

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Council 20th/21st January 2005.
AUTHOR: Director of Development Services

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: CORE STRATEGY/DEVELOPMENT CONTROL POLICIES AND RURAL CENTRES: 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 Core Strategy & Development Control Policies and Rural Centres of the Development Framework together with supporting studies, 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 Reports for the Core Strategy and Rural Centres and also the Recreation Study, Urban Capacity Study and Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, all published in October 2004.

Effect on Corporate Objectives

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

Background

3. The Council published the Preferred Options Reports for a number of Development Plan Documents on 1st October 2004. The supporting Studies were also published for consultation. Public participation on the matters raised in these reports took place over a six-week period ending on 12th November.
4. The Preferred Options Reports covered:
 - Core Strategy and Development Control Policies
 - Rural Centres
 - Northstowe Area Action Plan
 - Cambridge Southern Fringe
 - Cambridge East (prepared jointly with Cambridge City Council)

The supporting studies published as consultation drafts were:

- Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report
 - Urban Capacity Study
 - Recreation Study including Annexe 1 - the Village Results.
5. 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. The meetings and exhibitions were well attended (a log of the estimated numbers visiting has been made). The inter-active website was particularly well received and has assisted members of the public to access the full reports and make comment direct on-line. Some 5,500 representations to all the Preferred Options Reports and Studies were received in total, of which just over 1,800 related to the Core Strategy/Development Control Policies, 230 to the Rural Centres, 90 to the Urban Capacity Study, 47 to the Recreation Study and its Annexe and 30 to the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.
6. The Preferred Options reports were prepared under the "jumping the gun" regulations in the lead up to the new system of plan making which did not come into force until September 2004, after Council had agreed the approach. The new system requires the preparation of a Local Development Scheme which sets out the LDF documents that a local authority intends to prepare over the next three year period and a timetable for their preparation. On 9th December 2004, Cabinet agreed the Local Development Scheme which lists the documents (both Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents) which the Council will be preparing over the next 3 years. This has now been submitted to the Government Office (GO-East) for formal approval. Members will be advised at the meeting of any preliminary comments from GO-East.

Considerations

7. This is the first in a series of special meetings of the Council which will consider the results of public participation with a view to determining the directions the Development Plan Documents should take having considered the responses to the options. This meeting covers the matters contained in:
- The Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Preferred Options Report
 - Rural Centres Preferred Options Report
 - Urban Capacity Study – Consultation Draft
 - Recreation Study – Consultation Draft
 - Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report – Consultation Draft

Similar meetings of Council are programmed for Northstowe (1st February), Cambridge Southern Fringe (11th February) and Cambridge East (8th March).

8. There will then be a series of meetings of Council to determine the policy content of the draft Development Plan Documents: Core Strategy/Development Control Policies/ Rural Centres (15th March), Northstowe (23rd March), Cambridge Southern Fringe (8th April) and Cambridge East (15th April). A final meeting of Council on 9th May is programmed to deal with any amendments which need to be considered as a result of any of the previous meetings (20th May has also been reserved as a fall-back position if required).

9. Cambridge East is also complicated by virtue of being prepared jointly with Cambridge City Council and therefore the need to programme in meetings of the Member Reference Group (21st February and 5th April; this last meeting has yet to be confirmed) and Cambridge City Council (Environment Scrutiny Committee 22nd March and 12th April) and City Full Council Meetings (28th April with a fall-back of 19th May).
10. This report identifies the main issues raised through public participation on the Core Strategy and Rural Centres reports. Although a Rural Centres Preferred Options report was published separate to the Core Strategy, the responses have made it clear that this is a matter which is so inter-twined with the Core Strategy through a rural settlement strategy that it is considered that Rural Centres should not be a separate Development Plan Document. This approach was agreed by Cabinet in its consideration of the LDS. The responses to the Urban Capacity Study and the Recreation Study need to be considered alongside the Core Strategy to which they primarily relate. Responses to the Consultation Draft of the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, which covers all the Preferred Options reports, are also put before Members at this meeting as the Sustainability Appraisal is relevant to the Core Strategy.

