

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet
AUTHOR: Executive Director

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QUALITY OF LIFE STUDIES FOR THE CAMBRIDGE SUB REGION

Purpose

1. To inform Members about four Quality of Life Strategies/Studies for the Cambridge Sub Region and for Cabinet to endorse these documents as appropriate.

These are:

- i) Major Sports Facility Strategy
 - ii) Green Infrastructure Strategy
 - iii) Arts and Cultural Strategy
 - iv) Balanced and Mixed Communities: A Good Practice Guide
2. It is proposed that Strategies i-iii will also be incorporated into a planning obligations document, providing information and strategy to support the Development Plan Document.

Effect on Corporate Objectives

3. Quality, Accessible Services	The four documents have a key role to play in planning for and delivering successful new communities
Village Life	The successful provision of community, sports, arts and cultural facilities and appropriate levels of green infrastructure are vital to achieving a decent quality of life in the new developments
Sustainability	The four documents have a key role to play in delivery of sustainable new communities
Partnership	The four documents are the result of effective partnership working

Background

4. Cambridgeshire Horizons is a non-profit making company set up to help drive forward the development of new communities in the Cambridge Sub Region, in accordance with the approved Structure Plan.
5. Its job, working closely with the local authority partners, is not only to make growth happen, but to make it happen in a way that gives us the best urban environments, improved recreation opportunities, enhances the countryside, provides balanced communities with good schools, effective transport and utilities infrastructure, high quality community and cultural facilities and homes that people can afford to rent or buy.
6. The four Studies have been commissioned by Cambridgeshire Horizons as part of its Quality of Life Programme for the Cambridge Sub Region. Each Study has been completed by external consultants and managed and funded through a steering group involving a wide range of partners. South Cambridgeshire District Council has

been a key partner on each of the studies and this Council, along with Cambridge City Council, is the local authority area most affected by major growth in the Sub Region.

- 7 Due to the size of the main strategy documents (for i-iii), executive summaries have been produced which highlight the main findings and recommendation. These have been circulated with this report. The main strategy documents are much larger and include all background information and appendices. These are also available to members on request; please contact the appropriate officer listed at the end of this report.
- 8 A full copy of the Balanced and Mixed Communities report (iv) has also been circulated with this report.

Considerations

- 9 The purpose of the four documents is to help shape and guide growth across the Sub Region and to identify what will be needed to make the new communities sustainable and to ensure a good quality of life for all existing and new residents for the next 20 years and beyond.
- 10 Naturally the strategies cross a number of local authority boundaries and seek a balance between the views and priorities of different partners and stakeholders. The close involvement of SCDC Officers in the development of each of the strategies has helped ensure that the documents broadly fit with any existing Council policies and indeed enhance and strengthen them.

A Major Sports Facilities Strategy for the Cambridge Sub Region

- 11 Sports participation rates are high in South Cambs and good quality sports facilities are seen as essential to ensuring the health and well being of existing and new residents. It is not always possible to plan for the more major, strategic sports facilities on a district-by-district basis and it is anticipated that the growing demand for more specialist and larger scale sports facilities will become increasingly critical as the sub regional population grows. This pressure will be further intensified by the changing population profile and the significant increase in the number of young people/young adults and families living in the district. In addition it is anticipated there will be a further increase in demand, participation rates and opportunities arising from the 2012 Olympics.
- 12 Consultants PMP have completed a full audit of existing sports facilities in Cambridgeshire together with an analysis of current and future participation rates. Using a number of recognised standards, mapping exercises and sports planning tools they have identified the likely increase in demand anticipated through the significant population growth. A number of key strategic sports facilities have been identified as priorities for meeting the sporting needs of the Sub Region, up to 2026.
- 13 The Study has also included an assessment of what sports facilities will be required for each of the main growth areas, including Northstowe. Again, these recommendations are “evidence based” and relate to specific population projections but can be adjusted in response to any changes in these projections.
- 14 Sport England has been closely involved in the development of the Strategy and has identified it as good practice. This Strategy is due to be officially launched on Tuesday 25 July at The University Sports Ground at Wilberforce Road, Cambridge.

