

4. Spatial Strategy

- 4.1. A number of factors contribute to quality of life and help make South Cambridgeshire such a good place to live and work. The successful local economy, attractive villages, and the quality of the local environment all come together to give the district its particular character. The relationship with Cambridge and the focus it provides for shopping, entertainment, culture and services for residents of South Cambridgeshire is also significant. Parts of the area look to surrounding market towns for services.
- 4.2. For the success of the district to continue, it is important to make sure that the new Plan has the right development strategy. A key part of that is bringing the three strands of economy, social and environmental issues together to ensure a sustainable future for the district over the period to 2031 and beyond. There will be considerable change not least with significant developments occurring at Northstowe and on the Cambridge fringes and in surrounding areas as at Alconbury Enterprise Zone.

Key Facts:

- Previous plans shifted development patterns towards the edge of Cambridge, the new town of Northstowe and larger villages.
- Around 25% of the district is designated as Green Belt.
- Settlements have a varied and distinct local character, ranging from compact hamlets to larger villages. There is a need for some additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches to meet the forecast needs of this largest ethnic group in the district.
- Access to services and jobs for many is an issue, due to limited public transport in more rural communities away from transport corridors. 56% of our population live in villages without a Doctors surgery, primary school and food shop.
- The proportion of people that feel they can influence local decisions is higher in South Cambridgeshire than the national average.

Localism and Relationship with Neighbourhood Development Plans

- 4.3. The Localism Act 2011 creates new responsibilities and opportunities for local communities to be actively involved in planning. The District Council wishes to engage positively with local communities in the preparation of the Local Plan.
- 4.4. Communities will also have the opportunity to prepare their own Neighbourhood Development Plans, where these are consistent with the strategic policies in the current Local Development Framework and, when adopted, the new Local Plan. Neighbourhood Development Plans are optional but Parishes can use them to make their own development proposals if they wish. It is intended that the new Local Plan will be closely aligned with local opinion and will be supported so that time and resources are not required to develop separate neighbourhood plans.

Issue 7: Localism and Relationship with Neighbourhood Development Plans

The Council will engage with Parish Councils during the Issues and Options consultation to explore ways of meeting local aspirations through the new Local Plan.

Question 8: Do you think local aspirations can be reflected in the Local Plan?

If yes, how can this best be done? If no, why do you take that view?

Sustainable Development

- 4.5. The Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has at its heart a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which it says should run through both plan making and decision taking.

Sustainable development has twelve core planning principles – plan-led, creative, proactive, high quality design, area specific, low carbon, conserve natural environment, re-use land, mixed use, conserve heritage, actively manage growth, and meet local needs.

- 4.6. The NPPF says that for plan making this means positively seeking opportunities to meet the development needs of the area and planning to meet objectively assessed needs with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. The NPPF requires policies in Local Plans to follow the presumption in favour of sustainable development so that it is clear that development that is sustainable can be approved without delay. Clear policies in the Local Plan should guide how the presumption will be applied locally.
- 4.7. As will be explained in this chapter, the current development strategy is founded on the principle of moving to a sustainable pattern of development and supporting economic growth and the success of the local area, while protecting the best aspects of what makes South Cambridgeshire such a successful place to live and work.
- 4.8. One aspect of sustainable development is making the best use of previously developed land, sometimes called 'brownfield' land, and in some parts of the country this can help reduce the amount of 'greenfield' land that is needed for development. Given the rural nature of South Cambridgeshire, there is limited availability of previously developed land, and therefore it is likely that a significant proportion of new development will continue to come forward on greenfield land. The NPPF encourages the effective use of land by re-using previously developed land and therefore the Local Plan should ensure that the re-use of previously developed land in sustainable locations is prioritised, provided that the land is not of high environmental value.

Issue 8: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development

A key issue for the Plan will be to establish a clear sustainable development strategy for the district and a full range of clear and aspirational policies for achieving sustainable development in the district. A question for the Plan is how best to demonstrate that it supports the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Question 9: Do you think the Local Plan should include a specific policy focusing development on the re-use of previously developed land in sustainable locations, where the land is not of high environmental value?

Please provide any comments.

