

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO:

Council (Extraordinary Meeting)

10 March 2009

AUTHOR/S:

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SITE SPECIFIC POLICIES DPD RESPONDING TO A HOUSING SHORTFALL

RESULTS OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND RECOMMENDATION ON SITES TO RECOMMEND TO INSPECTORS

Purpose

1. To consider the results of public consultation on draft preferred sites to address a housing shortfall of 2,200 dwellings identified by the Site Specific Policies DPD Examination Inspectors, and recommend to Cabinet the Council's final preferred sites to recommend to the Inspectors in order to avoid the plan being found 'unsound'.
2. This is a key decision in respect of an Executive function for the Cabinet because:
 - it is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates.
 - it is likely to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area of the District comprising two or more parishes:
 - (i) Sites proposed for addition to the Site Specific Policies DPD:
 - o Fulbourn
 - o Girton
 - o Impington
 - o Gt Shelford.
 - (ii) Sites considered but rejected:
 - o Barton
 - o Bourn
 - o Caldecote
 - o Caxton
 - o Fulbourn
 - o Grantchester
 - o Histon
 - o Impington
 - o Knapwell
 - o Sawston
 - o Gt Shelford
 - o Stapleford
- it is in conflict with a policy, plan or strategy approved by the Council or a committee of the Council.
- it raises new issues of policy,

- it increases financial commitments (revenue and / or capital) in future years above existing budgetary approvals.
- it requires a virement of funding in excess of the virement limits approved by the Council.
- it is of such significance to a locality, the Council or the services which it provides that the decision-taker is of the opinion that it should be treated as a key decision.

and it was first published in the August 2008 Forward Plan.

Executive Summary

3. Public consultation has been carried out on a small number of draft preferred new housing allocations and draft policies to be recommended to the Inspectors to make up the identified housing shortfall of 2,200 dwellings. The representations received have been considered. The housing land supply position has also been updated. The report recommends that the draft preferred sites and policies be confirmed with the minor amendments set out in the report and be proposed to the Examination Inspectors as the Council's preferred sites to make up the housing shortfall.

Background

4. South Cambridgeshire District Council submitted the Site Specific Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) to the Secretary of State in January 2006, alongside 5 other plans and in May 2008 submitted the North West Cambridge AAP which together sought to identify how the requirement to deliver 20,000 dwellings in the District between 1999 and 2016 could be achieved. The other 5 DPDs submitted in 2006 have now been adopted. The plan was subject to Examination by independent Inspectors in late 2007 / early 2008, who concluded that there was currently only sufficient provision for 17,800 dwellings. They requested that the Council put forward their preferred sites for making up this shortfall, having undertaken comparative assessment and sustainability appraisal of site options and further public consultation. This is an additional, non-statutory stage in the plan making process. Public consultation was undertaken between 31 October and 12 December 2008 on 7 draft preferred sites and proposed policies to inform the Council's final decision on its preferred sites.

Considerations

Updating housing land supply

5. In considering the draft preferred sites to address the housing shortfall identified by the Inspectors, the housing land supply position was updated to September 2008. The Inspectors' housing shortfall was based on the situation as at March 2007. They had also confirmed that they do not consider it appropriate for South Cambs to include an allowance for windfall development, despite the Council putting forward a case why this should be allowed. As such, every new permission for residential development provides additional housing supply. The effect of updating the land supply to

September 2008 was to reduce the housing shortfall from 2,200 dwellings to 1,470 dwellings.

6. The housing land supply has now been updated to February 2009. This identifies a further 350 dwellings that have received planning permission or a resolution to grant planning permission subject to completion of a section 106 agreement since the preferred sites were identified (see Appendix A).
7. Housing monitoring is normally carried out for the 12-month period to end March. It is therefore proposed that the Council provide the Inspectors with an update to end March 2009 to inform their Report. It is not anticipated that this will have a significant effect on housing provision having assessed the applications coming through the system at the present time, but will be provided for consistency with the normal approach to land supply assessments.
8. The housing shortfall has therefore reduced from 2,200 dwellings identified by the Inspectors as at March 2007 to 1,120 dwellings on the basis of the situation as at February 2009. This demonstrates that whilst windfall sites cannot be included in housing supply assessments as part of plan making, there will continue to be a supply of housing coming forward on windfall sites over the remainder of the plan period. This is the housing shortfall that needs to be addressed through new allocations.