Options

11. 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 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.
12. Council is now requested to consider the options which were the subject of participation and indicate, in the light of responses any material considerations since the publication of the Preferred Options and taking into account the views of the independent consultants who undertook the SEA/SA, whether particular options and approaches set out in the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies and Rural Centres reports 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 relevant Development Plan Document which, in this case, is the Core Strategy.
13. Council is also requested to consider the responses to the Consultation Draft reports on the Urban Capacity Study, the Recreation Study and the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.

The Main Issues to be resolved

14. This section of the report highlights the *main* issues which arose during the participation process. Attached as Appendices are the detailed schedules which set 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 Appendices, noting that the main issues drawn out in this covering report are those which *officers* consider the key ones. 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 the Appendices.

15. Attached to this Agenda Item are the following Appendices:

- Appendix 1: Schedule of representations and recommended actions for the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report
- Appendix 2: Schedule of representations and recommended actions for the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies
- Appendix 3: Schedule of representations and recommended actions for the Rural Centres
- Appendix 4: Schedule of representations and recommended actions for the Urban Capacity Study
- Appendix 5: Schedule of representations and recommended actions for the Recreation Study.
- Appendix 5A: Schedule of representations and recommended actions for Annexe 1 of the Recreation Study.

Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

16. Members will need first to consider the responses to the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report as it relates to all the Development Plan Documents and sets out how to assess the extent to which the options will help achieve relevant environmental, social and economic objectives. The Scoping Report set out the methodology, relevant indicators and baseline assessment. The methodology was developed by the Cambridgeshire Districts and covers the approach for both Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment. The initial appraisals were prepared by independent consultants.

17. In general there was support for the approach taken, and therefore, subject to the minor changes set out in Appendix 1, this be confirmed as the approach to be taken for all Development Plan Documents. Two areas which should be given greater emphasis as a result of considering representations are health issues and Rights of Way. The intention was that health issues would be incorporated into the Sustainability Assessment Scoping Report and would therefore be incorporated into any future sustainability appraisals for the LDF. As the Strategic Health Authority is concerned that the Sustainability Scoping Report does not fully address health issues, a separate Health Impact Assessment is appropriate. It is understood that the Strategic Health Authority is developing a Health Impact Assessment protocol with Cambridgeshire Horizons. Consultation with the health authorities will be undertaken in preparing the Core Strategy to address how this can be most included in policy.

Core Strategy and Development Control Policies and Rural Centres

18. The Core Strategy is a critical document within the LDF as it sets the scene for all Area Action Plans and provides the basis for development control decisions across the District. As the Rural Centres issue will be combined within the Core Strategy, representations to that Preferred Options report are considered alongside the Core Strategy to ensure a consistent approach.

Strategy

19. CS1 set out a Preferred Approach for the Strategic Vision. Generally this was supported, recognising that RPG6 and the Structure Plan set the level of growth and are quite locationally specific. However, a number of representations felt that no real options had been presented. Concerns were expressed about the strict interpretation of limiting development in rural areas and called for a more flexible approach. This is dealt with later in response to representations on the rural settlement strategy in CS4 and RC1. The overall recommendation is that this Preferred Approach be confirmed, subject to minor wording changes as recommended in the schedule.
20. CS2 set out a Preferred Approach for Strategy Objectives. Whilst there is support for this approach, again concerns have been raised about the inflexibility of the rural settlement strategy which could frustrate bringing forward brownfield sites in villages. Other representations have argued for further allocations to be made in villages. (Dealt with at CS4 and RC1). In response to representations, a number of changes are recommended to take account of climate change, the need to sustain the high technology research and development industry, and to recognise that the requirement to improve biodiversity needs to be appropriate to the development.
21. CS3 set out the Preferred Approach to the definition of village frameworks and how development in villages would be guided, very much following the approach set out in the existing Local Plan. The majority of representations seek a change to the established village framework. Each case needs to be considered in respect of its particular circumstances, but as a general rule the recommendation is that the established approach, tested through two Local Plan inquiries, should remain and that changes only be made where it is clear that there has been a relevant change in circumstances or an anomaly has been identified.
22. CS4, RC1 and RC2 set out the approach to be taken for Rural Centres. Representations can be summarised as follows:
 - The criteria set out in Structure Plan para 1.17 had been applied too rigidly and in an overly-prescriptive way.
 - The Rural Centres PO Report failed to give sufficient consideration to the role Rural Centres should play in serving a local hinterland.
 - The report did not sufficiently take into account the geographical spread of Rural Centres through the District.
 - Too much weight was given to the size of convenience foodstore.
23. Whilst no changes to the tests for the definition of Rural Centres in the Preferred Options are recommended, it is considered that it would be appropriate to introduce a greater degree of flexibility to the rural settlement strategy by more fully acknowledging the role that a number of villages in the district have in serving a local hinterland, where the village comes close to meeting the Structure Plan criteria. Rural Centres were identified by applying four key criteria refined from para 1.17 of the Structure Plan:
 - Public Transport Accessibility
 - Accessibility of Secondary Education
 - Village Facilities
 - Local Employment Opportunities

