



To: Executive Councillor for Planning and Sustainable
Transport: Councillor Tim Ward
Report by: Head of Planning Services
Relevant scrutiny committee: DEVELOPMENT PLAN SCRUTINY 29/5/2012
SUB COMMITTEE
Wards affected: All Wards

CAMBRIDGE LOCAL PLAN - TOWARDS 2031 Issues and Options Report for Consultation

Key Decision

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The current Local Plan was adopted in July 2006. It sets out a vision, policies and proposal for future development and land use in Cambridge to 2016 and beyond.
- 1.2 Whilst the current Local Plan is an effective document and good progress is being made in terms of the delivery of the urban extensions in the Southern Fringe and North West, it is important that the Local Plan is reviewed and policies are updated.
- 1.3 The preparation of a Local Plan involves a number of stages, including public consultation. This is to ensure that it is robust and comprehensive.
- 1.4 The Issues and Options stage is about considering the types of issues that the city will face over the next two decades, and thinking about the policies and policy options that will need to be put in place to address those challenges. The issues and options document presents these issues and options in a thematic way to start the process of developing new policies.
- 1.5 Consultation on the Issues and Options Report is scheduled for six weeks between 15 June and 27 July 2012.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 This report is being submitted to the Development Plan Scrutiny Sub-Committee for prior consideration and comment before decision by the

Executive Councillor for Planning and Sustainable Transport. The Executive Councillor is recommended:

- a) To agree the Issues and Options Report (Appendix A) including the summary document (Appendix B), and interim Sustainability Appraisal (Appendix C) for consultation;
- b) To agree the consultation arrangements set out in paragraphs 3.33 to 3.38 and the consultee list (Appendix D);
- c) To endorse the supporting evidence base relating to the 2012 Appraisal of the Inner Green Belt (Appendix E), Housing and Employment Provision in Cambridge – Technical Background Paper (Appendix F) Cambridge Sub-Regional Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment 2011 (Appendix G) and Gypsy & Traveller Provision in Cambridge – Site Assessment Process 2012 (Appendix H); and
- d) To agree that any minor amendments and editing changes that need to be made prior to publication should be agreed by the Executive Councillor in consultation with the chair and spokes.

3. Background

- 3.1 The current Local Plan was adopted in July 2006. It sets out a vision, policies and proposal for future development and land use in Cambridge to 2016 and beyond. The Local Plan adopted a spatial strategy for Cambridge that promoted a limited number of large urban extensions to the city. The rationale behind this approach was to redress the imbalance of homes and jobs in Cambridge, and provide for the long-term growth of Cambridge University and Addenbrooke's Hospital Campus whilst minimising further increases in congestion on radial routes into the city. This approach involved a review of the inner boundary of the Cambridge Green Belt.
- 3.2 Whilst the current Local Plan is an effective document and good progress is being made in terms of the delivery of the urban extensions in the Southern Fringe and North West, it is important that the Local Plan is reviewed and policies are updated. If not, the Council is at risk of its policy framework becoming out of date and inappropriate development could come forward.
- 3.3 Planning policies need to be robust and kept updated in order to provide both certainty and flexibility for future development proposals. The planning process should provide certainty to the community and development industry. Given this, the Council agreed in March 2011 to press ahead with the review of the Local Plan, with adoption of a new Plan by mid 2014 (see Committee Report at the following link).