Results of public consultation

9. 740 representations were received during the public consultation period to the 3 consultation documents (the main report, technical annex and sustainability appraisal). 611 of these were objections (83%), with 129 (17%) in support. The representations addressed a range of issues, which can be broadly summarised as:
 - there is no shortfall given the current economic climate and no new allocations should be made
 - the shortfall is now greater in the light of the current economic climate and further or alternative new allocations should be made
 - the methodology used is not sound – too much emphasis is given to large sites on the edge of Cambridge – alternative large sites at the villages should be chosen – Green Belt sites at Rural Centres should be considered – sites at villages further down the hierarchy should be considered
 - the preferred sites are not suitable or deliverable for a number of reasons including Green Belt, infrastructure constraints, technical difficulties, will not deliver sustainable communities
 - various of the rejected sites should be identified, with promoters seeking to justify why their site should be chosen over the preferred sites.
10. The representations have now been considered and a response to the issues raised in the representations is proposed in the schedules of responses

relating to the 3 consultation documents at Appendices B, C and D. There are a relatively small number of changes proposed in response to the representations which are largely clarification rather than a change in approach.

11. The key issues raised in representations to the 7 draft preferred sites and the proposed responses are summarised below, together with a recommendation. The numbers relate to the original numbers in the site assessments and used in the public consultation documents (they are therefore not sequential):

Sites 1 and 2 – Orchard Park (adjacent to the A14)

12. Gallagher supports the allocation of the sites. Unex objects arguing that the recent appeal decision means the site isn't viable and that the number of units proposed is too low. Local groups and individuals object to the loss of employment, quality of the residential environment in terms of noise and air quality, concerns about traffic and about adequate provision of services and facilities.
13. The recent appeal decision considered the range of detailed issues raised by respondents and concluded that the site was suitable for residential use in terms of air quality, noise, transport, car parking, open space provision, provision of services and facilities. It concluded that the loss of employment use would not harm the provision of a sustainable mixed use community in the light of levels of employment provision locally and in the district as a whole. The appeal was dismissed because adequate provision had not been made for affordable housing, and that best efforts had not been made to secure grant, and because renewable energy provision had not been made in the design of the scheme which meant that only an inadequate level of contributions could then be made.
14. This is consistent with the site assessment which informed the identification of the sites as preferred sites to be allocated to address the housing shortfall. A change to the wording of the supporting text is proposed to make clear that the number of dwellings will be determined through the planning application process and could be higher.
15. **It is recommended that the sites and proposed policy be confirmed as contributing to the housing shortfall.**

Site 3 – Orchard Park (SW corner site)

16. Gallagher supports the allocation of the site. Local groups and individuals object to the loss of non residential uses, quality of the residential environment in terms of noise and air quality, concerns about traffic and about adequate provision of services and facilities. Also raised is the need to protect archaeology and provide a high quality gateway into Cambridge.

17. Whilst this site does not have the benefit of the technical evidence available for sites 1 and 2, the findings of that evidence is helpful in supporting the proposal for residential use on this site. Detailed issues of noise, air quality and traffic impacts will clearly need to be considered for this site in the context of a detailed proposed but it is considered sufficiently likely that a satisfactory scheme can be achieved that it can be included to address the housing shortfall. In terms of traffic impact, there is greater certainty that the site can be accommodated once the A14 improvements are completed which the Highways Agency has advised is proposed to be in mid 2014, which will allow adequate time for this site to be developed by 2016 if traffic proved to be a constraints earlier. This site was proposed for development in the original masterplan, for mixed uses on the corner with a heritage resource centre adjacent to the east. The County Council has concluded that this is no longer its preferred location for the heritage centre. The Roman Camp to the north must be protected in any proposed development and the policy requires the "preservation or enhancement of the Arbury Camp site of archaeological interest".
18. The policy for Orchard Park proposed for inclusion in the DPD requires high standards of design and landscaping and the creation of gateway features. This will be particularly relevant in the case of this site which is an important site on the edge of the development and fronting Histon Road. Whilst the policy refers to gateway features, this point could be emphasised through additional wording in the proposed supporting text along with the need to respect the separation between Cambridge and Histon and Impington to the north of the A14.
19. **It is recommended that the site and proposed policy be confirmed as contributing to the housing shortfall, subject to the change proposed.**

