

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Northstowe and New Communities Portfolio Holder 20 September 2011  
**AUTHOR/S:** Executive Director (Operational Services) / Corporate Manager (Planning and New Communities)

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### **CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH MINERAL AND WASTE SITE SPECIFIC PROPOSALS DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT - ALLOCATION FOR A HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING CENTRE TO THE SOUTH OF ADDENBROOKE'S ACCESS ROAD**

#### **Purpose**

- 1 The purpose of this report is to respond to a request received from the Inspector of the examination into the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Site Specific Proposals Plan (SSPP). He has indicated to Cambridgeshire County and Peterborough City Councils that he is minded to delete the allocation for Site W1X from the SSPP. This site allocation is for a Household Recycling Centre (HRC) to the South of the Addenbrooke's Access Road. The plan making authorities have responded to this and the opportunity is now being given to all those respondents to the Plan who made representations with respect to this allocation, including the District Council.
- 2 This is a key decision because if this site is not allocated in the SSPP an alternative site will need to be found and this is highly likely to be within the South Cambridgeshire District and would therefore impact on wards to the south of Cambridge City – possibly Hauxton, Harston, Gt Shelford, Lt Shelford and Stapleford or wards further afield such as Whittlesford, Newton, Fowlmere, Foxton, Barrington and Haslingfield. It has not been published in the forward Plan because it is a recent request received on 4 August 2011.

#### **Recommendations**

- 3 That the Northstowe and New Communities Portfolio Holder:
  1. Agrees to reaffirm this Council's support for the site allocation for a HRC to the South of the Addenbrooke's Access Road to remain in the Site Specific Proposals Plan and to support the comments made by Cambridgeshire County and Peterborough City Councils on this matter.
  2. Asks that the Inspector does not include within his report a request for South Cambridgeshire District Council during the forthcoming review of its Local Development Framework to have to consider removing land from the Green Belt specifically for a HRC to serve the south of Cambridge.

#### **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 4 South Cambridgeshire District Council recognises that many alternative options were considered by Cambridgeshire County and Peterborough City Councils in finding a suitable site for an HRC to serve the area to the south of Cambridge and that the proposed site south the Addenbrooke's Access Road is the best and most sustainable option.

## Executive Summary

- 5 The Inspector of the examination into the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough SSPP is considering deleting the allocation for an HRC on land to the south of the Addenbrookes Access Rd. Many alternative sites had been considered at earlier stages in the preparation of the SSPP. The Inspector has stated his reasons as site contrary to Green Belt policy and Cambridge Local Plan; will affect setting of city; will impact purpose of proposed Waste Consultation Area and he questions deliverability of site. Since development in area has slowed need for HRC could wait for early review of SSPP.
- Cambridgeshire County and Peterborough City Councils have responded – reaffirming need for HRC; site consistent with Green Belt and Local Plan; new facility so will be designed to mitigate impact on surrounding area; development in this area has not slowed therefore allocating site for HRC could not wait for partial review of SSPP; site is deliverable.
- South Cambs response to this is – site is close to where community lives who will use recycling centre – sustainable; new facility so can be designed with buffers to reduce impact on surroundings; development on southern fringe of city is progressing at fast rate and HRC is needed – cannot wait for partial review of SSPP; any site proposed for HRC will generate objections but need to weigh against need for facility; most sustainable location.
- Inspector has mentioned Hauxton as alternative area of search for HRC – already considered and rejected. Has same problems as site Inspector is considering deleting – site would be in Green Belt; close to both existing community in Hauxton and new residents once Bayer CropScience site is developed; impact on surrounding area. Has been suggested that when South Cambs reviews its LDF that site be taken out of Green Belt for HRC. Object to this – existing site allocation should be retained in SSPP. If site is deleted will not be easy to find alternative suitable site in partial review.