24. This led to the following five Rural Centres being identified:
- Cambourne
 - Histon & Impington
 - Great Shelford & Stapleford
 - Fulbourn
 - Sawston
25. Villages that meet the criteria set out in the Structure Plan less well than those identified as Rural Centres, but which nevertheless perform a role in terms providing services and facilities for a rural hinterland, could be designated as **Minor Rural Centres**, where greater scope for larger scale windfall development could be permitted up to a certain scale, whereas in Rural Centres there would continue to be no upper limit to the scale of windfall development within the village framework. This would allow larger villages with a reasonable level of services, currently suggested as Group Villages, because they do not quite meet the criteria to become Rural Centres, but help to provide services and facilities for surrounding smaller villages, to achieve more development. Other Group Villages, because of their more limited service provision and/or location whereby they do not contribute to meeting the needs of a wider rural area would remain in the Group category.
26. In Minor Rural Centres, windfall development within the existing Village Framework of up to 25 dwellings would thus be permitted, 25 dwellings being used as an appropriate figure to define the upper limit of a small estate development. Therefore, in order to ensure that residential development is not promoted in unsustainable locations, the acceptability of developments of a scale above Group level in Minor Rural Centres could be made dependent on existing facilities being improved. Developer contributions would then be sought to obtain the necessary improvements.
27. Given a new category of Minor Rural Centres, it is recommended that Fulbourn should no longer be a Rural Centre but designated a Minor Rural Centre, because representations indicate that the level of services and facilities generally fall below the level of those in other Rural Centres, particularly the fact that the branch surgery is only part time, that the library facility is very limited and that the village is not well related to a secondary school. If these considerations are taken into account, Fulbourn does not meet the Village Facilities criterion. Fulbourn therefore only meets two of the Key Criteria (Public Transport Accessibility and Local Employment Opportunities) set out in the Preferred Options Report. Fulbourn nevertheless has a reasonable range of shops in the village and it does perform a role in serving the needs of the more remote rural area to the east and south-east of Cambridge.
26. It is therefore recommended that the revised list of Rural Centres should thus be:
- Cambourne
 - Sawston
 - Histon & Impington
 - Great Shelford & Stapleford
28. The starting point in determining which villages should be Minor Rural Centres should be the “long list” of villages of more than 3,000 population set out in the Rural Centres Preferred Options Report. Papworth Everard should be added to this list for assessment, as at the end of the plan period it will have a population above 3,000. These villages have a reasonable level of services. Of these, Girton and Milton are too close to Cambridge to serve a rural area, while Bar Hill and Willingham are too close to Northstowe which will, in due course, effectively serve the immediate rural

area. Similarly, Papworth Everard is close to Cambourne which, with its proposed range of services fully developed would be more effective at serving the surrounding rural area.