Site 4 – North West Cambridge Area Action Plan

20. Objections are made to the level of delivery assumed to come forward in South Cambs by 2016. Objection is also raised to the principle and a number of details relating to the proposed development.
21. The NW Cambridge Area Action Plan is being prepared under a separate process and its relevance to the housing shortfall process is in terms of its housing contribution to count against the housing shortfall by 2016. Notwithstanding, the concerns raised by the respondents have been raised in representations to the NWCAAP by them or by others and are being considered by Inspectors through that separate examination process.
22. The Council has agreed the current position on the phasing and housing trajectory for the NWCAAP site with Cambridge University in an exchange of correspondence (February 2009, see Appendices E and F). The Council's consultation documents relied on the Submission NW Cambridge AAP housing trajectory which assumed that 550 dwellings would be completed in South Cambs by 2016 and assumed that there would be an early phase of development starting in the City and the site would be built out east to west.

The University's representations to the AAP examination advised that development would start a year later than the AAP assumed, the early phase in the City not having been pursued, and this meant that there would be 215 dwellings completed in South Cambs by 2016.

23. The Inspector advised at the NWCAAP examination hearing that his preliminary view was that a start in 2012/13 was a reasonable position but he questioned whether as many dwellings could be completed in the first year in the City. This would have knock on implications for delivery in South Cambs. To look at a potential worse case scenario, it would be reasonable to look at the implications of a further years slip in completions in South Cambs which would give 65 dwellings by 2016. The reduction may not be as much as this, but it provides a robust basis to continue work on the housing shortfall. The Council is keen to ensure the maximum delivery possible on this site in South Cambs at the top of the search sequence by 2016 and would wish to explore this further with the University before the AAP examination is concluded, but it is considered to be a reasonable potential worst case scenario.
24. However, this should be viewed in the context of on-going discussions with the University. The Inspectors have asked the Councils to carry out further work and public consultation on a larger site footprint option, which the Councils have agreed to undertake. Public consultation will take place between 9 March and 20 April. The University has indicated that if the larger site footprint were to be included in the adopted AAP, it may prefer a phasing plan where development starts around the local centre. This is due to the greater amount of development around the local centre which would affect the critical mass of development to support those facilities. The University has advised that a central start could deliver housing a year earlier in South Cambs and that it would anticipate that up to 800 dwellings would be completed in South Cambs by 2016 with this approach. Given the absence of community services and facilities in west Cambridge and the lessons learnt from the Orchard Park development, the Council supports the principle of a start around the proposed local centre, in view of the greater potential to create a sustainable community from the start.
25. It is understood that there are various factors influencing the University's decision on phasing of the development, including up front infrastructure costs. The University has also recently indicated that its position on a central start could also be dependent on the inclusion of a supermarket in the local centre. The University has advised that this would have the advantage of not requiring any market housing to deliver the first phase of development, which is particularly relevant in the current economic climate. The University has advised that it envisages a supermarket in the order of 2600-3250 sqm net. This range of is a significant size of superstore, comparable or potentially larger than the existing superstores in Cambridge, and the Council will clearly need to give proper consideration to this proposal with the City Council before being able to offer a view.

26. Therefore, at this time it is not possible to determine the housing trajectory for the AAP development with any certainty and therefore also the dwellings numbers that could be relied on to be delivered in South Cambs to 2016. Delivery could be anywhere in the range 65 – 800 dwellings. The final AAP figure for South Cambs is the figure that should be included in the housing shortfall calculations and the Inspectors will be able to take this into account as they complete their binding Reports on both examinations. The Council will therefore have to work on the worst-case scenario for the immediate matter of deciding its preferred sites to make up the housing shortfall, with the caveat that this could end up a higher number. Notwithstanding, the trajectory will need to be clearer for the final stages of the AAP examination. The Council will continue to work with the University and the City Council, as well as other partners to take forward this important issue with a view to assisting the University in coming to a firmer view that could be included in its representations to the forthcoming public consultation on the Inspectors' larger site option.
27. **It is therefore recommended that the housing shortfall calculations should assume a worst case scenario of 65 dwellings completed in South Cambs by 2016, but it is hoped that the final figure included in the adopted NWCAAP may well be higher.**

Site 6 – Land between Huntingdon Road and Histon Road (Council's revised site boundary)