The Current Development Strategy

- 4.9. The current development strategy for the Cambridge area aims to encourage the provision of new jobs to support the nationally and internationally successful local economy with its focus on the high technology and research sectors. Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire have strong links and a significant proportion of employment in these sectors is in the business parks in South Cambridgeshire, including the science park, Hinxton Hall and Granta Park. The strategy set out in the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework documents proposes 20,000 new homes between 1999 and 2016, which will help support employment growth.
- 4.10. New jobs will need new employees and the aim has been to provide as many new homes close to the jobs in and around Cambridge as possible, in order to provide a better balance between jobs and homes, to help reduce commuting and congestion, and provide a more sustainable pattern of development.
- 4.11. To achieve this, existing plans propose a development sequence focusing first on Cambridge, then extensions to Cambridge on land now released from the Green Belt, followed by the new town of Northstowe with its links to Cambridge via the Guided Busway. They then look to the market towns elsewhere in the County and only finally to villages that have good services, facilities, employment and public transport. As part of the last round of plan-making, the Green Belt around Cambridge was reviewed and land released to provide new communities on the edge of the City. These included land in South Cambridgeshire at Trumpington Meadows, sites both sides of Huntingdon Road in North West Cambridge, Cambridge East, and potential for additional housing at Orchard Park.
- 4.12. Proposals for the major development site are now generally progressing well:
1. **Trumpington Meadows** – under construction for 1,200 dwellings, half of which is in Cambridge.
 2. **North West Cambridge: Land between Madingley Road and Huntingdon Road** - A current planning application due to be determined by the Joint Development Control Committee for the Cambridge Fringes later in 2012 proposes a mixed use development including up to 3,000 new homes, half of which are 'key worker' housing for University staff, significant employment, a local centre including a medium sized supermarket, and a range of facilities.
 3. **North West Cambridge: Land between Huntingdon Road and Histon Road (NIAB 2)** – The site is allocated in the current plan for approximately 1,100 homes, a secondary school and supporting facilities. It is anticipated the site will come forward for development as a continuation of the adjoining site in Cambridge.

4. **Orchard Park** – Much of the 900 dwellings originally planned for the site is completed and occupied. The potential for a further 220 homes on the site is provided for by the current plan.
5. **Northstowe** – The site is allocated for a new town comprising 9,500 new homes and a full range of supporting employment, shops and community facilities. A planning application for a first phase of 1,500 homes has been received.

4.13. This focus on urban development resulted in a move away from the previous dispersed development strategy, which had seen relatively high levels of growth in many of South Cambridgeshire's villages over a number of decades. The current strategy has very little growth planned in villages, although windfall development (on sites that are not specifically allocated in plans) is provided for within villages at appropriate scales.

Moving to a Development Strategy to 2031

- 4.14. A key issue for the new Local Plan will be whether the current development strategy remains the most appropriate strategy for the district or whether any alternative strategies should be considered.
- 4.15. As well as looking at local issues, and the continuing relationship with Cambridge the plan needs to reflect and consider implications for the district arising from wider changes that have taken place since the current Plans were adopted, for example, the setting up of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership and the Alconbury Enterprise Zone.
- 4.16. All Councils are required to plan for Sustainable Development. Whilst the current allocations are considered to generally remain appropriate having already been found to be the most sustainable pattern of development, where there has been no progress in bringing sites forward for development there may be a need for re-consideration. In particular, the implications of Marshall's decision to stay at Cambridge Airport will need to be considered, as Cambridge East will not now be developed. This means that a key element of the current strategy has been lost that would have provided land for about 7,500 dwellings in South Cambridgeshire and a strategic location for new employment.
- 4.17. Cambridge City Council is also reviewing the Cambridge Local Plan 2006 and preparing a new Local Plan for the period to 2031. In view of the close relationships between the two districts, and the new duty to cooperate enshrined in national legislation, the Councils are working together on issues of shared interest, including the development strategy.