## Background

- 6 Cambridgeshire County and Peterborough City Councils have been preparing their Minerals and Waste Development Plan (MWDP) for some 5 years and at each stage of public consultation South Cambridgeshire District Council has taken the opportunity to make representations on the draft proposals. The Minerals and Waste Core Strategy DPD has now been adopted and contains within it Policy CS16 for Household Recycling Centres. This policy states that '*A network of household recycling facilities easily accessible to local communities will be developed through the Site Specific Proposals Plan...*' There are a number of broad locations listed in the policy for new HRCs and one is to serve Cambridge South.
- 7 In the earlier stages of the MWDP there have been a number of different sites considered for an HRC to serve the area to the South of the City. Cambridgeshire County and Peterborough City Councils have carried out extensive testing and assessment of land to find a site that is suitable. It must be one that is deliverable and able to serve the residents to the south of Cambridge in a sustainable way so that it is located near to where there is the highest demands from residents and that people do not have to travel long distances to dispose of their waste. It was in the Preferred Options 2 of the MWDP that the current site was indicated as the preferred site. South Cambs responded to the Preferred Options 2 consultation in 2008 and the Cabinet on 25 September 2008 recommended support for this site for an HRC. In

that Cabinet report there is a list of the alternative sites<sup>1</sup> that had been considered by Cambridgeshire County and Peterborough City Councils. –

| Site Name  |
|--|
| Bayer Crop Site East, Hauxton                                      |
| Cambridge Southern Fringe  |
| Glebe Farm, Trumpington  |
| Thriplow HWRC  |
| Area of Search near M11  |
| Bayer Crop Science Site, Hauxton                                   |
| Bayer Crop Science Site West, Hauxton                              |
| Park and Ride Site at Trumpington                                  |
| Magistrates Court at the Park and Ride, Trumpington                |
| M11 Area of Search, South of Addenbrookes Access Road              |
| Extension of existing Thriplow HWRC site                           |
| Adjacent land at Pet Crematorium Site off A505 near Thriplow       |
| A1307 Corridor (Babraham) – Search Area 1                          |
| A1307 Corridor (Babraham) – Search Area 2                          |
| A1307 Corridor (Babraham) – Search Area 3                          |
| Sawston/Shelford area as part of Babraham Area of Search.          |
| Glebe Farm Area of Search, Trumpington                             |
| Trumpington Road, Trumpington                                      |
| M11 Area of Search – Clay farm                                     |
| M11 Area of Search – East of A10                                   |
| M11 Area of Search – Monsanto Site                                 |
| M11 Area of Search – North of Addenbrookes Access Road             |
| M11 Area of Search – South of Monsanto site                        |
| M11 Area of Search – West of A10                                   |
| Land North of Sawston Village College                              |
| Glebe Farm Area of Search 2, Trumpington                           |
| Glebe Farm 3   |
| West of M11/A10 junction, Haslingfield + The Eversden/ Trumpington |

- 8 The Pre-Submission version of the SSPP included the site allocation for an HRC to the South of Addenbrooke's Access Road (Site W1X). Public consultation was carried out on this plan in February/March 2010
- 9 A Statement of Consultation was produced setting out all the representations received during the Pre-Submission consultation on the SSPP. This has been published on the County Council's website and can be found at the following link – <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/NR/ronlyres/B9BB4A86-DAD6-48DF-BC03-1209FFE297F2/0/C11Reg301eSSPPMainIssuesReportaa.pdf>  
This document shows that a number of representations were received relating to Site W1X – some in support and others objecting. (See pages 33-34 of the document for references to Site W1X).
- 10 During the Pre-Submission consultation on the SSPP South Cambridgeshire submitted representations supporting this site allocation. This representation is contained in Appendix A.

