

**REPORT TO:** Cabinet 29 June 2020

**LEAD CABINET MEMBER:** Deputy Leader (Statutory) – Cllr Aidan Van de Weyer

**LEAD OFFICER:** Stephen Kelly, Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development

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## **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) being prepared jointly by Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council 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 has been reported to the Joint Local Planning Advisory Group and South Cambridgeshire District Council Scrutiny and Overview Committee on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020 respectively. Section 5 of this report provides a summary of the comments made by both committees, who agreed the recommendations before them.
- 1.4 The draft AAP will be reported to the Cambridge City Council Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee on the 30<sup>th</sup> June with the same recommendations to publish in July 2020 for a ten-week period of informal public consultation. The outcome of this meeting will be reported orally to that Committee meeting.
- 1.5 An 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.

- 1.6 A separate report on the agenda for this Cabinet 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 Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Agree the name of the AAP be formally changed to the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan;
2. Agree the draft North East Cambridge Area Action Plan (Appendix A); the draft North East Cambridge Policies Map (including amended boundary) (Appendix B) and Topic Papers (Appendix C) for a ten-week period of public consultation under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and that this consultation will also include the evidence documents (listed in the draft AAP with relevant policy and published on the shared planning service website);
3. Agree the Statement of Consultation (Appendix D) including responses to comments received to the Issues & Options (February 2019);
4. Note the findings of the updated Joint Equalities Impact Assessment, Draft Sustainability Appraisal, Draft Habitats Regulation Assessment; and Duty to Cooperate Statement (Appendices E, F, G and H respectively);
5. Delegate authority to the Deputy Leader (Statutory) of South Cambridgeshire District Council and the Cambridge Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Open Spaces to agree the further Topic Papers as set out at paragraph 4.17 ahead of public consultation.
6. Delegate authority to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development, in liaison with the Deputy Leader (Statutory) of South Cambridgeshire District Council and the Cambridge Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Open Spaces, to make editorial changes to the Draft NEC AAP consultation report (including graphics) and supporting documents (prior to the commencement of the consultation period) to comprise minor amendments and factual updates and clarifications.

7. Note the update on the Fen Road access issues at paragraphs 4.19 and 4.20 in the report. A separate report will be provided on this matter in due course.

## **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, topic papers, and the council's response to previous comments received.

## **4. Background**

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 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).
- 4.3 The 2018 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)

- 4.4 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'.

- 4.5 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 I to this report.
- 4.6 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

- 4.7 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 D) 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 I.

## **5. Draft Area Action Plan**

### Purpose of the AAP

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 The current draft of the AAP is set out at Appendix A. It should be noted that a final edit of the draft AAP is still being finalised. This is to ensure the draft AAP for consultation is clear, in plain English, any superfluous text is streamlined and the AAP is internally consistent. It has been largely completed up to the end of chapter 5. The graphics and images in the current draft AAP are also being updated for final publication. It is not expected that this editing will materially change the content of the AAP, including the intent of any of the policies, and that the edits made can be dealt with under the delegated authority to the Director of Planning in recommendation 6. If any material change is identified this would be dealt with via a Lead Member decision under delegated authority through recommendation 5.
- 5.3 Being the ‘preferred option’ stage of plan-making, the draft document 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.

- 5.4 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.

#### 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 refined vision for the area is “We want North East Cambridge to be an inclusive, walkable, low-carbon new city district with lively mix of homes, workplaces, services and social spaces, fully integrated with surrounding neighbourhoods”.
- 5.7 The draft AAP proposes the following mixed-use development:
- Circa 8,000 new homes (18,000 people)
  - 234,500 sqm employment (20,000 jobs)
  - Diversification of employment offer – start-up, incubator, move-on space
  - 3 No primary schools, and including safeguarded land for secondary school if required
  - Community / recreation / culture facilities & open space provision
  - 7,300 sqm retail floorspace (c. 73 shops of a range of sizes)
  - No net loss of Industrial floorspace
- 5.8 The spatial framework, provided at Chapter 3 of the AAP, 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

- 5.9 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, a mix of different housing types, sizes and tenures including a policy target of 40% affordable housing, a range of employment, and other amenities, and sub-area objectives and guidance.

5.10 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.

