

## **Appendix A: Proposed joint response by South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council Councils to West Suffolk Local Plan (Regulation 18) Issues and Options**

The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service (GCSP), on behalf of Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council, thank West Suffolk Council for the opportunity to comment on the West Suffolk Local Plan (Regulation 18) Issues and Options. The Councils are already engaging with West Suffolk Council under the Duty to Cooperate in relation to Greater Cambridge Local Plan and North East Cambridge Areas Action Plan and look forward to ongoing engagement as both Greater Cambridge and West Suffolk plans progress.

The Councils note the three strategic issues outlined in the Issues and Options report: Climate Change; The right homes for our communities; and Economic growth and the provision of strategic infrastructure.

West Suffolk has a close relationship with Greater Cambridge, with a shared travel to work, housing market and economic area. Whilst West Suffolk may be a net importer of jobs, higher wages in Cambridge are a pull factor for West Suffolk residents commuting to jobs within Greater Cambridge. West Suffolk is within the top three districts providing workers for Greater Cambridge and where possible these trips should be encouraged by sustainable modes.

We note there are improvements to public transport, currently in the early stages of development, which should improve connectivity between Greater Cambridge and West Suffolk. The proposed Eastern section of East West Rail and in particular Cambridgeshire Autonomous Metro (CAM) which will serve Cambridge and the surrounding market towns including Haverhill and Mildenhall, will improve sub-regional connectivity.

In common with West Suffolk Council, Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council have both declared climate emergencies. As such, whilst the Councils have no preferred option for the distribution of future growth, they would suggest that the preferred strategy should be compatible with addressing the climate agenda. For example, evidence supporting the Greater Cambridge Local Plan identifies that a dispersed development strategy focused on village development is the least sustainable option in Greater Cambridge, given that transport is one of the greatest contributors to carbon emissions. The Councils suggest that development should be focused in sustainable locations which can reduce the need to travel, and where possible maximise opportunities for travel by non-car modes, particularly where locations may encourage commuting into Greater Cambridge. Further to this, recently published evidence supporting the Greater Cambridge Local Plan identified that, at least in a Greater Cambridge context, the smallest size of new settlement that could be considered to be sustainable is 4,500 homes. As such, we would encourage West Suffolk Council to consider infrastructure and service level thresholds when considering any new communities to minimise the travel and associated carbon impacts of such development.

While the focus should, rightly, be on sustainable modes of transport, the Councils suggest that there also needs to be consideration of the impacts of the plan on the Strategic Road network and the Major Road Network – including the A14, A11 and A1307 – which cross into Greater Cambridge from West Suffolk.

The Councils note that a range of additional evidence is being prepared to inform the draft Local Plan, including documents being prepared jointly with the GCSP, including an update to the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment and Housing Needs of Specific Groups Assessment. This reflects the number of strategic infrastructure requirements and shared cross-boundary issues between West Suffolk and Greater Cambridge. The Councils note that there are a number of sites in the West Suffolk Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) close to the boundary with Greater Cambridge. The Councils look forward to engaging with West Suffolk on an ongoing basis through our respective plan-making processes regarding strategic cross-boundary matters of shared interest, including if sites close to the Greater Cambridge/West Suffolk boundary were to be taken forward.