<sup>1</sup> In a further Preferred Options 2 New Sites consultation in January 2009 an additional site for the HRC was proposed in Hauxton

## The Current Situation

- 11 An examination has taken place into the SSPP and following the examination hearing about the allocation of Site W1X the Inspector wrote to Cambridgeshire County and Peterborough City Councils indicating that he was (provisionally) minded to recommend deletion of the allocation. The Councils responded to this note. These notes are included in Appendix B of this report.
- 12 Before the Inspector completes his report into the Examination of the SSPP he has invited comments on these two documents from respondents to the Plan who made representations with respect to this allocation. He will take into account these responses. Since South Cambs was one of these respondents, it is able to make further comments to the Inspector. It should be noted that any comments made will have to be limited to matters raised in the Council's original representation.
- 13 The Inspector's note - This highlights his concerns and he gives the following reasons for the allocation being potentially unsound
- Lack of consistency with national policy with respect to the Green Belt and PPS5 (setting of Cambridge as a heritage asset)
  - Lack of conformity with the objectives of the Cambridge Local Plan
  - Lack of consistency with the purposes of identifying Waste Consultation Areas in the Core Strategy
  - Doubts over the robustness of the assessment of the site with respect to the effect on the setting of the city and
  - Doubts over the deliverability of the facility and thereby the effectiveness of the allocation.
- 14 He suggests that since he heard evidence, the need for the facility is now not pressing because housing development locally has slowed down due to the recession, and the allocation can be removed from the SSPP.
- 15 The Inspector mentions representations that he received at the Hearings concerning Hauxton as being an alternative site for an HRC or at least an area of search but recognises that this too suffers from a number of drawbacks.
- 16 Finally, the Inspector concludes that a more measured approach would be for the County and Peterborough Councils to promote a new site within the context of a partial review of the SSPP in due course.
- 17 The Councils Response – Cambridgeshire County and Peterborough City Councils have made a detailed and robust response to the Inspector's comments. They have set out their response as follows –
- They have reaffirmed the need for a new HRC to serve the existing and future residents living in the area to the south of Cambridge.
  - They show how the proposals are consistent with national policy and that the impact on the Green Belt and historic setting of the City has been taken into account when assessing the allocation.
  - The Inspector expressed concerns about the proximity of future residents in the Glebe Farm development. The Councils pointed out that the new HRC would be designed to a high standard using the adopted Location and Design of Waste Management Facilities Supplementary Planning Document. The County Council

has recent experience of developing HRC near to residential areas and mitigation measures would be put in place.

- That contrary to the national situation, development of the Cambridge southern fringe has not slowed down and therefore there will be a need for the HRC in the medium term. A partial review of the SSPP would not be the favoured approach. An exhaustive search for potential sites has been carried out over a 5-year period and there is no evidence to suggest that new sites would be identified in a review process.
- The Inspector questioned the deliverability of the site given that many will object to the future planning application for the HRC. The Councils argued that any proposal for an HRC will generate much local comment but that it is not the volume of objections but their planning merits which must be balanced with the needs for the facility.
- The Councils recognise that this is a sensitive site but that it does have advantages – a sustainable location near where the waste will be generated; will be part of a newly developed area so can be designed into this new environment; is owned by the County Council; additional land is available for landscaping next to the site; it has easy access; and it is close to Trumpington Park and Ride so will help encourage linked trips and increase recycling.

18 The Councils do not wish to withdraw the site allocation from the SSPP. But if the Inspector does remove the site from the plan in order to ensure the soundness of the SSPP the Councils have confirmed that they would still wish to proceed to adopt the DPD.

19 If a review has to be carried out on the SSPP to find an alternative site Cambridgeshire County and Peterborough City Councils have asked that the Inspector's Report could assist the search by requesting that the current reviews of the Cambridge City Local Plan and the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework must consider removing land from the Green Belt for this specific waste management purpose.

### **South Cambridgeshire District Council's Response**

20 South Cambs supports the views of Cambridgeshire County and Peterborough City Councils that the proposed allocation of land to the south of the Addenbrookes Access Road is a suitable site for an HRC. South Cambs supports the site allocation for the following reasons -

- This site has the advantage of being close to the urban community where much of the need arises and residents will not have to travel far to reach the facility. Recycling waste is an important part of our communities leading more sustainable lifestyles. The housing developments on the southern fringe and at other locations on the edge of Cambridge were made on former green belt land because they are the most sustainable locations for development. The site south of the Addenbrookes Access Road is the next most sustainable location for a household waste recycling facility.
- Since the proposed site will be part of a new development it can be designed to minimize the impact on its neighbours. The Environmental Health officers at South Cambs previously commented that noise and possible odours could be generated from an HRC and that there would need to be buffer zones to reduce the impact. In its evidence the County Council has demonstrated that with careful consideration of the layout of the site operations and incorporating specific mitigation measures the new development could be designed to minimize the

impact and to protect the health and well being of residents in the surrounding area.