Development Strategy to 2031

- 4.18. South Cambridgeshire completely surrounds Cambridge so both Councils will be working together to consider how best to meet the needs of the wider Cambridge area, especially in relation to housing and employment. The current development strategy that came through the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan process in 2003, was based on the principle of providing as much housing as possible in and close to Cambridge and the new town of Northstowe to

place homes near to or easily accessible to jobs creating an improved overall balance between jobs and homes.

- 4.19. The current development strategy is urban focused, with very limited new development for housing or employment located in villages. The few housing allocations that were carried forward from previous plans have largely been developed and rural development is now mainly limited to completing the new village of Cambourne, making best use of brownfield sites, such as Bayer Crop Science at Hauxton and Ida Darwin Hospital at Fulbourn, with smaller scale windfall development within village frameworks.
- 4.20. The downturn has identified limitations of a development strategy that is almost entirely made up of major sites where there are often high up-front infrastructure costs. It is therefore anticipated that the new development strategy options should contain some smaller scale development allocations.

Issue 9: Development Strategy

The new development strategy for South Cambridgeshire needs to recognise the links with Cambridge, particularly in terms of providing employment to support the successful economy of Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, and housing to provide opportunities for the workforce, both existing and new, to live close to where they work. This will continue to provide a more sustainable pattern of development. In reality, the strategy is likely to need to be a combination in order to meet housing targets and in particular some village housing developments to provide a 5 year supply, given the long lead in time for major developments which will realistically only start to deliver later in the plan period. The options for the development strategy are:

- a) Focus on providing more development on the edge of Cambridge, in part to replace Cambridge East, through a further review of the Green Belt (this is addressed below).
- b) Focus on providing more development through one or more new settlements, of sufficient size to provide sustainable development, including provision of a secondary school, and with good public transport links to Cambridge.
- c) Focus on providing development at the more sustainable villages that have the best levels of services and facilities and accessibility by public transport and cycle to Cambridge or, to a lesser extent, a market town.
- d) a combination of the above.

Question 10: What do you think is the best approach to the development strategy for South Cambridgeshire? All options are expected to need to involve some village development to provide flexibility and early housing provision:

- a. Cambridge focus (would require a review of the Green Belt)
- b. New Settlement focus
- c. Sustainable Villages focus (would require a review of the Green Belt)
- d. Combination of the above

Please provide any comments.

- 4.21. The proposed development sequence for South Cambridgeshire will be included in the draft Plan, to reflect the chosen development strategy.

4.22. Site options for housing development to deliver each of the possible development strategies are contained in Chapter 5: Development Options. Site options for employment development are contained in Chapter 10: Building a Strong and Competitive Economy.

Green Belt

4.23. Some of the options would require land to be released from the Green Belt. Irrespective of which option is taken forward, all land that remains in the Green Belt will need protection. The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts, and this is set out in the NPPF. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open although necessary planned urban extensions can be successful.

4.24. Professor Holford first suggested the idea of a Green Belt around Cambridge in 1950, when the prospect of rapid growth around the city was seen as a threat to the 'only true University Town' left in England. Cambridge has had a Green Belt since the 1960s, which includes about 25% of South Cambridgeshire.

Issue 10: Green Belt

The Cambridge Green Belt surrounds Cambridge and extends around 3 to 5 miles from the edge of the City and incorporates many South Cambridgeshire's villages, including most of the largest villages (see Figure 1 in chapter 2). The established purposes of the Cambridge Green Belt are to:

- Preserve the unique character of Cambridge as a compact, dynamic city with a thriving historic centre;
- Maintain and enhance the quality of its setting; and
- Prevent communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with the city.

The current plan also sets out a number of functions that the Cambridge Green Belt serves. These could be carried forward to the new Local Plan. They are:

- Key views of Cambridge from the surrounding countryside;
- A soft green edge to the city;
- A distinctive urban edge;
- Green corridors penetrating into the city;
- Designated sites and other features contributing positively to the character of the landscape setting;
- The distribution, physical separation, setting, scale and character of Green Belt villages;
- A landscape which retains a strong rural character.

Question 11: Do you agree that the Green Belt purposes and functions remain appropriate for the new Plan?

Please provide any comments.

