



REPORT TO: Planning Portfolio Holder

18 November 2014

LEAD OFFICER: Director - Planning and New Communities

Cambridge Northern Fringe Area Action Plan - Issues and Options Report

Purpose

1. To agree the Cambridge Northern Fringe East Area Action Plan Issues and Options Report for consultation jointly with Cambridge City Council.
2. The adoption of an Area Action Plan will be a key decision because it is significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards or electoral divisions in the area of the relevant local authority. However, agreeing the consultation proposed in this report is not a key decision.

It was first published in the 10 September 2014 Forward Plan.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that the portfolio holder:
 - a. Agree the Cambridge Northern Fringe East Area Action Plan Issues and Options (CNFE AAP I&O) Report for consultation jointly with Cambridge City Council (Appendix A to this report);
 - b. Note and agree to publish the supporting evidence base contained in appendices B to H to this report;
 - c. Agree the approach to Consultation and Communications set out in the strategy appended to the report (appendix I);
 - d. Delegate to the Director – New Communities & Planning authority to finalise the consultation documents for publication including any minor typographical, formatting, editing or other inconsequential corrections that are necessary, in consultation with the Planning Portfolio Holder.

Reasons for Recommendations

4. The Submission South Cambridgeshire Local Plan identifies the Cambridge Northern Fringe East site for a mixed-use employment led development. Policy SS/4 states that a joint Area Action Plan is needed to ensure a coordinated approach to planning of the area across district boundaries. The Issues and Options consultation makes the first formal stage of consultation towards the Area Action Plan, and the proposed consultation is consistent with the Council's Local Development Scheme.
5. A report was considered by the Joint Strategic Transport and Spatial Planning Group on 28 October 2014. The Group recommended that the Councils agree the draft

Issues & Options Report for consultation (as set out in Appendix 1 of the report to that meeting).

Executive Summary

6. Cambridge Northern Fringe East (CNFE) area is one of the most important brownfield regeneration opportunities in Greater Cambridge. The new Local Plans for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire recognise that regeneration and redevelopment of the area is important, both in the short term aligned with the opportunity presented by the opening of a new rail station and in the long term to ensure that maximum regeneration benefits are captured for Greater Cambridge.
7. Work started on the development of an Area Action Plan (AAP) for the CNFE earlier in 2014, in parallel with the later stages of the Local Plans. This report presents the background research and evidence base prepared so far and possible development options for the area in an issues and options consultation document.

Background

8. The CNFE area has been the subject of regeneration policy aspirations for at least two decades.
9. South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council are both updating their adopted plans and producing new Local Plans for the period to 2031. The Proposed Submission versions of the plans were submitted to the Secretary of State on 28 March 2014 and the examination hearings started on 4 November 2014.
10. Policy SS/4 in the submitted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan and Policy 14 in the submitted Cambridge Local Plan seek the regeneration of CNFE and say that the precise amount of development, site capacity, viability, time-scales and phasing of development will be established through the preparation of a joint AAP for the CNFE area.
11. Cambridgeshire County Council prepared a new Transport Strategy in tandem with the Local Plans in order to ensure a fully integrated planning and transportation approach. All three plans have been developed collaboratively and very much in accordance with the Duty to Co-operate.
12. Cambridgeshire County Council adopted the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Core Strategy in 2011 and the Site Specific Proposals Plan in 2012. These include a number of waste, transport and minerals designations in the CNFE area.
13. Planning permission was granted on 18 December 2013 by the Joint Development Control Committee for the new railway station and interchange on the Chesterton Rail Sidings.
14. The County Council is currently considering a planning application for reconfiguration and consolidation of the existing Lafarge minerals processing and DB Schenker transfer operation at Chesterton Rail Sidings which involves the relocation of the tracks within the sidings area closer to the main railway line, freeing up land for redevelopment.
15. In order to move forward with the promotion of this area, Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council with support from Cambridgeshire County

Council as a key stakeholder agreed to start the preparation of an AAP for this area on the 6 February 2014.