- 3.4 Since March 2011, various changes have taken place at a national level. The Localism Act received royal assent in November 2011 and provides the legal basis for the abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) and the introduction of Neighbourhood Planning. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) also came into effect on 27 March 2012. In terms of plan making, the NPPF gives a 12 month transitional period for Councils to update their plans to ensure consistency with the framework. Weight will also be given to policies in emerging plans as they progress through the review process. Whilst the current Local Plan is considered to be in general conformity with the NPPF, it is important that the Council presses ahead with its replacement.
- 3.5 The preparation of a Local Plan involves a number of stages including public consultation. This is to ensure that it is robust and comprehensive. Key stages in the process are:
- *Preparation of Evidence Base* – preparation and completion of various studies which will be used to inform issues and options and policy development;
 - *Consultation on Issues and Options* – Identification of relevant Issues and Options for the future development and protection of the city. Consultation with relevant stakeholder groups and with the wider public;
 - *Submission Draft Consultation* - Consultation on the draft Plan.
 - *Submission* - Submission of the new Local Plan document to the Secretary of State;
 - *Examination* - An independent Government Inspector considers the 'soundness' of the document in a public examination and produces a report; and
 - *Adoption* - Formally adopted by the Council.

The Issues and Options stage

- 3.6 The issues and options stage is about considering the types of issues that the city will face over the next two decades and thinking about the policies and policy options that will need to be put in place to address those challenges. The Issues and Options Report presents these

issues and options in a thematic way to start the process of developing new policies.

- 3.7 As part of the early stage of developing a new plan, the Council has undertaken a significant amount of work in compiling its evidence base. This has involved the completion of a number of studies as well as working with key stakeholders, organisations and groups across the city. A series of workshops were also held between December 2011 and February 2012, with Councillors, stakeholders, developers, agents and residents associations. The purpose of these workshops was to explain how the Local Plan will be prepared, to encourage people to get involved from an early stage and to discuss issues and concerns. Reports documenting these workshops can be found on the City Council's website using the following link:
<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan-review.en>
- 3.8 One to one meetings were also offered and a number were held with various organisations in order to help understand future needs and concerns.
- 3.8 A comprehensive list of the evidence base work can be found as an appendix to the Issues and Options Report.
- 3.9 The Issues and Options Report pulls all of this information together and provides an opportunity for local residents and other key stakeholders and organisations to have sight of and discuss a range of issues and options that are relevant to the future planning and development of the city.
- 3.9 Appendix A includes the Issues and Options Report for consultation. The Report has been structured around different topic areas, this means there is some repetition but all of the topic areas are very much interrelated. The Report includes a vision, strategic objectives, and specific chapters relating to the future spatial strategy, possible opportunity areas and other topic areas. Each chapter provides key facts about the topic area, specific objectives and sets a strategic priority at the start. The chapters are as follows:
- Chapter 2 sets out a possible vision for Cambridge to 2031 and a number of strategic objectives.
 - Chapter 3 is concerned with the spatial strategy and focuses on the approach to housing and employment provision.
 - Chapter 4 sets out a number of other strategic spatial options, dealing with matters such as the Green Belt and the City Centre.

- Chapter 5 deals with potential opportunity areas, which are areas in the City which have been identified as having the potential to be considered for future improvement or development over the plan period.
- Chapter 6 is concerned with sustainable development, climate change, water resources and flooding.
- Chapter 7 deals with creating successful places in Cambridge and is concerned with design, landscape, and public realm.
- Chapter 8 sets out options to protect and enhance both the historic built environment and the natural environment.
- Chapter 9 is concerned with delivering high quality housing.
- Chapter 10 deals with building a strong and competitive economy, including sections on employment, retail, higher and further education and tourism.
- Chapter 11 is concerned with creating successful communities, including the provision of open space, leisure facilities and community facilities.
- Chapter 12 deals with promoting and delivering sustainable transport and other kinds of infrastructure, and the mechanisms for doing so.

3.10 There are a number of issues and options that need to be raised and considered at this stage, and a plain English summary document has also been prepared to signpost people through the plan (Appendix B). A checklist against the current Local Plan and NPPF will also be provided as part of the consultation.

Levels of Housing and Employment Provision

3.11 Changes brought about through the Localism Act 2011, now require local authorities to be responsible for setting their own level of housing and employment provision rather than targets being set at a regional level through Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS). This means that alongside establishing where future development should go, the Council needs to establish an appropriate level of housing and employment provision to 2031. Levels of housing and employment provision will need to be justified, based on evidence and include consideration of any cross boundary and strategic issues/implications. Furthermore, given the competing development pressures in Cambridge, the Council will need to consider how these needs can be met and balanced with environmental and infrastructure constraints along with improving the quality of life for all.