4.25. It is clear that we will need a policy on protecting land within the Green Belt and there are no other reasonable alternatives. The essential characteristic of all Green Belts is their openness and permanence. Green Belt boundaries can be

reviewed in Local Plans where there are exceptional circumstances. The Cambridge Green Belt was reviewed recently when the exceptional circumstance was to replace an unsustainable development strategy that pushed new homes into the rural area and market towns, despite the fact that job growth was strongest in and close to Cambridge, with a strategy that focussed more housing development on the edge of the City

- 4.26. A significant element of the current strategy was the removal of land from the Green Belt for a major new urban extension for 10,000 to 12,000 homes at Cambridge East, of which approximately 7,500 were to be in South Cambridgeshire, with a strategic level of new employment and a large new district centre. This site was intended to provide for longer term development most of which would have occurred between 2016 and 2031. Given Marshall's announcement that it is now remaining at Cambridge Airport, Cambridge East cannot be relied on to form part of the development strategy for the new plan to 2031 (see Chapter 12: Site Specific Issues).

Issue 11: Considering Exceptional Circumstances for a Green Belt review

The Council still needs to consider how best to achieve a Green Belt boundary that is compatible with long term sustainable development that will endure into the future, and whether this requires the boundary to be revisited again in this round of plan making.

A key issue for consideration at this stage is whether there should be more development on the edge of Cambridge and potentially around the largest villages in the district, most of which lie in the Green Belt. In other words, do the 'exceptional circumstances' required by the NPPF exist to justify the release of further land from the Green Belt to meet the housing and employment needs of the area. In the past, the provision of housing close to jobs to meet the high level of housing need in the area was considered exceptional circumstances. Any review of the Green Belt would take account of the purposes and functions set out above.

In reviewing Green Belt boundaries, the NPPF requires consideration of the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations including new settlements beyond the outer Green Belt boundary. This will require a coordinated approach between South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council to ensure a sustainable development strategy for the wider Cambridge area.

Question 12: Do you consider that more land, beyond that already released and committed, on the edge of Cambridge and potentially at larger villages, should be released from the Green Belt in order to achieve sustainable development?

Please provide any comments and explain why you think there are exceptional circumstances?

- 4.27. In order to ensure that the testing process for the new Local Plan is robust, Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council have decided to take a 2 stage approach to reviewing the land on the edge of Cambridge.

Stage 1: Issues & Options Consultation Summer 2012:

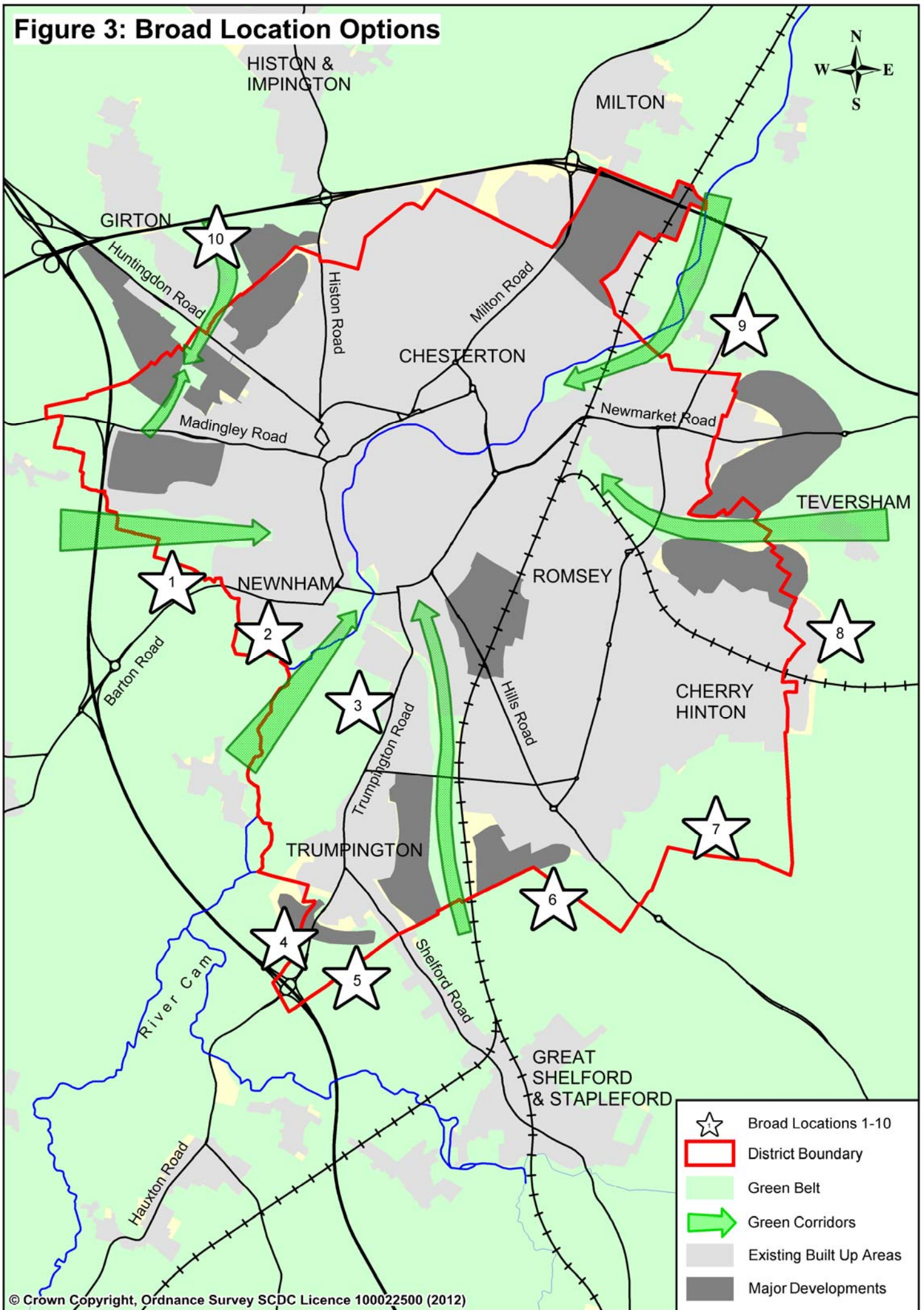
Looks comprehensively at all possible broad locations where Green Belt boundaries could be reviewed to see if further land could be removed from the Green Belt.

Stage 2: Issues & Options Consultation Winter 2012:

Depending on the outcome of the Stage 1 review which will include a comparison with the relative sustainability of development elsewhere in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, consultation on specific development site options.

- 4.28. Each broad location for the Stage 1 consultation is shown in Figure 3. Many of the broad locations cross the boundary with Cambridge, while others are entirely within one or other district. For the purposes of completeness, all broad locations on the edge of the city are addressed in the consultation. Comments are sought on all the broad locations including those in Cambridge to assist the Councils to take a coordinated approach on this important issue.
- 4.29. All of the broad locations identified for testing could theoretically be built out for housing in whole or in part, taking account of planning constraints such as flooding, environmental designations or heritage assets. The suitability of land on the edge of Cambridge for housing will however turn on the principle of whether the Green Belt should be reviewed as part of developing a new sustainable development strategy for the Cambridge area, and if so, whether individual sites within broad locations could be released. A key issue will be whether such releases and the level of harm they would have on the purposes of the Green Belt including the setting of Cambridge and separation with necklace villages are considered on balance to be acceptable within the wider strategic framework.
- 4.30. Assessments of each of the broad locations have been undertaken jointly by the two Councils. The following information has been provided for each broad location:
- Description and Context;
 - Designations and Constraints – heritage and environmental assets, planning policy designations, flooding and drainage, topography, pollution/noise;
 - Planning history – Previous plans, conclusions from Inspector's reports, key planning applications;
 - Green Belt and Landscape – significance to Green Belt purposes, function with regard to character and setting, including rural character of the landscape;
 - Schools, Utilities and Services – existing services and facilities available, new facilities required to serve the development;
 - Transport – highway capacity, public transport, site access;
 - Availability and deliverability.