28. The promoter of the site argues that a larger site with a greater capacity of approximately 1,350 dwellings (compared with the Council's assessment of 920 dwellings). Respondents object to the level of development assumed in the plan period to 2016 having regard to uncertainty over the timing of the A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton improvements. Objection is made in respect of impact on the Green Belt in terms of the setting of Cambridge and separation with necklace villages, the cumulative impact with the allocation in Cambridge City and Orchard Park, noise, air quality, transport, biodiversity, flooding, and the need to ensure integration with the City site to ensure quality scheme and also the need to provide green infrastructure adjoining the site.
29. The site assessments informing the draft preferred site concluded that the objector's site was too large and could not be supported. The Highways Agency has advised the Council in writing that it proposes to undertake the central and eastern sections of the improvement scheme in parallel and therefore the length between the Girton and Milton interchanges that is needed to serve this site will be completed and open in summer 2014. This provides sufficient time before the end of the plan period for 630 dwellings to be completed and to count towards the housing shortfall. This is a considerable improvement on the worst case scenario of 270 assumed at the time of consultation, although not as high as the best case scenario of 810 dwellings by 2016.

30. The respondents' concerns about impact on the Green Belt are understood and the Council had initially resisted the release of land in this location from the Green Belt. However, in the context of a housing shortfall to 2016 and the need to identify land to address that shortfall, the detailed site assessment process, which was informed by sustainability appraisal, concluded that this was one of the most sustainable and suitable locations to make a new housing allocation. A detailed technical hearing at the examination has already concluded that development can be accommodated in terms of transport, noise and air quality. The detailed policy proposed for the site would provide an appropriate framework for dealing with any application to ensure that it integrates effectively with the adjoining development in the City, respects its Green Belt location and provides countryside enhancements adjoining the development.
31. The conclusion on transport in relation to this site was on the basis that development in the north west quadrant of Cambridge as a whole does not generate more than 40% of trips to work by car drivers. This qualification should be added to the policy.
32. The proposal for this site also includes a secondary school to serve all new development in the north west quadrant, ie. including the adjoining allocated site in Cambridge City and the University site between Madingley Road and Huntingdon Road subject of a separate Area Action Plan. Additional text is proposed to make clear that the timing of provision of the school will need to relate to the levels of development coming forward across the quadrant as a whole and not triggered solely by development on this site. It is possible that the school may be triggered by development off site before this site comes forward.
33. **It is recommended that the site and proposed policy be confirmed as contributing to the housing shortfall, with capacity for 630 dwellings by 2016, subject to the changes referred to above and additional detailed word changed to the policy for clarification as set out in Appendix B.**

Site 10 – Powell's Garage, Woollards Lane, Great Shelford

34. The landowners propose the extension of the site to include the residential property and large curtilage to the east, and also the greengrocers shop on Woollards Lane. The garage use on the site object to the allocation. Other respondents object to the loss of employment, the identification of a site at the bottom of the search sequence, and on the grounds of traffic and impact on the conservation area. The retention of the existing building is requested including by English Heritage and the Cambridge Preservation Society.
35. The site is previously developed land within the village framework of a Rural Centre and therefore the principle of redevelopment is acceptable, subject to other policies. The landowners of this site have previously gained planning permission for this site for redevelopment for residential use and, whilst that has expired, they have sought the allocation of the site for residential through

the LDF process. Whilst the use does provide some employment in the village and adjoins the village centre, it is a non-conforming use adjoining residential development and redevelopment for residential use could have benefits for residential amenity, help improve the character and appearance of this important corner site in the Conservation Area, as well as provide additional custom for the local centre. The principle of residential use has already been established through previous planning permissions.