29. It is therefore recommended that a new category of Minor Rural Centre be created and that these be:
- Cottenham
 - Fulbourn
 - Gamlingay
 - Linton
 - Melbourn
 - Waterbeach
30. CS5 suggested preferred approaches which would allow windfall development without a scale “ceiling” to take place within the village frameworks of Rural Centres. CS6 put forward the approach that some Rural Centres might be allocated development beyond the framework if it met an identified local need. In the event, the housing land supply demonstrated that there was no need to allocate additional land in Rural Centres, as the requirement would be met by increasing densities at Cambourne. In addition, no identified local social or economic need has been identified at any of the Rural Centres that would justify peripheral development on local grounds. It is recommended that there be no ceiling on windfall development in Rural Centres and that all Rural Centres be classified as Rural Centres without peripheral development.
31. RC3 set out the Preferred Approach for additional development in Rural Centres and suggested that the existing allocations at Histon/Impington and Sawston and that the residual land in the Cambourne Masterplan area would, through increased densities consistent with PPG3, would be sufficient to meet the housing requirement. The implications for Cambourne and review of the original outline planning permission and Masterplan/Design Guide have been the subject of many representations. On the one hand, local residents are opposed to any development beyond the original 3,000 dwellings with a 10% reserve, while the developers argue for more development, along the lines of the Cambourne Enhanced planning application (for 1559 dwellings) and/or extensions to the developable area of the village on the basis that this would secure a more sustainable level of facilities. It is recommended that the Preferred Approach be confirmed as the direction to take as it recognises that some change beyond the original permission is inevitable given the requirements of PPG3 but that greater development on the existing residential land parcels in the Masterplan beyond that suggested by the Annexe C to the Rural Centres Preferred Options report or by enlargement of the site should be resisted as being inconsistent with maintaining the character of Cambourne as three rural villages.
32. CS7 set out the Preferred Approach for development in Group villages – up to 8 dwellings and exceptionally 15 where it would make best use of a brownfield site. There has been a mixed response. Generally local residents and Parish Councils welcome the approach but developers and land interests object that it is too restrictive and that there is a need in some cases for greenfield allocations. A number of representations have suggested that there should be a category between Group Villages and Rural Centres and suggest villages for inclusion. This matter has been addressed in response to CS4 and RC1 and RC2. It is not recommended that the policy approach should be amended to allow more development possibilities in other Group Villages, as they are not sustainable locations.

33. CS8 set out the Preferred Approach for Infill Only Villages. Again there is a mix of support and objection. Some representations argue that the defining criteria of a primary school should be treated in a more flexible way to allow greater development including Greenfield allocations in small villages where the population level is static or declining. However, this matter was considered at the last Local Plan Public Inquiry and the Inspector concluded that such an approach would lead to development in unsustainable locations. It is therefore recommended that the Preferred Approach be confirmed.

Green Belt

34. CS9 and CS10 set out the Preferred Approach for Green Belt objectives and boundary definition. Although generally there is support, some representations suggest that Green Belt boundaries should be the subject of review other than at the locations for major development. It is recommended that, subject to any anomalies being dealt with, the Preferred approach should be confirmed.
35. CS11 and CS12 deal with the Preferred Approaches for development within the Green Belt and for Major Developed Sites (MDS) within the Green Belt. In response, it is recommended that a definition be included of what would constitute a MDS; this would help clarify which sites would be appropriate and thus address the representations seeking additional sites to be a MDS.

Development Principles

36. CS13 set out the Preferred Approach for the Development Principles objectives. The County Council has highlighted a number of matters which are currently included in the Area Action Plan Preferred Options reports and suggests that they should form part of the Core Strategy. Examples include ensuring the recycling of redundant buildings and materials, resource re-use and recycling and management of spoil from construction. It is recommended that it would be appropriate to include such matters in the Core Strategy policies with only site specific issues addressed in individual AAPs.
37. Section 4 of the Core Strategy and Development Principles (Options CS14 – CS17) set out Preferred Approaches to development principles including sustainability, design and landscape. CS18 covered the approach of preparing a policy setting out development criteria for all developments. It was agreed by Cabinet that the Local Development Scheme would create a Development Control Policies Development Plan Document separate from the Core Strategy. Council is asked to note that the agreed approaches to be taken on Development Principles, together with any changes recommended in the Schedule in Appendix 1 would form the basis of such a DPD.

