

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**REPORT TO:** Council  
**AUTHOR:** Director of Development Services

18 November 2005

### **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: NORTHSTOWE AREA ACTION PLAN: PRE-SUBMISSION DRAFT RESPONSE TO REPRESENTATIONS AND PROPOSED CHANGES**

#### **Purpose**

1. For Members to consider representations to the Pre-Submission draft Northstowe Area Action Plan (AAP) and agree proposed responses to it. Members are also asked to agree the resulting proposed changes to the draft AAP and to submit it to the Secretary of State in January 2006.

#### **Effect on Corporate Objectives**

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|----|--|---|
| 2. | High quality, accessible, value for money services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assist the Council's objectives to deliver quality accessible development in the district</li><li>• Include the provision of affordable housing and the effective delivery of sustainable development at Northstowe and other major developments on the edge of Cambridge and development of sustainable communities</li><li>• Assist the delivery of the Community Strategy</li><li>• Be used by Cambridgeshire Horizons to help the early and sustained development of the necessary services and infrastructure.</li></ul> |
|    | Quality village life                               |   |
|    | A sustainable future                               |   |
|    | A better future through Partnerships               |   |

#### **Background**

3. Initial consultation took place with stakeholders between 14 April and 12 May 2004 on issues for the first tranche of DPDs under the "jumping the gun" regulations. An additional round of public participation took place on the Northstowe Preferred Options Report between 1 October and 12 November 2004, involving issues and alternative options for the AAP. The results of these consultations fed into the Pre-Submission draft Northstowe AAP, which was subject to six weeks consultation between 17 June and 29 July 2005.

#### **Results of Pre-Submission Public Participation**

4. Around 900 representations were received during the Pre-Submission public participation period to the Northstowe AAP, approximately a third of the number received at the Preferred Options Stage. Of these, approaching 36% were in support. The majority of representations have come from just a few organisations - principally Longstanton and Oakington Parish Councils, the Longstanton Parish Plan Committee, Government Office for the East of England, Cambridgeshire County Council, Gallagher Estates, English Partnerships and the Fairfield Partnership.

5. Officers have prepared proposed responses to representations on the Pre-Submission draft Northstowe AAP and also to a small number of representations that have been received on the Draft Final Sustainability Report for the Northstowe AAP. The proposed responses are set out in Appendix A for Members' consideration. The schedule:

- (a) lists all the representations in plan order by policy / paragraph;
- (b) identifies the respondent where it is an organisation;
- (c) indicates whether the representation objects to or supports the plan;
- (d) summarises the representation;
- (e) gives a proposed officer response;
- (f) where any changes to the AAP document are considered appropriate in response to the representation, indicates how the AAP should be amended to address the issue; and
- (g) includes at the end, maps showing the physical extent of any site specific representations received.

6. Further Appendices provide other information to assist Members consider the representations and agree the AAP for Submission:

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|------------|--|
| Appendix B | A version of the Northstowe AAP, which highlights the changes arising from the responses to representations in Appendix A, and includes resulting changes to the Proposals Map |
| Appendix C | An index of all those making representations to the draft AAP for reference  |

7. The proposed changes to the AAP have been subject to independent sustainability appraisal by the Council's consultants to assess their impact in sustainability terms. In terms of the Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) the consultants have not identified any significant changes to the previous appraisal of the Pre-Submission documents, although they note some minor improvements in terms of sustainability for some changes and less sustainability benefits in terms of other changes (generally those where environmental requirements have been deleted from policies in response to representations from GO-East that they lie outside the scope of the planning system). Any new policies proposed have also been subject to appraisal. The consultants have not recommended any further changes to the Plan. Copies of the SA / SEA schedules are available to view as a background document on the Council's website.

### **Key Issues for Consideration**

8. There are a number of changes proposed to the AAP in response to representations many of which are refinements rather than fundamental changes. These are identified in detail in the schedule at Appendix A and highlighted in the AAP at Appendix B. Members should focus their attention on the representations received and the proposed changes to the AAP (the struck through and underlined text indicated by a sideline in the margin of the page). However, in order to assist Members, some of the main changes arising from the representations to the AAP can be summarised as follows:

- Amend policy NS/2 to set a target of *approximately* 8,000 dwellings at Northstowe to allow the possibility of some variation in density within the site as a result of as yet unseen detailed designs which will be approved by the Council over the 15-year construction period;

- A change to provide 300 metres green separation from the Village Framework at St Michael's Mount (this is the same as 200 metres from the Conservation Area boundary and therefore results in no extra land take);
- Policy NS/10 is proposed to be amended to provide for a housing mix which will provide a better balance of house types (40% with 1 or 2 bedrooms, 30 % with 3 bedrooms and 30% with 4 or more bedrooms);
- Amend the population size of Northstowe to be approximately 19,000 people (average household size of 2.4 persons);
- Proposed amendments to policy NS/13 clarify the purpose of the policy to ensure that adequate road capacity is available in the A14 corridor for new town traffic throughout the construction of Northstowe;
- Proposed amendment to policy NS/14 to allow for the provision of High Quality Public Transport should there be any unforeseen delay in the provision of the Cambridge Guided Busway;
- Proposed amendment to exclude 2 hectares of small holding from the proposed Country Park west of Station Road, Longstanton;
- Amend policy NS24 to require that all flood mitigation measures should make allowance for the forecast effects of climate change and to ensure that balancing ponds associated with the proposed access roads will be designed to provide flood control for Longstanton Brook;
- The requirement for a single body to manage watercourses is amended to instead set the requirements for any body or bodies, such as the need for public accountability and sufficient powers, funding, resources, expertise and integrated management to be secured by legal agreement;
- The requirement for 25% water conservation measures has reluctantly been recommended to be deleted in policy in response to a representation from GO-East that this lies outside the scope of the planning system. A reference to the importance of this issue has been retained in the supporting text;
- The scope of the energy conservation policy has been amended to delete aspects which GO-East advise are outside the scope of the planning system;
- Amendment of the start date for development from 2006 to 2007 and the likelihood that slightly less than 6,000 dwellings will be delivered by 2016;
- Proposed amendment to policy NS/27 to include a re-use and recycling scheme as part of the construction strategy;
- New chapter on delivery of the AAP (Chapter E3) which sets out the mechanisms for implementing the AAP and includes a housing trajectory, a requirement of the new plan making system which predicts delivery of the development; and
- New chapter on monitoring the AAP (Chapter E4) which highlights the importance of the plan, monitor and manage approach and sets out the indicators that will be used to monitor delivery of Northstowe.