Green Infrastructure Strategy for the Cambridge Sub Region

- 15 The provision of appropriate levels of green infrastructure has been identified as a key priority for the successful implementation of the growth areas and to counteract major urban development. In recent years Cambridgeshire County Council carried out, through consultants, an audit of the Strategic Open Space. The Strategic Open Space Study stopped short of developing a Strategy for the future
- 16 Following on from, this a 'steering group' was formed to brief and commission consultants, The Landscape Partnership, in July 2005 to complete the Green Infrastructure Strategy. The group is chaired by Cambridgeshire Horizons and includes representatives from each of the local authorities along with English Nature, National Trust, The Forestry Commission, Countryside Agency and Cambridge Preservation Society, all of whom contributed to the funding package.
- 17 The objective of the Strategy is to provide a bold and imaginative 20 year plan for the provision of a strategic network of large scale green spaces involving green corridors and linkages to improved existing and new major sites. It identifies a list of creative initiatives and proposals along with the lead organisation for each project.
- 18 The vision for the Green Infrastructure Strategy is therefore, to contribute to the mitigation of the growth demands, by creating a comprehensive and sustainable network of green corridors and sites that :
 - (a) enhance the diversity of landscape character
 - (b) connect and enrich biodiversity habitats
 - (c) extend access and recreation opportunities.

The strategic objectives which underpin the Green Infrastructure Strategy are thus :

- (a) Provision of improved linkage between existing and proposed Green Infrastructure resources.
 - (b) Multi-functionality of greenspace in and around settlements.
 - (c) Enhanced access for all and by sustainable means to promote a healthier lifestyle.
 - (d) Enhancement appropriate to the distinctive patterns of the Cambridgeshire landscape.
 - (e) Biodiversity enhancement reflecting and protecting existing resources.
 - (f) Development of prominent landmark projects to provide a focus for the strategy.
- 19 Advisory Group on 12th July 2006 and its recommendations will be presented to the Cabinet meeting. The official launch was on 9th June 2006 by Sir David Trippier (Chairman of Cambridgeshire Horizons) and Jonathon Porrit (Chairman of the UK Sustainable Development Commission). In launching the strategy great emphasis was laid on the fundamental necessity of achieving the delivery of the long-term strategy as a key component of the growth agenda, rather than as an optional addition to housing development. The enhancement and provision of space to accommodate the movement of wildlife and community recreation is essential to ensure that the demands of development does not compromise existing quality of life or negate the attractiveness of the area for future communities.

Arts and Culture Strategy for the Cambridge Sub Region

- 20 The Arts and Culture Strategy has been identified by partners as essential to the effective delivery of the Sub Region. Culture and the Arts contribute significantly to our quality of life and help shape local communities. The Strategy not only builds on Cambridgeshire's well established and rich cultural history and facility provision but also aims to place culture and the arts firmly at the heart of the growth areas.
- 21 In 2005 Consultants David Powell Associates were commissioned by Cambridgeshire Horizons to complete this Strategy and the steering group involved representatives from each of the local authorities along with Arts Council East, Screen East and the Greater Cambridge Partnership.
- 22 The Strategy includes a review of current provision and strengths, including museums, libraries and archives many of which are based around Cambridge University. The important role of existing facilities in Cambridge City and also its relationship with South Cambs and other local authorities is also considered including an analysis of gaps and opportunities and priorities for the future. Particular attention is paid to the encouragement of creative businesses.
- 23 The Strategy aims to ensure that each major new development is properly equipped to meet the demands of the new communities in terms of culture and the arts and makes specific recommendations about provision for each of the growth areas including Cambridge East and Northstowe.
- 24 The official launch of the Strategy will be on Wednesday 19 July at the Fitzwilliam Museum by Graham Creelman, Chaiman of Living East.