36. As it is no longer possible for the Council to include any allowance for windfall sites (unallocated sites that come forward for housing) every site that gains planning permission counts towards the Council's housing targets. The site has previously gained planning permission for residential use and the principle of loss of the residential use has already been established. The Council has not sought to identify and allocate potential windfall sites. However, where a site is known about, there is no reason why it should not be allocated if it is consistent with policy. The Powell Garage site is therefore proposed to be allocated to reflect the position that the site is suitable for housing and that it can reasonably be assumed that it will gain planning permission and contribute to housing provision in the district by 2016.
37. The larger site put forward by the landowners relates, in the main, to adjoining land that has previously formed part of an area that together with the garage site has had planning permission for residential development. However, the site now put forward also includes a shop unit fronting onto Woollards Lane. The shop unit forms part of Great Shelford local centre and must be retained in retail use. It should not be included in the residential allocation. Any proposals for redevelopment or replacement of the retail unit as part of the residential proposal would be better addressed through the planning application process and it would not be appropriate to establish that principle in policy terms through inclusion in the residential allocation.
38. The concerns raised about the loss of the former Old British School building built in 1845 are recognised and the building retains a number of original features and makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area despite the less sympathetic additions to the building. Those additions could be removed and it could be converted to residential use as part of any wider scheme on the site. The building is identified as a positive and focal building in the Great Shelford Conservation Area Appraisal (2007). It would be appropriate for the proposed policy allocating the site to be strengthened to make clear that the starting point for considering any application is that the Old British School building should be retained in any residential scheme. As a result the capacity of the larger site should now be calculated on the basis of the usual net residential density approach, rather than assuming an apartment scheme as previously. At 40 dwellings per hectare due to its accessibility to services and facilities and to public transport, this gives 18 dwellings (compared with 20 dwellings for the smaller site).
39. **It is recommended that the site and proposed policy be confirmed as contributing to the housing shortfall, subject to the changes referred to**

above as set out in Appendix B, in particular the extension to include the adjacent property to the east and revision of the capacity of the site to 18 dwellings.

Site 11 – Ida Darwin Hospital, Fulbourn

40. The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust supports the proposal for residential development on the site. It comments that it will facilitate the provision of a green area of public open space enhancing the separation of Cambridge from Fulbourn, together with the redevelopment of fit-for-purpose mental health facilities on the Fulbourn Hospital site. The Steiner School which is located on the Windmill School site seeks the exclusion of its premises from the policy area.
41. Other respondents object to the identification of the site for residential use on the basis of the development sequence, loss of health care/employment use, the impact on the Green Belt, impact on Fulbourn village (including cumulative impact with current development proposals), transport (including public transport), drainage, and the capacity of the site (including by 2016). Others support the principle subject to details such as countryside impact, open space, separation, archaeology.
42. This site is included as a preferred site to address the housing shortfall specifically because the redevelopment could come forward anyway consistent with the existing planning policy applying to the site as a Major Developed Site in the Green Belt. As such it could come forward as a windfall. However, as there is now no windfall allowance included in the housing land supply calculations, it is entirely reasonable for the Council to include sites where there is known intention to bring forward a proposal that is consistent with existing policy. It is therefore proposed for those reasons, not as an extension to Fulbourn village, although the proximity to local services and facilities helps the sustainability of the site. The proximity and accessibility to Cambridge is also relevant. The Trust proposes that the redevelopment of the Ida Darwin site would involve the relocation of some of the build footprint to the Fulbourn Hospital site and the redevelopment of the Ida Darwin site would involve returning an area in the western part of the site to open space, thereby enhancing the separation between the two areas and assisting Green Belt purposes. It is agreed to exclude the Steiner School site from the area subject to this policy.
43. The site assessment concluded that the site was acceptable in planning terms, subject to the detailed consideration that will come at the planning application stage.
44. **It is recommended that the site and proposed policy be confirmed as contributing to the housing shortfall, subject to the changes referred to above as set out in Appendix B.**

Rejected sites

45. Representations have also been received from the promoters of rejected sites arguing that their sites are preferable to those identified. The main sites where this is the case are land between Huntingdon Road and Histon Road (where the objectors promote their own preferred site over that proposed by the Council), land north of Fen Road, Milton, land between Teversham Road and Cow Lane at Fulbourn, and sites north and east of Cambourne (but not this time to land west of Cambourne which was also a site tested and rejected). The responses schedule at Appendix B sets out the proposed responses to those representations which do not accept the arguments made. A number of representations have been received for these sites supporting the Council in rejecting them. **It is recommended that the rejected sites remain rejected.**