Housing

38. CS19 set out the Preferred Approach to housing objectives and has been generally supported. One of the objectives is to provide an adequate and continuous supply of land for housing. The development strategy set out in the Structure Plan and reflected in the LDF strategy is for four stages in the development sequence. The AAPs address the provision of housing land for the major development locations while the Urban Capacity Study addresses provision in the rural area taking into account completions, commitments, allocations in the 2004 Local Plan and the windfalls predicted to come forward in the villages. The Preferred Options Report set this out in the table in paragraph 5.6, and it showed a need for an additional 366 dwellings over

and above provision identified or predicted. Some representations suggested that the windfall assessment was over-optimistic. However, the windfall figure used for the Urban Capacity Study already takes a conservative view. The rate fell from the 1990s to the early 2000s and this lower rate has been used. It also takes account only of sites in village frameworks. Given high demand and land values in the Cambridge area it is considered unlikely that this rate will not be achieved. The housing land supply, which has been based on the 2004 Local Plan Strategy, will need to be reworked when the Core Strategy Rural Settlement Strategy has been agreed, taking account of the recommended approach for Rural Centres and Minor Rural Centres. With the approach set out in the Preferred Options this could have led to a shortfall of around 100 dwellings. If the approach on Minor Rural Centres is adopted, this shortfall is likely to be even less. There is therefore still no need to allocate additional land in villages as the additional capacity recommended at Cambourne will continue to be sufficient to satisfy housing land supply needs.

39. CS20 set out the Preferred Approach to the existing housing allocations made in the 2004 Local Plan, which was to roll these forward into the LDF. There are some representations suggesting that this is not appropriate, that they will not come forward or are not in sustainable locations. However, these allocations have been scrutinised by an Independent Local Plan Inspector in the context of the then emerging Structure Plan, and the sites included in the adopted Local Plan 2006 were those considered suitable in the transition to the new urban focused development strategy. The majority of these have, or are, coming forward for development, and are considered reasonable to be carried forward to help meet the housing numbers for the period to 2006, when the Core Strategy will be adopted. Again, therefore, there is no need to allocate further sites.
40. CS22 set out the Preferred Approach to densities, suggesting at least 30 dph and at least 40 dph in more sustainable locations. This has drawn a mixed response, some support, some seeking higher densities and others seeking lower densities. In response, it is noted that PPG3 requires densities of at least 30 dwellings per hectare (dph) in order to make best use of land, and encourages densities of 30-50dph. PPG3 also seeks a greater intensity of development at places with good public transport accessibility. This is carried forward in the Structure Plan which says "Densities of at least 40 dwellings per hectare should be sought in locations close to a good range of existing or potential services and facilities and where there is, or there is the potential for, good public transport accessibility." CS22 is consistent with the Structure Plan, and is flexible, recognising that higher densities should be achievable in the larger strategic development sites, particularly in the service centres, which will have a greater range of facilities and services and High Quality Public Transport. Density policies for the major developments are included in the AAP's. Higher densities can be achieved without detriment to the environment if carefully designed and integrated with its surroundings. However, a blanket requirement for higher than 30dph across the district would not be considered in keeping with existing development, and should only apply to locations with a good range of facilities and services and good public transport provision, for example in some larger village centres. Very occasionally there may be local circumstances whereby lower densities should be sought, and CS22 allows flexibility for these situations, as the exception rather than the norm. It is recommended that the Preferred Approach be adopted.
41. CS23 – CS26 suggested a Preferred Approach and 3 alternative options for the targets for the mix of house sizes, based on the number of bedrooms, in market housing. In response, it is considered that the targets proposed in Preferred Option CS23 for bedroom sizes for 1 & 2 bedroom, 3 bedroom and 4 or more bedrooms, in the proportions 40%:30%:30%, would be appropriate for Northstowe as this would

address locally identified housing needs whilst not compromising the development of a balanced community in a new town. However, the use of these proportions in existing villages would not address the high proportion of properties of 4 or more bedrooms, nor the high level of need for 1 and 2 bedroom properties identified in the Housing Need Survey (89% of all market dwellings). Therefore, the targets for bedroom sizes in the proportions 50%:25%:25% (CS26) are recommended for development in villages to help redress the current imbalance.