#### 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 car showrooms and garages on Milton Road 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 draft North East Cambridge Policies Map, including the proposed new boundary, is attached at Appendix B.

#### Name of the AAP

5.12 The name of the Area Action Plan was changed for the 2019 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 approved by Members so that it may be amended in the Local Development Scheme.

#### Supporting documents, evidence and topic papers

5.13 The North East Cambridge Area Action is accompanied by a number of supporting documents that are formally required as part of the plan making process and are required to be published alongside the draft AAP for consultation. Further information on the purpose of each is included in the summary at Appendix J and the full documents are attached in the following appendices:

- Statement of Consultation (Appendix D)
- Joint Equalities Impact Assessment (Appendix E)
- Draft Sustainability Appraisal (Appendix F)
- Habitats Regulations Assessment (Appendix G)

5.14 The draft Sustainability Appraisal at Appendix F includes a record of the recommendations that the SA consultants put forward to the emerging draft AAP and also how officers responded to them. The SA will be updated to integrate that information for the consultation, and it is anticipated this update can be dealt with under delegated authority sought at recommendation 6.

5.15 A range of evidence documents have been prepared that have helped inform the draft AAP. They have been published on the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service webpages and can be viewed here:

<https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/emerging-plans-and-guidance/north-east-cambridge-area-action-plan/draft-area-action-plan-evidence-base-and-supporting-documents/>. These documents will be published with the draft AAP for consultation and are listed below:

- Ecology Study
- Area Flood Risk Assessment
- Surface Water Attenuation Report
- Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment
- Typologies and Development Capacity Assessment
- Mixed Use Development: Overcoming barriers to delivery
- Innovation District Paper
- Retail and Town Centre Study
- Community and Cultural Facilities Audit
- Cultural Placemaking Strategy
- NEC Transport Assessment
- Noise Assessment
- Odour Impact Assessment for Cambridge Water Recycling Centre

5.16 Further evidence will be prepared to inform the next formal stage of plan making and the AAP will also draw on evidence being prepared to support the new Greater Cambridge Local Plan. This will include evidence relating to issues such as net zero carbon, site wide energy, heritage impact and townscape character, infrastructure and viability.

5.17 A range of Topic Papers have also been prepared that identify national planning policy and guidance, the evidence documents prepared, plus any other relevant information and consider the preferred approach to be taken in the draft AAP. The Topic Papers supporting the regulation 18 public consultation are listed and attached at Appendix C, but note that many of these will be updated as the AAP progresses to take account of any additional evidence and any revision to the preferred approach in the AAP. Five of the listed Topic Papers are still being finalised and the Lead Planning Members will be asked to agree them under an out of meeting decision ahead of the consultation under recommendation 5. The issues addressed in these topic papers have nevertheless been considered in drafting the AAP. These are:

- Transport Topic Paper - Further transport work including to consider traffic movements on King's Hedges Road and impacts of reduced car parking in the AAP area on surrounding communities, including consideration of any future requirement for controlled parking zones and parking enforcement.
- Internalisation Topic Paper - Considers how to maximise internal trips within NEC to reduce the need to travel by private motor vehicle.
- Health Facilities and Wellbeing Topic Paper - Considers how health facilities and wellbeing can be improved through well designed places and how policies within the AAP can maximise health and wellbeing benefits for future residents and existing residents in the surrounding area. The preparation of this paper has been impacted by health specialists focus on the Covid-19 crisis.

- Environmental Health Topic Paper - Identifies the existing environmental health constraints of the area including air quality, noise, odour, land contamination, ground conditions and lighting.
- Community Safety Topic Paper - Explores the issues of community safety in North East Cambridge and how development should be socially inclusive and safe.

#### Duty to Cooperate

- 5.18 A requirement of the plan-making process is to engage neighbouring authorities and other specified statutory bodies on your emerging plan focussing, in particular, on cross boundary matters. This is referred to as the 'Duty to Cooperate'. The duty requires on-going constructive and active engagement on the preparation of statutory Plans. A Duty to Cooperate position statement on strategic cross-boundary matters relevant to the preparation of the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan has been prepared (Appendix H). It sets out engagement undertaken to date with relevant prescribed duty to co-operate bodies and the current position on each relevant issue. The proposed approach to the Duty to Cooperate is consistent with the approach proposed for the Greater Cambridgeshire Local Plan (see separate report on this agenda). Duty to Cooperate engagement for North East Cambridge Area Action Plan will, in due course, be integrated where relevant within Duty to Cooperate engagement supporting the preparation of Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

