

Report to: Joint Local Planning Advisory Group (JLPAG) 2nd June 2020

Lead Members: Deputy Leader (SCDC) – Cllr Aidan Van der Weyer
Executive Cllr for Planning Policy & Open Spaces (City) – Cllr Katie Thornburrow

Lead Officer: Stephen Kelly, Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development

North East Cambridge Area Action Plan: Draft Plan for consultation (Regulation 18)

Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report introduces the draft Area Action Plan (AAP) that presents the councils' preferred approach for managing development, regeneration and investment in North East Cambridge (NEC) over the next fifteen years and beyond. It follows public consultation on Issues & Options in February 2019 that sought to elicit views on a wide range of options for how the area might change, the issues and challenges facing the area, and how these might be addressed.
- 1.2 The draft AAP represents a further informal consultation stage in the Plan's preparation, inviting stakeholders and the public to view and comment on the councils' detailed proposals for development management policies and the contribution individual sites and the district's centres will make, in terms of housing, employment, and social and physical infrastructure, towards delivery of the objectives and vision for the area as a whole.
- 1.3 The draft AAP is to be reported to the respective decision-making committees of the councils in June with a recommendation to publish in July 2020 for a ten-week period of informal public consultation. The extended period of consultation is in recognition of the summer holiday period and the current circumstances regarding Covid 19 and the implications for consultation and community engagement.
- 1.4 A separate report on the agenda for this JLPAG meeting addresses updates to the Local Development Scheme, for both the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan and the Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

Key Decision

1. Yes

The key decision was first published in the September 2019 Forward Plan.

Recommendations

2.1 The Joint Local Planning Advisory Group (JLPAG) is recommended to:

1. Recommend the name of the AAP be formally changes to the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan and the boundary of the Area Action Plan be amended to be as shown on the new Policy map (Appendix A);
2. Review and comment on the draft North East Cambridge Area Action Plan: consultation document (Appendix B);
3. Note the response to comments received to the Issues & Options document as set out in the Statement of Consultation (Appendix C);
4. Note the findings of the updated Joint Equalities Impact Assessment, Draft Sustainability Appraisal, and Draft Habitats Regulation Report (Appendices D, E and F respectively); and
5. Recommend to the respective Councils decision-making processes that they should approve the draft North East Cambridge Area Action Plan, and supporting documents, for a ten-week period of public consultation.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 To confirm the name of the NEC AAP for the purposes of the Local Development Scheme and next stage of work and to reflect that the AAP boundary has been amended to better reflect the areas subject to future development.
- 3.2 To progress the NEC AAP through the various stages of informal and formal consultation on its way to adoption as part of the development plan for Greater Cambridge.
- 3.3 The current stage represents the last informal consultation on the AAP, inviting comment on all aspects of the plan, including the vision and strategic objectives, the emerging spatial framework and proposed development management policies, as well as the supporting evidence base studies and the council's response to previous comments received.
- 3.4 In addition, JLPAG members are invited to comment on the proposals for community engagement and consultation activities recognising the constraints and opportunities posed by Covid 19. Recommendations from JLPAG will be

communicated to each council's separate democratic processes for discussion and formal agreement.

4. Background

- 3.1 South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council are jointly preparing an Area Action Plan (AAP) for the North East Cambridge, which will form part of the statutory development plan.
- 3.2 Policy 15 of the City Local Plan, and Policy SS/4 of the South Cambs Local Plan, allocate the area for high quality mixed-use development, primarily for employment uses such as B1, B2 and B8, as well as a range of supporting commercial, retail, leisure and residential uses (subject to acceptable environmental conditions).
- 3.3 The local plans do not specify the amount of development, site capacities, or timescales for development, deferring such matters to the preparation of the joint AAP. This is because the development within the area is affected by the Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant, which is a significant constraint on development of adjoining land. It therefore needs to be noted that development at NEC is not being relied upon to meet current need as referred to in the current local plans and as provided for by the policies and proposals in those plans.

Cambridge Waste-Water Treatment Plan (WTP)

- 3.4 The City Council and Anglian Water have been successful in a bid for Housing Infrastructure Funding to inter alia, relocate the WTP that, along with the City Council owned former driving centre site, comprises a significant part of the North East Cambridge AAP area referred to as the 'Core Site'.
- 3.5 The proposed relocation of the WTP, will deliver critical water recycling services to residents in and around Cambridge in a new, modern, low-carbon facility. Its relocation will release brownfield land and enable the regeneration of the wider area, making provision for circa 8,000 new homes and around 20,000 new jobs. Further details on the relocation process for the WTP, and the process by which the Core Site is intended to be brought forward for development, are outlined in Appendix G to this report.
- 3.6 The AAP being drafted by the Councils is therefore predicated on the WTP being relocated and is required to support the Development Consent Order application for the relocation of the WTP.