Figure 3: Broad Location Options



Issue 12: Green Belt Locations

For the Cambridge focused option for the development strategy, land would need to be released from the Green Belt. A comprehensive approach has been taken to the Green Belt around Cambridge, jointly with Cambridge City Council, and the community's views are sought whether they think any of the broad locations listed here and assessed in Appendix 2 have any potential for housing development, whether that is may be for a small area of development close to the built up area, or possibly a larger site.

The broad locations are:

1. Land to the North & South of Barton Road (includes land in both districts)
2. Playing Fields off Granchester Road, Newnham (includes land in both districts)
3. Land West of Trumpington Road (includes land in Cambridge only)
4. Land West of Hauxton Road (includes land in both districts)
5. Land South of Addenbrooke's Road (includes land in both districts)
6. Land South of Addenbrooke's Road between Babraham Road & Shelford Road (includes land in both districts)
7. Land between Babraham Road & Fulbourn Road (includes land in both districts)
8. Land East of Gazelle Way (includes land in South Cambridgeshire only)
9. Land at Fen Ditton (includes land in South Cambridgeshire only)
10. Land between Huntingdon Road & Histon Road (includes land in South Cambridgeshire only)

The City Council has included indicative capacities for land within its area. This is possible because of the tightly drawn administrative boundary, which means that there is a finite physical capacity in each location. The same does not apply to South Cambridgeshire and no capacities have been included in the assessments, which would require making some judgment on the extent of land that should be used to determine capacity.

Following consultation on this Issues and Options Report, all comments received will be assessed and subsequent consultation on any reasonable site options with specific boundaries will be undertaken in Winter 2012, prior to both the District Council and Cambridge City Council developing draft local plans.

It is important to note that the Council cannot take decisions on the future spatial strategy in isolation and the views of the community, interested parties, organisation and service providers are essential. The interrelationship with Cambridge City Council, the rest of the Cambridgeshire and the sub-region is also an important factor.

A consultation on specific site options that may be identified will include an indication of capacity. This means that it is not possible at this stage to identify the potential capacity from land on the edge of Cambridge in South Cambridgeshire.

Question 13: Do you consider that any of the following broad locations have potential to be released from the Green Belt to provide new housing to help meet the needs of the Cambridge area? (tick any number of boxes):

1. Land to the North & South of Barton Road (includes land in both districts)
2. Playing Fields off Granchester Road, Newnham (includes land in both districts)
3. Land West of Trumpington Road (includes land in Cambridge only)
4. Land West of Hauxton Road (includes land in both districts)
5. Land South of Addenbrooke's Road (includes land in both districts)
6. Land South of Addenbrooke's Road between Babraham Road & Shelford Road (includes land in both districts)
7. Land between Babraham Road & Fulbourn Road (includes land in both districts)
8. Land East of Gazelle Way (includes land in South Cambridgeshire only)
9. Land at Fen Ditton (includes land in South Cambridgeshire only)
10. Land between Huntingdon Road & Histon Road (includes land in South Cambridgeshire only)

Please provide any comments, and indicate the area of land at the relevant broad location that you feel has potential, either in words or provide a map.

Development at Villages

- 4.31. The current plan groups villages into 4 categories that reflect their relative sustainability in terms of location and function, size, services and facilities, and accessibility to Cambridge or a market town by sustainable modes of transport, particularly by bus or train. Having appropriate village groupings is important both to help direct new housing allocations to the most sustainable locations and also to help inform the policies for windfall development in villages to make sure that such development is appropriate in scale and reflects the relative sustainability of the village.
- 4.32. Villages are currently categorised as Rural Centres, Minor Rural Centre, Group Villages or Infill Villages. A review of the assessment of larger villages has been carried out (all those over 3000 population as before, plus those over 2000 population to test whether any others should be considered). This has broadly confirmed the split between the less sustainable majority of villages ie. Group and Infill villages, and the more sustainable larger villages.

- 4.33. However, it does suggest that there is a case to review the split between Rural Centres and Minor Rural Centres in respect of two villages and it identifies that a number of additional villages of between 2000 and 3000 population should be considered as possible Minor Rural Centres, performing better than some of the current villages in that category.