#### Fen Road Access

- 5.19 The previous round of consultation served to highlight ongoing concerns about the Fen Road level crossing which 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. Responsibility for the Fen Road crossing lies with Network Rail and its closure is not directly connected to the redevelopment on the AAP area. Whilst some options for improving access to Fen Road might require land within the AAP area to be used, because the development proposed on the NEC site does not require vehicular access to Fen Road, securing a new vehicle access through the AAP area cannot be made a requirement of the AAP framework for development on the site.
- 5.20 Notwithstanding that responsibility for resolving the crossing issue rests with Network Rail, given the concerns expressed on this issue, officers within the Councils (in parallel with the work on the AAP), have been exploring options for resolving the Fen Road access. Some of these options include access via the North East Cambridge AAP area to deliver that solution. If Network Rail's preferred option requires land within the AAP area, the costs of and impacts upon the AAP will need to be reviewed. For this reason, whilst the current draft of the AAP does not propose a vehicular link (the AAP does include a proposal for a pedestrian/cycle bridge), officers will continue to explore with partners the resolution of the matter so that the outcome of that investigation can be captured in future stages of the process as appropriate.

Consideration by the Joint Local Planning Advisory Group and South Cambridgeshire Scrutiny and Overview Committee

- 5.21 The Joint Local Plan Advisory Group (JLPAG) on 2 June 2020 considered this report. JLPAG endorsed the recommendations of the report.
- 5.22 The South Cambridgeshire Scrutiny and Overview Committee (SOC) on 9 June 2020 also considered this report. SOC endorsed the recommendations of the report.

## **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 have approved 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.
- 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.
- 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 AAP for Pre-submission publication (Regulation 19). Following that decision 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 are covered in a separate report on this agenda 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 Cabinet members may decide to:

1. agree to approve the draft NEC AAP and supporting documents for public consultation;
2. agree to approve the draft NEC AAP and supporting documents for public consultation with amendments; or
3. 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 E. The EqIA will be published alongside publication of the draft NEC AAP for public consideration and comment. An Anti-Poverty and Inequality Topic Paper has also informed the Draft NEC AAP (see Appendix C). The two papers will be updated to reflect any further implications identified from the public consultation to inform the future decision-making process on the NEC AAP.

### **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 documents, including via the Sustainability Appraisal, which is attached as Appendix F
7. The vision for the site is for it to respond to the climate and biodiversity emergencies and lead the way in showing how we can reach net zero carbon. Policies within the AAP support this vision, with policies related to net zero carbon, climate change resilience, water efficiency, sustainable drainage, promoting sustainable modes of transport and the delivery of green infrastructure. Construction standards for new non-residential development are proposed alongside support for standards such as Passivhaus and the One Planet Living Framework.

### **Consultation responses**

8. 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. (Appendix D). Details on the proposed summer public consultation are provided in Appendix K.

## **Alignment with Council Priority Areas**

### **Growing local businesses and economies**

9. The AAP proposes a significant level of jobs growth that will support the wider area and will include a range of employment and types of businesses to meet a wide range of employment needs.

### **Housing that is truly affordable for everyone to live in**

10. The AAP proposes the provision of 40% affordable housing and a range of tenure types to help meet a housing needs including delivering housing that is affordable for people to live in.

### **Being green to our core**

11. The AAP strives towards a net zero carbon development within high levels of internalisation and one that plans positively to deliver net biodiversity gains on this largely brownfield site.

### **A modern and caring Council**

12. The AAP aims to deliver an inclusive development a wide range of homes, jobs, services and facilities to support a mixed and balanced community.

## **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>

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](mailto:ldf@scambs.gov.uk) or phone: 01954 713183.

Appendix A: Draft North East Cambridge Area Action Plan: Consultation Document (Regulation 18)

Appendix B: Proposed new Policies Map boundary for Draft North East Cambridge Area Action Plan

Appendix C: Topic Papers

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

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

Appendix F: Draft North East Cambridge Area Action Plan Sustainability Appraisal

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

Appendix H: Duty to Cooperate Position Statement

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

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

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

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