Issues and Options consultation 2019

- 3.7 An "Issues and Options" report was published for consultation on 11th February 2019. It included 80 questions for the public and stakeholders to consider and respond to. During the consultation period a programme of drop in exhibition events were held both within the AAP area and neighbouring communities at which a summary leaflet was also distributed. Meetings were also held with the Landowners and Community Liaison Forums. In all, over 1,200 comments were received. These are provided in summary in the attached Statement of

Consultation (Appendix C) along with councils proposed response to the matters raised and how these have been considered in preparing the Draft AAP. Further information on the 2019 consultation is available in Appendix G.

5. Draft Area Action Plan

- 5.1 The current draft of the AAP is set out at Appendix B. It should be noted that it is still being further refined to take account of recommendations that have come through from the initial Sustainability Appraisal (see Appendix E) and other evidence base studies, as well as input from members and officers across the two authorities. The graphics and images in the current draft AAP are also being updated for final publication.
- 5.2 Being the ‘preferred option’ stage of plan-making, it is much longer than the final AAP will be. This is because this iteration needs to address the previous comments received, how these have been taken into account, outline the reasonable alternatives considered, and set out why the approach being put forward is preferred.
- 5.3 Being mindful of the length and complexity of the issues at consideration, we are proposing different approaches to consultation that seek to engage respondents on 10 big issues. Further details on the consultation methods planned are outlined at Appendix K.

Purpose of the AAP

- 5.4 The purpose of the AAP is to establish a framework for the comprehensive and co-ordinated regeneration of North East Cambridge, and to set out the means to achieving this through planning and partnership working.

Vision, Objectives and Strategy

- 5.5 The vision, strategic objectives and spatial strategy for North East Cambridge are set out in the introductory chapters (1, 2 & 3) of the draft AAP. The purpose of these sections of the document are to set out the kind of place we want North East Cambridge to be like in the future, and to outline the broad development strategy to deliver the vision and objectives. It considers the key issues facing the area that need to be addressed and the strengths and opportunities that need to be enhanced and realised.
- 5.6 The spatial framework, provided at Chapter 3, establishes the key policy interventions required across the area, providing clarity and certainty about how places and strategic sites are to develop and change. This includes: - strategic walking and cycling connections and links; the creation of a network of green spaces which connect NEC into the wider Fen countryside; the location of four new centres to provide easy access to local amenities; the proposed distribution of land uses across the area including residential, commercial, industrial, and other supporting land uses; and an indication as to the scale and density of new development.

Detailed Policies

- 5.7 The subsequent chapters of the draft AAP are all concerned with what needs to happen (the where, when and how) to deliver the vision and spatial strategy for the area. This includes detailed criteria-based policies and design guidance (set out in chapter 4) concerned with environmental and design standards, the provision of mixed-use development, housing, employment, and other amenities, and sub-area objectives and guidance.
- 5.8 The last chapter of the draft AAP outlines the proposed delivery and implementation strategy, covering requirements for land assembly, relocations and securing the coordinated delivery social and physical infrastructure. It also has regard to the appropriate phasing of development taking into account the need to ensure development between sites is coordinated and regeneration occurs across the whole area, including on sites with greater constraints than others.
- 5.9 Further details on the AAP including the Draft Vision, Objectives and Strategy, Proposed Provision, and Detailed Policies is attached in Appendix H.

Duty to Cooperate

- 5.10 A requirement of the plan-making process is to engage neighbouring authorities and other statutory bodies on your emerging plan focussing, in particular, on cross boundary matter. This is referred to as the 'Duty to Cooperate'. This is an on-going process, with the intention that such engagement and cooperation will involve consideration of both the Area Action Plan and the Greater Cambridgeshire Local Plan and will continue through the plan making process. The proposed approach to the Duty to Cooperate is covered in the accompanying Local Plan report.