- South Cambs can confirm that development on the southern fringe of Cambridge is progressing at a faster rate than any of the urban expansions on the edge of Cambridge. Reserved matters for the planning permissions for phase 1 of the development of this area have been approved. Further planning permissions for housing have been approved in August 2011. Although the first houses are not expected to be completed in South Cambridgeshire until 2014-15, within the City boundaries the first completions are expected as early as 2011-12. Planning permission for a primary school was given in July 2011. This is not an area of slow growth.
- If there were delays in providing an HRC because a partial review of the SSPP had to take place then this would not be good planning. An alternative site will not easily be found and is likely to have similar difficulties in delivery. The nearest sites at Milton and Thriplow are relatively distant from the southern fringe and any benefits in waste recycling will almost certainly be undone in congestion, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and avoidable use of petrol. The Milton Household Waste Recycling facility is located in the Cambridge Green Belt.
- South Cambs agrees that any site put forward for a new HRC is likely to generate objections but this must be weighed against the need for a new facility in a sustainable location.
- The setting of Cambridge to which the Inspector attaches weight extends over the whole of the Green Belt whose extent was determined with the very purpose of protecting the setting of Cambridge. The Green Belt designation was itself subject to Inspector scrutiny at a Local Plan Inquiry and only includes land, which performs a green belt purpose. If land, which is currently in the Green Belt, is to be developed for a household waste recycling facility it is preferable that it is the most sustainable land for this purpose that is used. Cambridgeshire County and Peterborough City Councils' assessment has shown that the current proposed site is a very sustainable location for this development.

21 The Inspector had suggested that Hauxton be considered as an area of search but this village is some way from the edge of Cambridge and would result in increase travel for people wishing to use the facility. A number of sites have been considered in this area and all have been rejected.

22 The Cambridge Green Belt extends to the area surrounding the village of Hauxton and therefore any proposed site would have the same problems of being an inappropriate use in the Green Belt likely to harm the setting of Cambridge as the Inspector has concluded for the existing allocation.

23 If a site were to be considered near the village or the new development that will take place on the Bayer CropScience site then again it is likely that the Waste Consultation Area would include existing and new residents within it and consequently would not be acceptable to the Inspector if he is to be consistent in his views on reducing the impact of an HRC on adjoining residential areas.

24 South Cambs objected to one extensive site in Hauxton proposed in the Preferred Option 2 new sites consultation in 2009 because it was in a sensitive ecological area. It was located between two County Wildlife sites – River Cam and River Rhee. Otters are known to use both watercourses. Land to east of the River Cam is subject of a

river restoration scheme and adjacent land has been set up as a community riverside park. Amenity impact would be significant if a HRC was to be located here.

- 25 An area of search was considered in the Preferred Options 2006 on the Bayer CropScience site but was rejected by the County Council since the land was already allocated for housing in the South Cambs Local Development Framework. This site now has planning permission and remedial works are being carried out to remove contamination as a result of the previous industrial user. This site would not be suitable and is not available for use as an HRC.
- 26 The Councils in their response to the Inspector's note have suggested if he does remove the existing site allocation that he include in his report the request that during the reviews of the Cambridge City Local Plan and South Cambridgeshire District Council Local Development Framework that these councils must consider removing land from the Green Belt for this specific waste management purpose. Whilst recognising that this would remove the difficulties the Inspector had expressed about an HRC being located in the Cambridge Green Belt any land removed from the Green Belt within the South Cambridgeshire is likely to be within open countryside and therefore would have all the problems highlighted by the Inspector for the existing allocation. An HRC in the flat open countryside characteristic of the land to the south of Cambridge City would result in a highly visible facility, which would be out of place in this rural environment. If it is proposed that the Green Belt is removed for a site adjacent to a village this is highly likely to impact on the local community and result in many objections to the proposal.
- 27 South Cambs considers that the existing allocation should be retained in the SSPP. If the Inspector decides to remove it and this results in an early partial review of the SSPP it is not likely to be an easy task to find a suitable alternative site. With careful planning and design the site to the South of the Addenbrookes Access Road is the most sustainable and best option.

