

**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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**REPORT TO:** Council 23 September 2004  
**AUTHOR/S:** Development Services Director

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**Local Development Framework**

**Local Development Framework Preferred Options Reports - Revisions**

**Purpose**

1. To consider the decision of Scrutiny and Overview Committee of 16th September regarding the call-in of the decision relating to the Northstowe Preferred Options report made by Cabinet at its meeting of 9th September. There are two possible scenarios for Council depending on that decision:
  - a. if Scrutiny and Overview Committee recommends any changes to the Northstowe Preferred Options report, Council is asked to decide the final wording of the report so that it can be subject to public participation alongside the other Local Development Framework Preferred Options reports, as previously agreed by Council, starting on 1 October.
  - b. if Scrutiny and Overview Committee recommends that no changes be made to the Northstowe Preferred Options report, no further action is required by Council.
  
2. If the decision of the Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder relating to the Cambourne Technical Appendix to the Rural Centres Preferred Options report is called in and considered by the Scrutiny and Overview Committee on 16th September (the deadline for call-in is after this agenda went to print), there are also two scenarios for Council:
  - a. if Scrutiny and Overview Committee recommends any changes to the Cambourne Technical Appendix to the Rural Centres Preferred Options report, Council is asked to decide the final wording of the report so that it can be subject to public participation alongside the other Local Development Framework Preferred Options reports, as previously agreed by Council, starting on 1st October.
  - b. if Scrutiny and Overview Committee recommends that no changes be made to the Cambourne Technical Appendix to the Rural Centres Preferred Options report, no further action is required by Council.

**Effect on Corporate Objectives**

3. Quality, Accessible Services	As a new town, there will be a major opportunity at Northstowe to incorporate the infrastructure for broadband and other information technologies into the development.
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Village Life	<p>The development of Northstowe provides the opportunity secure:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the Council's targets for the delivery of affordable homes</li> <li>2. to develop layouts which mitigate against criminal activity</li> <li>3. promote healthy lifestyles by being pedestrian and cycle friendly, and provide access to the surrounding countryside; and</li> <li>4. which include a range of public and private services and facilities.</li> <li>5. Ensure that the majority of South Cambridgeshire's villages are not called upon to accommodate the high levels of housing growth proposed for the Cambridge Sub-Region.</li> </ol>
Sustainability	<p>Northstowe will be developed as an example of high quality sustainable development. To ensure that this objective is achieved, the plans have and will be subjected to Strategic Environmental Assessment/ Sustainability Appraisal (SEA/SA).</p>
Partnership	<p>Planning and delivering a new town of between 8,000 and 10,000 dwellings will require the Council to work in partnership with a whole host of services and infrastructure providers as well as local authorities and government agencies. The scale of development including that at Northstowe has already resulted in the establishment of the Infrastructure Partnership – recently renamed Cambridgeshire Horizons.</p>

## Background

4. Council on 22nd July agreed Preferred Options reports for all the Local Development Framework documents currently in preparation, subject to changes to the Northstowe Preferred Options report to accord with the following decisions:
  - i. That no decision be made on the site selection for Northstowe until the green separation for Longstanton and Oakington has been decided.
  - ii. That all references to “double counting” in the land use budget and possible uses of the green separation in the Northstowe Preferred Options Report be deleted
  - iii. That Council present the three site location options for Northstowe as equal options A, B and C, in order that that the public may be consulted in a fair and unbiased way.
5. Council also agreed that a Technical Appendix be prepared to the Rural Centres paper relating to the way that an additional 700 dwellings could be accommodated at Cambourne.
6. The work required to the Northstowe Preferred Options report by those decisions was considered by the Northstowe Member Steering Group at its meeting of 6th September to which all Members of Cabinet who are not already members of the Steering Group were invited. A site visit to assist the meeting was also held. The Member Steering Group recommended to Cabinet that the officers' recommendations be agreed, subject to certain changes. (Members may find it helpful to bring with them their copies of the Member Steering Group agenda papers. If you do not have a copy already,

please contact Democratic Services. The Steering Group's recommendations were sent to all Members on the 8th September for Cabinet on the 9th.)

7. Council delegated to the Planning Portfolio Holder the power to decide whether the amendments required by Council have been made. The Planning Portfolio Holder requested that Cabinet assist in making this decision having regard to the recommendations of the 6th September meeting of the Northstowe Member Steering Group.
8. Cabinet considered this issue at its meeting of 9th September and resolved to agree the Preferred Options report, as amended by the Member Steering Group. Cabinet decisions were sent to all Members on the 10th September and the full (draft) minutes are attached to the Council agenda.
9. The decision of Cabinet was called-in by the Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee and will be considered as an emergency item at the meeting of 16th September. The Committee's decision and any recommendations will be reported to this meeting of Council.
10. With regard to the preparation of a Cambourne Technical Appendix to the Rural Centres Preferred Options report agreed in principle by Council, this was agreed by the Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder following consultation with local Members. The appendix makes no changes of substance to the reports already agreed by Council, but amplifies the implications. The call-in for that Portfolio decision expires after the Council papers go to print and it is therefore included in this report to allow for the event that it is called in and any changes are recommended by Scrutiny and Overview Committee who, it is understood, will consider any call in as an emergency item at its meeting of 16th September.
11. The timetable for preparing the Local Development Framework in order that it can be adopted during 2006 and meet the government's objective for the first houses at Northstowe to be ready for occupation during 2007 means that the Council will need to maintain momentum in preparing the plan and consulting with the community. Council's decision on 22nd July has introduced an additional round of drafting before public participation can begin and has caused a review of the Council's working arrangements in order to ensure that the whole Council can be more involved in plan-making before agreeing the Local Development Framework documents.
12. The timetable for preparing the Local Development Framework (LDF) is now as follows:

LDF STAGES	TIMETABLE	NOTES
Public Participation	1 <sup>st</sup> October to 12 <sup>th</sup> November 2004	Exhibitions and general publicity for 6 weeks
Agree outline of the LDF	Mid January to end February 2005	4 joint meetings of the Planning Policy Advisory Group & Development and Conservation Control Committee
Agree policies and proposals of the LDF	End February to mid April 2005	4 Special Meetings of Council
Submit LDF to the Secretary of State	Mid June 2005	6 week period for making representations

LDF STAGES	TIMETABLE	NOTES
Public objection sites for public comment	October and November 2005	6 weeks
Public Examination	January to March 2006	Duration determined by number of objections and format of inquiry
Receive binding Inspector's Report	October 2006	Approximately 6 months after close of Examination
Council adopts LDF	November 2006	

### Options

13. Following the resolution of Council of 22nd July, a considerable amount of work has been done on the issue of green separation between Northstowe and the villages of Longstanton and Oakington. This has been agreed, with a small number of changes, by both the Northstowe Member Steering Group and Cabinet. Work has also taken place on a Technical paper to the Rural Centres report, which has been agreed by the Portfolio Holder. The findings of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee will also be before Council.
14. It is crucial to regain momentum in the preparation of the Local Development Framework in order for the Council to be able to demonstrate that an LDF can reach the point where an outline planning application could be determined which would allow development at Northstowe to start in 2006 as required by the Structure Plan. If the Council fails to achieve this, there is every possibility that the way in which Northstowe is developed will be determined either by plan-making powers being passed from the Council to another body or through the development control appeal process. The Council has already received a letter from GO-East expressing concerns that the delay in the timetable resultant from the July meeting of Council "could have a significantly adverse effect on meeting the 2006 start date" and drawing attention to the provision of £20M of Growth Area Delivery Grant and other monies from Government which has been given to assist the delivery and early implementation of the development strategy. I am advised that these concerns from GO-East have been brought to the attention of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. It is understood that Lord Rooker has asked to be updated on the position.
15. It is important that a decision on the Northstowe and Rural Centres Preferred Options reports is made by Council at this meeting. Not only could there be significant implications for the future operation of the Council if the timetable were to slip further, but the public participation exercise would be complicated by Northstowe and Rural Centres being on a different timetable to all the other Preferred Options reports which would cause significant confusion to the general public. Delivery of the LDF is also important for a number of the Council's corporate objectives.

### Financial Implications

21. The Directorate of Development Services budget includes provision for public participation on Preferred Options.

### **Legal Implications**

22. The Government Office for the Eastern of England has been closely consulted on the preparation of the Local Development Framework prior to commencement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

### **Staffing Implications**

23. Continued involvement of the Planning Policy Team and officers from a number of the Council's departments who will have a role in the implementation of development.

### **Risk Management Implications**

24. The programme for the preparation and adoption of the LDF is very challenging but the timely delivery of the Local Development Framework is crucial to the delivery of a number of the Council's Corporate Objectives. If a decision is not made at Council there would be unfortunate consequential problems with the forthcoming public participation.

### **Consultations**

25. Responses to the Statutory Bodies Consultation are set out in each of the Preferred Options Reports. The main purpose of publication of the Preferred Options Paper is to enable consultation with the public and stakeholders before Council agrees the content of the plan for submission to the Secretary of State in June 2005.

### **Recommendations**

26. For the avoidance of doubt, Council is not being asked to agree the content of the Northstowe Area Action Plan or the Rural Centres Development Plan Document at this stage. Those documents will be drafted with the benefit of the results of the public participation to be carried out in October/November. The Development Plan Documents will subsequently be considered by Members during January and February 2005 and will be the subject of recommendations to Council meetings from the end of February to mid April.
27. It is **RECOMMENDED** that,
  - a. if Scrutiny and Overview Committee recommends that changes be made to the Northstowe Preferred Options report, Council **DECIDES** the final form of the report for public participation, also having regard to the decision of Cabinet on 9th September.
  - b. if Scrutiny and Overview Committee recommends that changes be made to the Cambourne Technical Appendix to the Rural Centres Preferred Options report, Council **DECIDES** the final form of the report for public participation.
  - c. If Scrutiny and Overview Committee recommends that no change be made to either of the Preferred Options report, that decision is **NOTED**.

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- Regional Planning Guidance 6
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan (2003)
- Local Transport Plan (2004-11)
- Cambridgeshire Strategic Open Space Study Initial Report 2004
- South Cambridgeshire Housing Needs Study 2002
- Cambridge Area Key Worker and Affordable Housing Study 2002
- Cambridge Sub-Region Housing Needs Survey 2003
- Draft Regional Planning Guidance 14 for the East of England
- A number of other publications including Government PPGs.

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