Balanced and Mixed Communities: A Good Practice Guide

- 25 This report has been prepared to help guide the local authorities in providing for sustainable housing in new communities. The requirement from the Structure Plan to provide 47,500 new homes by 2016 provides many challenges for local authorities in the Sub Region if we are to ensure that the major growth areas identified are places where new communities can grow successfully and are sustainable throughout the build period and into the future.
- 26 Cambridgeshire Horizons commissioned consultants Three Dragons and Halcrow with a brief to identify and explore examples of mixed, balanced and socially inclusive communities elsewhere; this was in partnership with the local authorities. The aim was to produce a good practice guide which would help inform the delivery of a well integrated mix of decent homes of different types and tenures to support a range of household sizes, ages and incomes within sustainable new communities in the Sub Region.
- 27 Key lessons are identified in terms of housing mix, tenure mix and layout, management, mixed use facilities, design and access, green spaces and community and recreation facilities and relationships with existing communities.
- 28 SCDC Officers have been involved and consulted on the study as it has developed and it is seen as a useful guide, which highlights many important issues and lessons to learn. As The Balanced and Mixed Communities report is a guide rather than a Strategy for provision, some of the information below is less relevant and more

relating to the other three Strategy documents. It is however highly relevant to the success of Northstowe and the Cambridge Sub Region and of interest to the Council, so has been included within this report package.

Options

- 29 The Strategies are finished documents that are “owned” primarily by Cambridgeshire Horizons on behalf of the partners in the Sub Region. It is important that they are properly recognised by each of the local authorities as being vital to the successful and sustainable delivery of the growth areas. This will strengthen their status and help attract external funding to secure their delivery.
- 30 The three Strategies provide an important framework approach to the delivery of facilities for the Sub Region. It is acknowledged that each scheme that comes forward from the Strategies will be considered and dealt with on merit and a number of different delivery methods are envisaged.
- 31 A number of the local authorities in Cambridgeshire are in the process of presenting these documents to Elected Members for their approval.
- 32 Cabinet must consider the status it wishes to give these documents. The Major Sports Facilities Strategy and Green Infrastructure Strategy are currently referred to in the Local Development Framework documents and the proposal is to incorporate the three Strategies (i-iii) into a Planning Obligations Document later in 2006.
- 33 It is not expected that the Council will sign up to any financial commitment to the delivery of these strategies at this stage. It is important though that it commits through officer time and Planning Policy development, to work in partnership towards their achievement.

Financial Implications

- 34 The three Strategies all consider a wide range of options and opportunities for delivery and funding. In some cases, funds or suitable sites will be required to be provided from developers for more local facilities as a fundamental contribution in order to meet basic planning needs. However the value of the S 106 package for Northstowe is unlikely to meet all the demands identified and the strategies, therefore, have attempted to identify a balanced programme of prioritised initiatives for which funding from a variety of sources will need to be drawn over the life of the strategy.
- 35 Most significantly the three Strategies will strengthen the case for these identified facilities and increase the opportunity to attract external funding and wider partnership and stakeholder commitment. It is planned to identify key projects for bids as part of the next round of Growth Area Funds.
- 36 The Consultants have also met to consider how a new Cultural levy or roof tax might be applied to the developers of all new homes. Further work is required to make this deliverable.

Legal Implications

- 37 No legal implications at this stage.

Staffing Implications

- 38 Current SCDC staff involvement is expected to continue and may increase if funding bids are required.

Risk Management Implications

- 39 The main risk is to the successful delivery of the growth areas if these Strategies are not taken into consideration and delivered.

Consultations

- 40 Wider consultation with stakeholders has taken place with each of the studies.

Conclusions/Summary

- 41 The successful delivery of the three Strategies is essential to the quality of life of new and existing communities. The massive population growth expected over the next 20 years and beyond will bring with it much greater demands on the sports, arts, cultural and green infrastructure and facilities. These Strategies show that all partners take this seriously, are planning ahead and sign up to endeavouring to achieve their successful delivery. Likewise the delivery of the right balance, mix and quality of sustainable homes is fundamental to the success of the Sub Region.

Recommendations

- 42 It is recommended that Cabinet **endorses** the four reports.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: The Four documents and related papers and meeting notes.

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Contacts for each of the Studies are:

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