### Implications

|    |                                      |  |
|----|--------------------------------------|--|
| 28 | Financial                            | Nil  |
|    | Legal                                | Nil  |
|    | Staffing                             | If the site is removed from the Plan and an early review has to be carried out on the SSPP this will result in increased demands on staff time.  |
|    | Risk Management                      | Nil  |
|    | Equality and Diversity               | Having an HRC located in an unsustainable location could make it more difficult for the less able to access the facility.  |
|    | Equality Impact Assessment completed | An EIA would have been carried out on the Pre-Submission Minerals and Waste Development Plan, which would have included this site.   |
|    | Climate Change                       | Providing an accessible HRC in the proposed site allocation will be a sustainable option. If alternatives had to be assessed it is likely that this would result in increased travelling for the people wishing to use the facility. |

### Consultations

- 29 At earlier stages in the preparation of the Minerals and Waste Development Plan both Environmental Health and Conservation officers were consulted for their views on the different sites proposed in the plan. This report has reaffirmed their views.

### **Consultation with Children and Young People**

- 30 Not applicable.

### **Effect on Strategic Aims**

- 31 AIM A – We are committed to being a listening Council, providing first class services accessible to all.

The Council is responding on behalf of the residents of the district to the consultation. If the Inspector rejects the allocated site it is highly likely that an alternative site could be within South Cambridgeshire. By supporting the County Council in reaffirming the current allocation South Cambs is looking to provide easy access to an HRC to the communities to the south of the City.

- 32 AIM B – We are committed to ensuring that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a safe and healthy place for you and your family.

By responding to the consultation the Council will ensure that the needs of the local residents to the south of Cambridge are considered. The current site allocation is the most sustainable one to serve the area to the south of Cambridge.

- 33 AIM C – We are committed to making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live.

By responding to the consultation the Council will ensure that the villages to the south of Cambridge have easy access to a new HRC and that its location does not impact on the surrounding countryside or result in increase travel by car along rural roads to access any new facility.

- 34 AIM D – We are committed to assisting provision of local jobs for you and your family.

The provision of a well-located new HRC will promote recycling within the district. Managing waste facilities could provide for local jobs.

- 35 AIM E – We are committed to providing a voice for rural life.

The Council in responding to the consultation will ensure that the Inspector considers the needs of the rural communities to the south of Cambridge.

### **Conclusions**

- 36 South Cambridgeshire District Council supports Cambridgeshire County and Peterborough City Councils' view that the existing site allocation south of the Addenbrookes Access Road is the best location for a new HRC to serve the south of the City of Cambridge. If the Inspector removes this allocation from the SSPP there is not an obvious alternative site without similar difficulties highlighted by the Inspector for the current site allocation. Without an allocation in the SSPP there will be increase pressure placed on the ageing HRC facility at Milton to meet the increasing demands. This would undo much of the sustainability benefits of recycling by requiring unsustainable journeys to reach the recycling facility.



## **Appendices**

A - Representation from South Cambs to the Pre-Submission Site Specific Proposals Plan DPD 2010.

B - Inspector's note on Site W1X – Household Recycling Centre, South of the Addenbrookes Access Road & Response by Cambridgeshire County and Peterborough City Councils to the Inspectors note

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

- Cabinet Report – 14 December 2006 to consider the Preferred Option stage of the MWDP
- Cabinet Report – 9 September 2008 to consider the Preferred Option 2 stage of the MWDP.
- Planning and New Communities Joint Portfolio Holder Report - 10 March 2009 to consider the Preferred Options 2 new sites consultation on the MWDP

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