9. Many of the representations which have not resulted in proposed changes to the Area Action Plan were repetitions or refinements of representations submitted at the Preferred Options stage in Autumn 2004 and considered by Council at its meetings in Winter/Spring 2005. Some of the main themes of those representations, where no changes proposed are:

- Northstowe should have a target size of 10,000 dwellings;
- The proposed site does not have capacity for the development of 8,000 dwellings;
- The site proposed in the Area Action Plan should be extended to include land west of Station Road, Longstanton instead of allocating this land as a Country Park;

- A site with capacity for 10,000 dwellings should be allocated for Northstowe which would straddle the St Ives railway line and be located more centrally between Longstanton, Oakington, Willingham and Rampton;
- The requirement in the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan “to mitigate current flood risks affecting Oakington village” should be extended to Longstanton;
- Greater green separation is needed for Longstanton and Oakington; and
- The Area Action Plan includes too much detailed guidance.

### **Next Steps**

10. Members are being asked to agree the Northstowe AAP at this meeting for submission to the Secretary of State. However, if there are any matters arising from this meeting, they will be brought back to Council at its meeting on 9 December for final agreement. The revised Northstowe AAP, together with the Core Strategy DPD, Development Control Policies DPD, Site Specific Policies DPD and the other Area Action Plans for Cambridge East and Cambridge Southern Fringe that are the subject of separate meetings of Council, will be submitted to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in January 2006.
11. Further minor technical updating will also be required to the Northstowe AAP and consistency across the plans will need to be checked to ensure that any consequential changes are made as a result of proposed changes in other DPDs. Members are asked to delegate this process to the Portfolio Holder if it involves any matters of policy and to the Development Services Director for purely technical changes.
12. Submission to the Secretary of State will trigger the start of a further statutory six week period during which representations can be made on the AAP. Once this consultation period has finished public views will also be sought and considered on any “objection” sites. This includes both new and alternative development sites put forward by objectors to the AAP and will give an opportunity for third parties to make formal representations before objection sites are considered by the Inspector. This is a new stage under the new plan making system. A public examination is then scheduled for July to October 2006 (with a recess in August) to be chaired by an independent Inspector who will test the “soundness” of the AAP. Finally the Inspector will produce a binding report which is programmed for March 2007 and the Council will then adopt the AAP.

### **Options**

13. There are no specific options to put before Members at this stage.

### **Community Safety Implications**

14. None

### **Environmental / Sustainability Implications**

15. Key components of the AAP will consider matters such as landscape and biodiversity, land drainage and water conservation, energy efficiency and managing waste. The Sustainability Appraisal of the proposed changes to the AAP did not identify any significant issues.

### **Equal Opportunities Implications**

16. None

### **Financial Implications**

17. The additional round of public consultation occasioned by the September 2004 changes in the Regulations for plan-making has had to be funded from the unspent monies for the Public Examination into the 'soundness' of the plans which has now been postponed to the next financial year. Additional budgetary provision will have to be added to the monies which will be rolled over into 2006/07.

### **Legal Implications**

18. None.

### **Risk Management Implications**

19. The effect of any slippage to the timetable could be significant to meeting the Structure Plan development strategy for the Cambridge area.

### **Staffing Implications**

20. Within existing resources.

### **Conclusions**

21. The Pre-Submission Public Participation has resulted in a positive level of support for many of the policies contained in the draft AAP and many of the objections received were seeking refinement of policies rather than major changes to them. The Council's selection of its preferred site option has led to a significant reduction in the number of representations from the public although the promoters of alternative land for the site of Northstowe have continued to make representations and account for the majority of objections to the Northstowe AAP.
22. A number of representations from GO-East questioned the need for and scope of policies in the AAP and sought a streamlining of the plan and increased emphasis on linkages with other plans and strategies and on implementation and monitoring. These have been addressed through proposed changes to the AAP. The Sustainability Appraisal of all proposed changes confirms that these do not have any material impacts on the sustainability credentials of the AAP.
23. The revised AAP as contained in Appendix B is considered to be a sound plan and ready for submission to the Secretary of State, subject to the further refinement proposed.

### **Recommendations**

24. Members are invited to:
- (a) **AGREE** the responses to representations to the Pre-Submission draft Northstowe Area Action Plan (AAP) as contained in Appendix A.
  - (b) **AGREE** the responses to representations to the Draft Final Sustainability Report for the Northstowe AAP as contained in Appendix A.

- (c) **AGREE** the proposed changes to the draft AAP as contained in Appendix A and incorporated into Appendix B and that it **BE SUBMITTED** to the Secretary of State in January 2006.
- (d) **DELEGATE** further minor editing changes to the DPDs to the Planning Portfolio Holder where they involve matters of policy and to the Development Services Director where they are technical matters.

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

Pre-submission Northstowe Area Action Plan, June 2005  
Representations received in response to the above document.  
Representations received in response to the Draft Final Sustainability Report for the Northstowe AAP.  
Revised Sustainability Appraisal

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