Issue 13: Rural Settlement Hierarchy

Options exist around the way the more sustainable villages are categorised. A summary of the assessment of the larger villages is contained as Appendix 3 and demonstrates the reasons for the options set out below:

- Rural Centres – these remain the most sustainable villages with the best level of services and facilities and accessibility by public transport to Cambridge (and to a lesser extent to Market towns, given the importance of access to Cambridge for services and jobs). However, reassessment has identified possible changes:
 - Should Cottenham should be added as a Rural Centre (up from a Minor Rural Centre)
 - Should Fulbourn be deleted from the Rural Centre category and designated as a Minor Rural Centre.
- Minor Rural Centres – most of these continue to come out as the second most sustainable villages. However, 3 existing Minor Rural Centres score less well than the 5 larger and better served Group Villages identified in the new assessment. The Group villages that have scored well are those that contain secondary schools and those on the edge of Cambridge. Reassessment has therefore identified the following possible changes:
 - The better served Group villages to be added to Minor Rural Centres to create a new larger set of villages. These are:
 - Milton
 - Swavesey
 - Bassingbourn
 - Girton
 - Comberton
 - Alternatively, introduce some further sub division of village categories, eg. a category of called Better Served Group Villages. If so, it would be logical for the 3 Minor Rural Centres that score less than the better served Group villages be changed to fall within this new category. They are:
 - Papworth Everard
 - Willingham
 - Waterbeach
- Group villages close to the Guided Busway – 3 larger villages lie relatively close to the Guided Busway, although not generally in easy walking distance for much, or all, of the village, but would be within cycling distance. They do not perform well in terms of the level of services and facilities. However, the Council wishes to explore through the consultation whether the proximity to the Guided Busway is of sufficient benefit that they should be identified as a special category of sustainable village, albeit the least of the sustainable villages. They are:
 - Oakington
 - Longstanton
 - Over
 - Other group villages and infill villages – no changes suggested

Question 14: Which of the following changes to the rural settlement hierarchy do you agree with?

Rural Centres:

- a. Should Cottenham be added as a Rural Centre (up from a Minor Rural Centre)?
- b. Should Fulbourn be deleted from the Rural Centre category and added as a Minor Rural Centre?

Minor Rural Centres:

- c. Should the following be added as Minor Rural Centres?
 - Milton
 - Swavesey
 - Bassingbourn
 - Girton
 - Comberton

Better Served Group Villages:

- d. Should there be a further sub division of village categories to create a new category of better served group villages?
- e. If so, should the 3 Minor Rural Centres that score less than the better served Group villages be changed to fall within this new category? They are:
 - Papworth Everard
 - Willingham
 - Waterbeach

Guided Busway Villages:

- f. Should there be a new category for villages close to the Guided Busway?

If so, the villages included in the category should be:
 - Oakington
 - Longstanton
 - Over

Other Group Villages and Infill Villages:

- g. Should these remain in the same categories as in the current plan?

Please provide any comments.

Scale of Housing Development at Villages

4.34. The current plan sets the amount of development that can take place at the different categories of village through windfall development (sites not allocated in the plan) based on their relative sustainability. For Rural Centres, there is no limit of the size of a development, reflecting that they are the best served and

most accessible villages. In Minor Rural Centres, development is limited to an indicative maximum scheme size of 30 dwellings with developments towards upper end that place a burden on local services and facilities expected to make financial contributions towards improving them. Development in Group villages is limited to 8 dwellings with exceptionally up to 15 dwellings being acceptable where it makes the best use of a single brownfield site. Development in Infill villages is limited to 2 dwellings with exceptionally up to 8 being acceptable where it makes the best use of a single brownfield site.