16. The Area Action Plan (AAP) will go through the following stages:
 - Issues and Options consultation (the current stage) – 8 December 2014 to 2 February 2015
 - Pre-Submission public participation – September to October 2015
 - Draft Plan submitted to the Secretary of State – April 2016
 - Independent Examination into the soundness of the Plan by a Government Planning Inspector – April to September 2016
 - Adoption – October 2016
17. As highlighted above, the Issues & Options Report is the first stage in the preparation of the AAP for CNFE. The Issues and Options Report identifies the policy context guiding the AAP and outlines a number of site constraints that need to be taken into consideration. These include the capacity of the transport network, implication of odour from Water Recycling Centre on nearby uses, noise, land contamination, landscape and ecology. This work is ongoing and will feed into the preparation of the AAP.
18. The opportunities and constraints identified have informed the preparation of a series of Redevelopment Options, which capture ways in which the area could be regenerated.
19. A do nothing (baseline) option has been rejected, because it would not meet the Local Plan strategies to seek the positive regeneration of the area. However, it is a useful starting point for comparing with other redevelopment options in the Interim Sustainability Appraisal which accompanies this document.
20. Four main Redevelopment Options have been identified. Each option takes a more comprehensive approach to redevelopment than the previous option. These are summarised below:
 - **Option 1: Lower Level of Redevelopment** – Creates an enhanced 'Boulevard' approach to the proposed new Station, to provide a gateway to Cambridge. Focuses on regeneration of areas of more easily available land, allowing existing business and the Water Recycling Centre to stay, whilst creating a major new area for businesses. This option could be delivered early but could compromise the viability of longer term development options if not considered carefully.
 - **Option 2: Medium Level of Redevelopment** – Focuses on regeneration of areas of more easily available land, allowing existing business and the Water Recycling Centre to stay. Includes new homes and a local centre near the proposed new station, to create a vibrant mixed use area around the gateway. More comprehensive redevelopment improving existing areas south of Cowley Road, to integrate them into the Station area. A new road north of Cowley Road to separate out industrial traffic from the main station access. Option for Nuffield Road industrial area to change to offices / residential. This option could be delivered in the short to medium term.
 - **Option 3: Higher Level of Redevelopment** – Reconfiguration of the Water Recycling Centre onto a smaller site, with more indoor or contracted operations, subject to technical, financial and operational deliverability. Would

retain the Water Recycling Centre on site but open up options for larger scale employment redevelopment and a mix of other uses. This option is complex and delivery of the full option would be in the longer term. The potential to phase redevelopment to achieve the objective of an early gateway to the proposed new station would need to be explored, whilst ensuring that the delivery of the full option is not prejudiced by piecemeal redevelopment. Also in this option, Nuffield Road industrial area is proposed for entirely residential development, with existing industry relocated north of Cowley Road.

- **Option 4: Maximum Level of Redevelopment** - Water Recycling Centre relocated off site, subject to identification of a suitable, viable and deliverable alternative site being identified. This would free up a large area of land for redevelopment, and the opportunity to comprehensively address the area. This option is complex and delivery of the full option would be in the longer term. The potential to phase redevelopment to achieve the objective of an early gateway to the proposed new station would need to be explored, whilst ensuring that the delivery of the full option is not prejudiced by piecemeal redevelopment.
21. The final development option that will form the basis of the adopted AAP is likely to be combination of aspects of more than one option.
 22. The Issues and Options Report recognises that the Water Recycling Centre performs a vital infrastructure service for the Greater Cambridge area. Discussions are on-going with Anglian Water to explore whether either downsizing or relocating are capable of delivery taking account of technical, financial and operational issues. In the case of relocation, this is subject to a suitable viable and deliverable alternative site being identified. No alternative sites for the Water Recycling Centre have been identified at this stage. In the past, relocation has been explored and a viable alternative site was not able to be identified at that time. At this stage the Issues and Options Report is seeking views on whether the advantages of the maximum level of regeneration are such that this is the most desirable option. In this case the principle of relocation would need to be explored again.
 23. Options 3 and 4 would require significant changes to the Water Recycling Centre and would present significant and complex delivery issues including timescales and investment to bring them forward. Development would need to come forward in phases to maximise early opportunities from the delivery of the proposed new station (due to open in 2016), to create a vibrant and welcoming environment residents and visitors. At the same time the longer term goals of more comprehensive redevelopment would need to be secured within the strategy of delivering the longer-term vision of regenerating the wider area.
 24. Options also propose different approaches to the Nuffield Road industrial area. These range from no change, redevelopment for office type uses, or redevelopment for housing.
 25. The Issues and Options Report will also include options covering a range of key policy options covering aspects such as densities of development, employment uses, housing mix, provision of services and facilities, place making and urban design, transport.
 26. It will also include consideration of implementation and delivery.