42. CS27 put forward the Preferred Option for the target for Affordable Housing which was that it should be approximately 50% of all dwellings proposed. CS28 and CS29 set out two rejected options for targets of 40% and 30% respectively. Again there is a mixed response, some arguing for the higher targets, primarily on the basis of need, whilst others are concerned that high targets could affect the viability of developments and the balance of communities. In response, it is recommended that it should be noted that the South Cambridgeshire Housing Needs Survey 2002 identifies a high level of need in the District of 871 units per annum and therefore recommends a target of 50% Affordable Housing. Even at this level, not all need over the plan period would be met. The Cambridge Sub-Region Housing Needs Survey identified a similar but higher level of need. A key part of the development strategy for the Cambridge Sub-Region is about meeting local needs, and the Structure Plan requires at least 40% of all housing in the Cambridge Sub-Region to be affordable. Taking account of the higher level of need and higher house prices at the heart of the sub-region (i.e. Cambridge and South Cambs) and that some sites will not meet the tests for providing affordable housing provision, it is considered that it is important for the target for South Cambs to be higher than 40%. The proposed target of approximately 50% is therefore considered to be reasonable. The target for small sites in smaller villages (under 3000 population) has been established in the 2004 Local Plan and it is suggested that this should not be changed. In villages over 3000 population it is proposed to carry forward the threshold from the Local Plan of over 10 dwellings (see CS30). The increase in the target will therefore apply to larger sites in larger settlements. These are the more sustainable locations for development with better services and facilities, including public transport. Affordable Housing provision should be maximised in these locations. The process for assessing viability of development and therefore the appropriate level of affordable housing and other obligations is an issue that will need to be resolved. This will need to have regard to financial confidentiality whilst at the same time offering confidence to the Council that the viability concerns are reasonable and genuine, if the level of affordable housing provision is to be varied. Council is therefore recommended to agree the Preferred approach of approximately 50%.
43. CS30 suggested a Preferred Approach of requiring Affordable Housing to be provided as currently set out in the 2004 Local Plan, ie a threshold of 10 dwellings in settlements over 3,000 population and 2 dwellings in villages where the population was lower than this. Some responses suggest a higher threshold of 25 dwellings should be used while others seek the threshold of 2 dwellings be used in all settlements. The aim is not to stifle development, but smaller villages are at the end of the development sequence for sustainability and a key justification for new development is to meet local needs for Affordable Housing through 50% of sites of 2 or more dwellings and exceptions Affordable Housing sites. The Preferred Approach would include the tests in the 2004 Local Plan which consider the particular costs associated with the development. The onus would continue to be on the developer to demonstrate that it is not viable to provide or contribute towards Affordable Housing at this level. Addressing the particularly high level of housing need in the District is a key part of the development strategy and the use of thresholds below the 25 dwellings normal threshold and the 15 dwelling threshold in exceptional

circumstances was demonstrated to the Inspector's satisfaction during the public inquiry into the 2004 Local Plan. The level of need has risen since that plan was prepared which further supports the carrying forward of the thresholds. It is understood that PPG3 is to be revised, and any changes it brings forward will need to be taken into account in developing this policy.

44. CS32 and CS33 set out alternative options for funding Affordable Housing. CS32 suggested that if there were insurmountable subsidy issues, a lower proportion of Affordable Housing could be negotiated, while CS33 suggested that in such circumstances a contribution to Affordable Housing elsewhere might be negotiated. These options refer to insurmountable subsidy issues which relate specifically to funding from other bodies, primarily the Housing Corporation. There is no intention to increase the financial obligation on the developer, but to consider alternative ways of using that developer contribution to secure Affordable Housing. It is recommended that further flexibility is needed in exceptional circumstances to address the current uncertainties over funding and both options could both have a role in providing such flexibility in different circumstances. In a case of insurmountable subsidy issues, a lower proportion of built units on site could be appropriate district wide as set out in CS32. However, to ensure that this would not prejudice securing significant Affordable Housing provision, further work is required to identify an appropriate minimum requirement in such exceptional circumstances. It is unlikely that this would be below the Structure Plan minimum of 40%. With financial contributions for off-site provision, this would be most relevant for small sites where there are prejudicial issues over delivery and management and will not be appropriate for major developments, where on site provision is a key part of creating a sustainable community. It is therefore recommended that CS32 be pursued District wide, while CS33 would be pursued for small sites. It would not apply to major development sites such as the AAP locations.