Issue 14: Scale of Housing Development at Villages

A question for the new Local Plan is whether the current limits on the scale of housing development that can come forward on sites not allocated in the plan (windfall or bonus developments) remain appropriate or whether there should be a different approach. In view of the continuing need to provide new homes to meet the needs of the area, and the principle of supporting rural communities to remain strong and vital, it is not considered to be a reasonable option to reduce development levels below those in the current plan. The question remains whether there should be greater flexibility provided to allow larger housing developments and if so whether this should be a similar approach to that currently in place, but with higher numbers, or by removing any numbers and applying criteria that look at each development proposal on its merits and have regard to the character of the village concerned. Options are to:

- a. Retain the existing approach to scales of windfall developments in villages
- b. Retain numerical limits but increase the scale of developments allowed. For example (different levels could be chosen):
 - Minor Rural Centres could increase from 30 to 50 dwellings
 - Group Villages could increase from 8 to 20 dwellings
 - Infill villages could increase from 2 to 10 dwellings
- c. Remove numerical limits for Minor Rural Settlements (and if they are added, for better served Group Villages and Guided Busway Villages), so that along with Rural Centres, the most sustainable categories of settlement have no limit on scheme size, having regard to village character.
- d. Remove numerical limits for all categories of village and dealing with all proposals on their merits having regard to village character.

Question 15: Which of the options for the scale of unplanned development allowed at villages do you support

- a. Retain existing numerical limits for unplanned developments in villages
- b. Retain numerical limits but increase the scale of development allowed
- c. Remove numerical limits for Minor Rural Centres so consistent with Rural Centres
- d. Remove numerical limits for all categories of village

Please provide any comments.

Village Frameworks

- 4.35. Plans for South Cambridgeshire have included village frameworks for many years. They have the advantage of restricting the gradual expansion of villages into the open countryside in an uncontrolled and unplanned way. They also provide certainty to both local communities and the development industry of the Council's approach to development at villages.
- 4.36. Many of the 102 villages in South Cambridgeshire offer attractive and safe local living environments based around close knit communities but often have limited services and facilities and poor access to public transport. In terms of policies designed to reduce travel and achieve good levels of access to a range of employment and service opportunities many villages do not score well as locations for development.

Issue 15: Approach to Village Frameworks

Alternatives could be considered to the current village framework approach. Village Frameworks have been in place for a long time and the policy for windfall development on land not allocated in plans means that many possible opportunities have already been developed. The windfall policy is intended to allow small scale development to occur in even the smallest villages and the case is often made that all identifiable sites have been exhausted. Whilst the evidence is that windfalls continue to come forward because circumstances change over time, the new Plan could take a different approach if it was decided that it should be more flexible and allow some additional development at villages beyond the current village framework boundaries.

There are different ways this could be done. This is potentially a radical change in approach from previous plans. In view of the new Localism agenda, the Council wishes to seek the views of Parish Councils and local residents on this issue. The new Local Plan could:

- a. Retain village frameworks and the current approach to resist development outside frameworks as defined on the Proposals Map.
- b. Retain village frameworks but include a policy that would allow limited additional development outside and adjoining the frameworks where certain criteria were met.
- c. Delete the current village frameworks entirely and instead use a policy that makes clear in words the Council's approach to development on the edge of the built up area of a village.

Options b and c would be perceived as a loosening of the Council's approach to development in the countryside on the edge of villages and there is a risk that it could weaken the ability of the Council to resist inappropriate development on the edge of villages. Indeed there seems little point in changing the approach, unless there is a desire to provide more flexibility for more development to come forward on the edge of villages. The question would be how much development and in what form was being sought and how overall levels of development could be controlled to avoid sites coming forward all around villages that might be difficult to resist. There is also a risk that exceptions sites for affordable housing may stop coming forward as landowners see a possibility of gaining greater value out of their land.

See also the exceptions sites policy at Issue x which includes options to allow a limited amount of additional market housing at different levels as part of exceptions affordable housing sites.

If village frameworks are retained in the new Plan, they will be carried forward from the adopted plan, unless any anomalies are identified to the Council that need to be corrected.

Question 16: Do you think the new Local Plan should:

- a. retain village frameworks and the current approach to restricting development outside framework boundaries as defined on the Proposals Map
- b. retain village frameworks as defined on the Proposals Map but include policies that allow small scale development adjacent to village frameworks where certain criteria are met.
- c. delete the current village frameworks entirely and provide greater flexibility for some development on the edge of villages controlled through a written policy.

Please provide any comments.

Question 17: Are you aware of any existing village framework boundaries that are incorrectly drawn?

If so, please identify where you think the boundary is incorrect and how you consider it should be changed (please provide a map).