Revised NEC AAP Boundary

- 5.11 The previously consultation proposed the inclusion of the Cambridge Science Park within the AAP area. This is now confirmed. However, as a result, the exclusion of the Cambridge Regional College from the AAP area is now apparent. To ensure the comprehensive consideration of the wider area it is recommended to also include the Cambridge Regional College and Garage Site within the AAP boundary, while removing the Bramblefields Nature Reserve and Nuffield Road Allotment Site because there are no plans or intention to develop these areas. The proposed new boundary and Policy Map is attached at Appendix A.

Other Matters

- 5.12 The name of the Area Action Plan was changed for the Issues and Options consultation from Cambridge Northern Fringe East to North East Cambridge to reflect the extended AAP area, and its location relative to the North West Cambridge Area Action Plan. This change needs to be formally ratified and approval by Members so that it may be amended on the Local Development Scheme.

5.13 The North East Cambridge Area Action is supported by a number of evidence base documents. Further details are attached in the following appendices:

- Outline of Support Documents (Appendix I)
- Consultation Statement (Appendix C)
- Joint Equalities Impact Assessment (Appendix D)
- Sustainability Appraisal (Appendix E)
- Habitats Regulations Assessment (Appendix F)
- List of Evidence Documents (Appendix J)

5.14 The Fen Road level crossing is currently closed for around 30 minutes in every hour, severing the Fen Road residential and business communities from the wider area for significant parts of the day. The Fen Road crossing is an existing issue which lies outside the AAP area and therefore cannot be attributed to development at NEC; and that a solution to the crossing is not required for the delivery of NEC. It would therefore not be acceptable to make this a policy requirement of the AAP to resolve or fund.

5.15 Responsibility for the crossing sits primarily with Network Rail. In the interests of the proper planning of the area the Greater Cambridge Planning Service is seeking to work with Network Rail and the transport authorities to explore the options, and a separate report will be provided in due course.

6 Next Steps

- 6.1 Public consultation on the draft NEC AAP document and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment is proposed to be carried out for a period of ten weeks starting in July 2020. The elongated consultation period was due to running the consultation over the summer holidays but is also thought appropriate given the current Covid 19 context. Further details on the proposed summer public consultation are provided in Appendix K. The Councils are preparing an addendum to the adopted Joint Statement of Community Involvement to reflect government advice on responding to the current Covid 19 situation, including for plan making consultations, which is intended to be published shortly as an out of cycle decision.
- 6.2 The upcoming round of consultation is important as it is the last informal round of consultation on the draft plan, welcoming comments and suggestions to all aspects of the draft. It also provides the public and stakeholders with the opportunity to be further informed of councils detailed proposals for NEC, enabling them to highlight any issues relating to policy coverage; the wording of the vision, objectives, policies, and sub area guidance; development mix, quantum, distribution, and form; and to identify potential issues regarding the tests of soundness.
- 6.3 The results of this consultation will be assessed and the draft NEC AAP will be revised in light of the comments received as appropriate. Further evidence is underway to test the viability of the development proposed and its ability to meet the policy requirements, including the provision of affordable housing and social and physical infrastructure. Both the assessment of representations and the revised NEC AAP will be reported back to both authorities, alongside further appraisals of the impact of implementation on environmental, social and economic considerations (see Appendix J).
- 6.4 If both authorities are satisfied that the NEC AAP meets the Government's tests of soundness, the councils will be requested to endorse the Plan for Pre-submission publication (Regulation 19). At this stage however, the AAP will necessarily need to be paused to await the outcome of the Development Consent Order (DCO) process for the relocation of the Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant, so that there is sufficient certainty of the deliverability of the proposals in the AAP. If the DCO is successful, the NEC AAP can then proceed to pre-submission publication, during which formal representations can be made, followed by formal submission to the Secretary of State and an Examination in Public. The timescales will be covered in a separate report proposing an update to the timescales for the Greater Cambridge Local Plan and NEC AAP in the Greater Cambridge Local Development Scheme.

7 Options

7.1 JLPAG members may decide to:

1. Recommend to the respective Local Planning Authorities that they should agree to approve the draft NEC AAP and supporting documents for public consultation, incorporating amendments agreed in discussion at JLPAG;
2. Recommend to the respective Local Planning Authorities that they should agree to approve the draft NEC AAP and supporting documents for public consultation, without any amendments; or
3. Recommend to the respective Local Planning Authorities that they should not agree to approve the draft NEC AAP and supporting documents for public consultation.