Economy and Tourism

45. Section 6, covering options CS35 – CS43, set out the options for employment. There is general support, but a number of representations emphasise the need for monitoring to ensure that policies remain relevant and appropriate. There appears to be general support that the selective management of employment should cover the whole of the District not just the area close to Cambridge (CS36/37). There is also concern that the major developments, primarily Northstowe and Cambridge East, should include a mix of employment types, not just high technology research and development. The other major issue is the amount of land to be allocated for employment and the impact of higher density development on determining whether this should be reduced. This will be an important consideration in the AAPs for those locations (CS38/39).

Services and Facilities

46. CS44 set out the objectives for services and facilities. Whilst generally supported, representations also suggested that this be extended to cover Rights of Way, which it is considered would not be appropriate for inclusion in the LDF as such protection is covered by other legislation. There was also comment that health and social care should be included, and this is recommended as being appropriate.
47. CS45 set out the preferred Approach for the protection of village services and facilities. There was general support for this approach, but also comment that it should be extended to cover recreation and sports facilities, and this is recommended as being appropriate. A number of representations suggested that the policies

restricting the scale of development in villages runs contrary to the objective of this policy, but the rural settlement strategy and the distribution of development has been largely set in the Structure Plan. Nevertheless, the changes recommended through the introduction of a Minor Rural centre category does go some way towards addressing this point.

48. CS46 set out the retail hierarchy for the District. There are representations that Cambridge East's District Centre should be upgraded to the same level as Northstowe's (ie town centre), and that Cambourne's centre should be upgraded to a District rather than a local centre. However, neither of these changes are considered appropriate, Cambridge East because the centre there should not compete with the City Centre and Cambourne because it should remain a local centre primarily serving its village community and because it is poorly served by public transport compared with District (town) centres in the Sub-region.
49. CS50 set out the Preferred Approach to encourage developers to provide public art as part of their development. A number of representations suggested that this meant that developers would be required to contribute to public art, whereas in fact the approach is not require but encourage.

Recreation

50. CS51 set out the Preferred Approach for open space standards. This drew a limited and mixed response, some pressing for a higher standard, others for a lower standard. PPG17 advocates that standards should be set locally and the Recreation Study indicated that a standard higher than the NFTA was appropriate and this was the basis of the standard put forward.
51. CS54 suggested that new developments should be required to contribute to the provision of strategic open space. Representations have made the point that development should only provide for facilities needed directly as a result of the development. This is accepted – it was not the intention of the Preferred Approach to require contributions towards strategic open space over and above the need generated by the development itself.
52. The Recreation Study, the audit and assessment of need for outdoor playspace and informal open space, together with its Annex containing the full results for each village, was also published as a consultation draft document. The detailed representations and responses are set out in Appendix 5 and those to the Annex 1 of the Study, the Village Results, are set out in Appendix 5A. In general representations were supportive although there were many which put forward corrections and amendments to the maps and definitions in the Annex. Some representations sought the Study to have a greater emphasis on countryside recreation by including bridleways and footpaths, but this is a matter which is beyond the scope of the report which is to look at dedicated recreation areas. There was also comment that this is a study which needs to be regularly updated.

Papworth Hospital

53. CS55 – CS58 dealt with the options surrounding the potential relocation of Papworth Hospital. The responses suggest that it is not appropriate for a LDF policy to dictate to the health authorities whether the current activities continue on this site. Whilst that might remain the Council's preference, it is recommended that whilst that may be the case, it reinforces the need for a policy within the LDF to guide a mixed development

and set the criteria against which any redevelopment proposals should be tested and that this should be augmented by a Supplementary Planning Document.