Considerations

27. An AAP is required to ensure a comprehensive approach to development given the cross-boundary nature of the site and the potential need to reconfigure or move the Water Recycling Centre, amongst a number of other factors which need careful consideration.
28. The Issues and Options Report is the first opportunity to explore public and stakeholder opinion on various options for the redevelopment of the area. The results of the consultation will inform the preparation of the AAP.

Options

29. An alternative option would be for the Portfolio Holder not to agree the Issues and Options Report for consultation, but this is not recommended as it would delay the AAP process and consequently delivery of development of the site. The Issues and Options Report itself proposes a range of options for consideration through the plan making process.

Implications

30. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered: -

Financial

31. The cost of producing the CNFE AAP will be primarily met from the budget agreed within two councils planning service budgets.

Legal

32. The legal requirements associated with preparing an Area Action Plan have been complied with.

Staffing

33. The work to develop the CNFE AAP is part of the agreed work programme for the Planning Service in 2014/15.

Risk Management

34. The risks associated with not delivering an adopted Local Plan as quickly as possible to ensure a five-year land supply of housing and the long term planning of South Cambridgeshire have been considered.

Equality and Diversity

35. An EQIA has been undertaken and will continue to be updated as the AAP document is developed (appendix J to this report).

Climate Change

36. The Local Plan includes policies to address the implications of climate change in the determining of planning applications.

Consultation responses (including from the Youth Council)

37. A report was considered by the Joint Strategic Transport and Spatial Planning Group on 28 October 2014. The Joint Strategic Transport and Spatial Planning Group

recommended that the councils agree the draft Issues & Options Report for consultation (as set out in Appendix 1 of the report to that meeting).

38. A similar report is being considered by Cambridge City Council's Development Plan Scrutiny Sub Committee on 11 November 2014.
39. No specific consultation undertaken with the Youth Council, although there will be extensive and wide ranging consultation undertaken on the Area Action Plan.

Effect on Strategic Aims

Aim 1 - We will listen to and engage with residents, parishes and businesses to ensure that we deliver first class services and value for money.

40. Consultation on Issues and Options will provide the opportunity for all stakeholders to influence the policies and proposals for this area of the district before the Council prepares the Area Action Plan.

Aim 2 - We will work with partners to create and sustain opportunities for employment, enterprise and world leading innovation.

41. The CNFE area is proposed for mixed-use development, including employment uses.

Aim 3 - We will make sure that South Cambridgeshire continues to offer an outstanding and sustainable quality of life for our residents.

42. The Council has a duty to contribute to sustainable development. This lies at the heart of the Local Plan and covers all three aspects of sustainability – economic, social and environment. The Plan has a focus on sustaining and enhancing the qualities of South Cambridgeshire that in national surveys consistently identify the District as one of the best places to live in the UK.

Background Papers & Appendices

None

Appendices:

- A. CNFE AAP Issues and Options Consultation Report
- B. Supporting Technical Statement
- C. Interim Sustainability Appraisal Annex: Detailed Assessment Tables – Appraisal of Spatial Redevelopment Options
- D. Interim Sustainability Appraisal: Appraisal of Policy Options
- E. Employment Options Study – Final Report
- F. Employment Options Study – Sector Profile
- G. Area Flood Risk Assessment
- H. Consultation and Community Engagement Strategy
- I. Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report
- J. Equalities Impact Assessment

Report Author: Jonathan Dixon – Principal Planning Policy Officer
Telephone: (01954) 713194