46. Many of these are on land in the Green Belt at Rural Centres which the Council rejected in principle at the site assessment stage. The Structure Plan Policy P9/2c, carried forward into the East of England Plan Policy CSR3, provides the strategic context for a review of the Green Belt around Cambridge this is required by PPG2. It does not propose any change to the Green Belt at Rural Centres. Any such change would therefore only be justified by other exceptional circumstances. Paragraph D.14 of the Responding to a Housing Shortfall document states that "whilst on the edge of Cambridge, as a matter of principle, it might be possible for there to be such exceptional circumstances because it is at the top of the search sequence, Rural Centres are at the bottom of the search sequence and it is unlikely that there will be exceptional circumstances for releasing land from the Green Belt if there are other suitable sites at Rural Centres on land that is not in the Green Belt. The only possible circumstance where this could arise is if there was a need to look to one of the Rural Centres that is significantly less sustainable than the others, such that it would be appropriate to carry out an assessment of potential Green Belt sites around more sustainable Rural Centres. An assessment of Green Belt sites at Rural Centres would therefore only need to be carried out if suitable new allocations could not be found higher up the settlement hierarchy, which has not proven to be the case and no such assessment has been undertaken." **It is recommended that the approach taken in the site assessment process be confirmed.**

47. Other representations put forward sites in the rural area in categories of village below Rural Centres where development would either be outside the village framework or of a scale that would be inconsistent with the policy approach for those villages. There is no justification in the development sequence included in the Core Strategy for considering sites below Rural Centres, particularly where there are significant sites being considered at the Rural Centre level. Such sites have therefore not been considered as part of the housing shortfall process and should not be allocated for residential development. **It is recommended that the approach taken in the site assessment process be confirmed.**

Preferred sites and contribution to housing shortfall

48. The preferred sites consulted on, as amended above, are sufficient to meet the updated residual housing shortfall with a small surplus, as shown in Table 1 below (which is an updated version of the table included in the consultation documents). It assumes the worst case scenario for the NW Cambridge Area Action Plan housing trajectory for the purposes of the housing shortfall, and any improvement on the provision from that site in the final version of the AAP once the Inspectors have reported would increase the surplus.

Table 1 (updated): Addressing the Housing Shortfall

	AS PUBLISHED IN CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS (OCTOBER 2008)		CURRENT POSITION (FEBRUARY 2009)	
	<i>Dwellings</i>	<i>Shortfall to 2016</i>	<i>Dwellings</i>	<i>Shortfall to 2016</i>
Housing shortfall at March 2007		2,200		2,200
Updating housing land supply to September 2008	730	1,470	730	1,470
Further updating housing land supply to February 2009	-	-	350	1,120
Site 1: Parcel L2, Orchard Park, Cambridge Northern Fringe (West)	30	1,440	30	1,090
Site 2: Parcel Com. 4, Orchard Park, Cambridge Northern Fringe (West)	70	1,370	70	1,020
Site 3: Parcel Q and H.R.C.C., Orchard Park, Cambridge Northern Fringe (West)	120	1,250	120	900
Site 4: North West Cambridge Area Action Plan (worst case scenario)	550	700	65 [*1]	835
Site 6: Land between Huntingdon Road, Histon Road and the A14, North West Cambridge (Council's revised site boundary) [*2]	810 (best case) 270 (worst case)	-110 (430)	630	205
Site 10: Powell's Garage, Woollards Lane, Great Shelford	20	-130 (410)	18 [*3]	187
Site 11: The Ida Darwin Hospital, Fulbourn	215	-345 (195)	215	-28
SUPPLY COMPARED WITH HOUSING SHORTFALL		345 surplus (best case) 195 shortfall (worst case)		28 surplus

Options

49. The preferred sites were identified following a detailed comparative site assessment of all reasonable alternatives. The preferred sites fully address the housing shortfall, even on the basis of the worst-case scenario at the NW Cambridge AAP, there is therefore no need to look to any further sites to address the housing shortfall, and no further options need to be considered.