The Natural Environment

54. CS60 set out the natural environment objectives. There is general support for these objectives, but in response to a representation it is recommended that the Core Strategy should include a policy on habitat creation.

Energy

55. CS61 suggested the Preferred Approach for developing renewable energy sources should be to develop a criteria based policy and this has generally been supported, and in response to a representation it is recommended that the criteria should include visual and noise impact.
56. CS62 put forward the Preferred Approach to ensure that at least 10% of the energy needs of larger developments are met by renewable energy technologies. Some representations support this approach but others object. However, it would be consistent with the policy in the emerging RSS14 and has been included in other councils' plans and would help meet Government objectives. In response to another representation, it is recommended that the threshold for providing renewable energy should be changed from 50 dwellings to 10 dwellings, this being closer to the equivalent of the other threshold of 1,000 m² and would also be consistent with the approach taken by Cambridge City Council which would be advantageous for developments which cross the administrative boundary.
57. CS63 set out the Preferred Approach for all new development to exceed by 10% the Building Regulations' standards in force at the time. There are a number of objections to this approach, including the Government Office on the basis that it should not seek to over-ride other legislation (Building Regulations). It is therefore recommended that this approach be amended to require developers to maximise energy efficiency through sustainable design and construction etc but to *encourage* developers to strive to achieve energy efficiency standards above minimum standards. This would be consistent with the policy in emerging RSS14.

Protecting South Cambridgeshire's Landscapes

58. CS64-CS66 set out the Preferred Approaches for Landscape Character Areas, Natural Areas, Biodiversity and River Valleys. The majority of responses support these approaches and comment that further guidance should be set out in Supplementary Planning Documents.
59. CS68 set out the Preferred Approach for flood risk. Comment has been made that this should be consistent with PPG25 which requires a sequential approach to be adopted using flood zones information and this is recommended as an approach which should be adopted. Other representations emphasise the need to consider flooding on a catchment basis not just within the floodplain; again it is recommended that this be the basis of the ensuing policy in the LDF.
60. CS69 set out the Preferred Approach for sustainable drainage systems. In response to representations it is recommended that it be accepted that sustainable drainage systems should be sought only where they are practicable.

Financial Implications

61. The cost of progressing the LDF is set out in the Council's budget.

Legal Implications

62. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 imposes a statutory duty to prepare a Local Development Framework and to keep it up to date.

Staffing Implications

63. 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

64. The Core Strategy is a key Development Plan Document within the LDF. Given the imperative from the Regional Planning Guidance and the Structure Plan that an early start must be made on the increased rate of development in the Cambridge Sub-region, it is important that the District Council, as the plan-making authority, is able to ensure that development takes place consistent with the LDF. If the LDF is not in place at an early stage there is the risk of developments being determined by the development control and appeal process.

Consultations

65. The Preferred Options Reports have been the subject of extensive public participation.

Conclusions/Summary

66. The public participation exercise has been effective at involving both individuals and organisations and has given them an early opportunity to determine the direction the LDF documents should take. The programme of Council meetings, of which this is the first, should enable the Council to meet its objective of submitting the first tranche of Development Plan Documents to the Secretary of State in the summer of this year.
67. The Core Strategy should include the matters set out in the Rural Centres report in order to develop a cohesive rural settlement strategy. The resultant suggested revisions to the rural settlement strategy would require adjustments to be made to the results of the Urban Capacity Study.

Recommendations

68. Council is recommended to agree the recommendations set out in this report and the Appendices as the basis for developing the policies to be set out in the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Documents. Council would receive these draft documents at the special meeting arranged for 15th March.

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

Core Strategy Preferred Options Report, SCDC, October 2004
Rural Centres Preferred Options Report, SCDC, October 2004

Recreation Study Consultation Draft, SCDC, October 2004
Urban Capacity Study Consultation Draft, SCDC, October 2004.
Representations received in response to the above documents.

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