Implications

Financial

1. Currently anticipated to be within current budgets. This will be kept under review alongside other work priorities.

Legal

2. No comments received.

Staffing

3. Currently anticipated to be delivered within our existing budgets. This will be kept under review alongside other work priorities.

Risks/Opportunities

4. The results of the Development Consent Order (DCO) process for the relocation of the Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant is yet to be formally started. It is due to be determined in Autumn 2023. If the process is unsuccessful, it would impact on the delivery of the vision identified. The approach to the AAP would be reviewed if the DCO process was unsuccessful. The approach to transport relies on a reduction and transfer of parking that is outside of the Planning Authorities control to implement. Discussions are ongoing as to the mechanisms to achieve this. There is a further risk over the overall viability and deliverability of the proposed vision for North East Cambridge and this will be assessed as part of the Viability Appraisal study that will inform the pre-submission version of the AAP. The Opportunities are outlined in the Draft AAP.

Equality and Diversity

5. The plan provides an opportunity to address aspects of equality and poverty that can be influenced by the physical environment. A Joint Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council Equalities Impact Assessment, building upon and expanding on that undertaken into the Issues & Options consultation document, was prepared to inform the draft APP, and is attached as Appendix C. The EqIA will be published alongside publication of the draft NEC AAP for public consideration and comment.

Climate Change/Environmental

6. The plan provides an opportunity to address the aspects of the environment that can be influenced by the planning system. These aspects will be considered by a range of evidence including via the Sustainability Appraisal which is attached as Appendix A.

Procurement Implications

7. A large number of evidence base studies have been or are being procured to support the development of the AAP.

Community Safety Implications

8. A Community Safety Topic Paper was prepared to consider aspects of community safety that can be influenced by the physical environment to inform the Draft AAP.

Consultation responses

9. The AAP was previously consulted on at the Issues and Option stage in 2014 and the Issues and Options 2 stage in 2019. These comments have been reviewed and considered to inform the preparation of the proposed Draft Plan and are summarised in the Consultation Statement.

Background Papers

Background papers used in the preparation of this report:

North East Cambridge Area Action Plan: Issues and Options consultation document (February 2019)

<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/consultations/north-east-cambridge-area-action-plan-issues-and-options-consultation>

Cambridge Northern Fringe Area Action Plan: Issues and Options consultation document (December 2014)

<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/cambridge-northern-fringe-area-action-plan-issues-and-options-2014>

South Cambridgeshire Leader's Decision approving the final Joint Local Planning Advisory Group terms of reference

<https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=11133>

Papers relating to Cabinet meeting 3 October 2018, where it was agreed to set up a joint member group in principle

<http://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=293&MId=7345&Ver=4>

Papers relating to Cambridge Planning & Transport Scrutiny meeting 3 October 2018, where it was agreed to set up a joint member group in principle

<https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=475&MId=3558&Ver=4>

Adopted Cambridge Local Plan 2018

<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/local-plan-2018>

Adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-and-neighbourhood-planning/the-adopted-development-plan/south-cambridgeshire-local-plan-2018/>

Appendices

The Councils have prepared these documents to be compliant with the website accessibility requirements where possible; however, some sections of individual documents may not be fully website accessibility compliant. If you would have problems accessing any sections of the appended documents, please contact the Planning Policy, Strategy and Economy Team by email: ldf@scambs.gov.uk or phone: 01954 713183.

Appendix A: Proposed new Policy Map boundary for Draft North East Cambridge Area Action Plan

Appendix B: The Draft North East Cambridge Area Action Plan: Consultation Document

Appendix C: The Statement of Consultation for the Draft North East Cambridge Area Action Plan

Appendix D: Joint Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council Equalities Impact Assessment for Draft North East Cambridge Area Action Plan

Appendix E1: Draft North East Cambridge Area Action Plan Sustainability Appraisal Policy Appraisals

Appendix E2: Draft North East Cambridge Area Action Plan Sustainability Appraisal Spatial Framework Policy Appraisal

Appendix F: Draft North East Cambridge Area Action Plan Draft Habitats Regulations Report

Appendix G: Background to Draft North East Cambridge Area Action Plan

Appendix H: Outline of Proposed Draft North East Cambridge Area Action Plan

Appendix I: Outline of Supporting Documents for Draft North East Cambridge Area Action Plan

Appendix J: Draft North East Cambridge Area Action Plan – List of Evidence Documents

Appendix K: Proposals for Summer Public Consultation on Draft North East Cambridge Area Action Plan

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