Implications

50. Once the Council has made a decision on its preferred sites having regard to the results of public consultation, the Inspectors will be advised of that decision. They will then hold further hearings, likely to be in the second half of May. The Inspectors will make the final decision on the sites to make up the housing shortfall. The robust evidence base provided by the Council provides a strong case for the allocation of these sites and no others, however the risk remains that the Inspectors may decide otherwise. However, this process should enable the Inspectors to recommend binding changes to make the plan sound and enable it to be adopted. The risk otherwise was leave the Council in a vulnerable position with a known inadequate supply of housing land and having to start the plan making process afresh. This would have been likely to result in a period of several years where speculative planning applications for housing development would have been received for unallocated land that may not be the most appropriate sites for development and potentially in unsustainable locations, but there could have been pressure to grant planning permission either by the Council or through planning appeals to meet the district's housing requirement, a situation known colloquially as "planning by appeal". That risk should now have been averted.
51. The Inspectors have committed to provide an early part report on the land between Huntingdon Road and Histon Road (the NIAB site) by the end of June, to provide certainty on future development in this sector and enable the City NIAB application to progress to a decision. The certainty over provision of a secondary school is a key issue for that decision. The Inspectors have advised that they intend to issue their final reports for both the Site Specific Policies DPD and the NW Cambridge AAP in July. This will enable the Council to progress to adoption of those plans.

Financial	There have already been financial implications in terms of advice on this additional non-statutory process and public consultation expenses. There will be further additional costs including legal representation at any further hearings as part of the SSPDPD Examination. Budgeted work on a number of DPDs and SPDs has been delayed.
Legal	This is an additional non-statutory stage in the plan making process which is not guided by regulation.

	Steps have been taken to assess that risk and mitigate as far as possible through the preparation of a robust evidence base.
Staffing	There has been a significant call on officer resources in the preparation of this work which will continue through the remainder of the plan making process. This has had, and will continue to have, implications for other planning policy work.
Risk Management	Risks as set out in the report.
Equal Opportunities	Ensuring that the Council is able to meet its housing target will ensure that there will be no shortage of housing and associated development which might disadvantage any existing or future residents within South Cambridgeshire.

Consultations

52. A period of 6 weeks public consultation was undertaken 31 October to 12 December 2008. All statutory and non statutory consultees that the Council normally consults in plan making as well as all those who have made representations on previous stages of the Site Specific Policies DPD were advised of the consultation. An article was also included in South Cambs Magazine which goes to every household in the district. An interactive website was provided to help those who wished to make representations do so easily and efficiently as well as the normal representation forms.

Effect on Corporate Objective and Service Priorities

Work in partnership to manage growth to benefit everyone in South Cambridgeshire now and in the future
The proposed preferred new housing allocations provide the most appropriate response to a housing shortfall which will manage growth in a sustainable way.
Deliver high quality services that represent best value and are accessible to all our community
Whilst not directly delivering services, the proposed new planning policies would provide an appropriate planning framework to secure appropriate high quality services through the new developments that would be accessible to new communities.
Enhance quality of life and build a sustainable South Cambridgeshire where everyone is proud to live and work
The proposed new housing allocations provide the most sustainable response to the need to provide new sites to make up a housing shortfall and the proposed policies will require high quality sustainable developments to be brought forward.

Conclusions/Summary

21. A small number of new housing allocations are proposed to make up the identified housing shortfall with proposed policies for inclusion in the Site Specific Policies DPD, taking account of the results of a thorough and consistent assessment of reasonable site options and public consultation on them.

Recommendations

22. Council is invited to recommend to Cabinet that:
1. The responses to representations included in Appendices B, C and D be agreed, including changes to the preferred sites and policies
 2. The updated housing land supply position results in a residual housing shortfall of 1,120 dwellings
 3. The capacity of the NW Cambridge Area Action Plan for the purposes of the housing shortfall be 65 dwellings but that discussions continue to explore the potential for provision to be up to 800 dwellings by 2016 in the district
 4. That the following preferred sites be recommended to be allocated in the Site Specific Policies DPD examination Inspectors (subject to the changes set out in Appendix B and summarised in this report):
 - i. 3 sites at Orchard Park, Cambridge
 - ii. Land between Huntingdon Road and Histon Road (Council's revised boundary)
 - iii. Powell's Garage, Woollards Lane, Great Shelford
 - iv. Ida Darwin Hospital, Fulbourn

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Background Papers:

Site Specific Policies DPD Submission Draft (January 2006)
 Core Strategy DPD (January 2007)
 North West Cambridge AAP (May 2008)
 Final Sustainability Report of the Site Specific Policies DPD
 South Cambridgeshire Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

Responding to a Housing Shortfall (October 2008)
 Responding to a Housing Shortfall – Technical Annex (October 2008)
 Sustainability Appraisal of the South Cambridgeshire Site Specific Policies DPD – Supplementary Report (September 2008)

Representations received to the public consultation on the above documents

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