3.12 Given the need to accommodate more homes and jobs in Cambridge, and in a sustainable way, a key issue for the new Local Plan will be

how many new homes should be provided over the next 20 years, along with the number of jobs.

- 3.13 Planning for an appropriate level of housing and employment provision requires us to take account of a range of forecasts for population, homes and jobs. This information has been pulled together in a background document to inform the development of options: Housing and Employment Provision in Cambridge Technical Background Paper (Appendix F)
- 3.14 Due to the closely drawn administrative boundary around Cambridge the Council is working closely with South Cambridgeshire District Council to consider the needs of the wider area, and both Councils will need to decide whether the current spatial strategy approach for the Cambridge area remains the most appropriate to 2031 or whether an alternative would be more sustainable.
- 3.15 Alongside exploring what the right level of development for Cambridge should be over the next 20 years, it is important to explore where development should be directed. As part of this, a key issue for consideration at this stage is to explore the principle of whether there should be more development on the edge of Cambridge and whether exceptional circumstances exist to justify the release of further land from the Green Belt to meet the housing and employment needs of the area.
- 3.16 At this stage the most appropriate approach to these questions is for them to be raised through a comprehensive look at the broad locations on the edge of Cambridge and present the factual technical information for each location. This approach should enable views to be sought before any decision is taken. Members and the communities in these areas will be well aware that these examinations have been undertaken previously. The process of delivering a new plan requires us to revisit these questions as part of the necessary robust examination of all possible options for the city. Further consultation on any site specific options with detailed boundaries will follow in autumn/winter 2012, again prior to any decisions that need to be taken on the preferred spatial strategy.
- 3.17 This approach was supported at the Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire, County Council Strategic Transport and Spatial Planning Group on 18 April 2012. The report is available online and can be found using the following link:
<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/CMSWebsite/Apps/Committees/Meeting.aspx?meetingID=471>

- 3.18 To help inform this debate, officers have undertaken an appraisal of the Inner Green Belt. A copy of this is attached as Appendix E. In summary the appraisal found that, on the whole, recent releases on the edge of the city were sound. However those changes, which are currently underway at the edge of City through new development in the agreed urban extensions, will result in the adjacent rural land increasing its value to the Green Belt purposes and to the setting of the City. This will have a key bearing on the evaluation of these areas that will take place through the preparation of this plan.
- 3.19 Deciding on how many new homes and jobs should be provided, and where these are best located should come through a step by step process. As the preparation of the Local Plan continues, everything will be brought together in order to ensure that the right approach is developed and agreed. This means that whilst the provision of new homes and jobs is important, a balance needs to be achieved with other objectives. Cambridge is a special place and the future shape and function of the city needs careful consideration. There are constraints on the amount of development that can take place within Cambridge, given its constrained area, historic environment, and limited infrastructure as the importance of protecting the Green Belt and enhancing the unique setting of Cambridge. There will be difficult choices to be made but these are decisions that we need to make locally, not have handed down to us. This document is the start of that process.
- 3.20 Related to the number of new homes that need to be provided to 2031, is ensuring that provision is made for Gypsy and Travellers. In March 2012, the Government released national guidance on planning for Gypsies and Travellers sites. The guidance requires that Councils set pitch targets to address the likely need, working collaboratively with neighbouring authorities. In 2011, a review of the 2006 Cambridge Sub-Regional Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment was undertaken. For Cambridge, it identified that 1 permanent pitch was needed between 2011 and 2031. This is related to the natural growth of Gypsies and Traveller family groups identified as already in Cambridge. In addition to this, there is a need to consider transit or emerging stopping provision for Gypsies and Travellers in the Cambridge area. A copy of this assessment is attached as Appendix G.
- 3.21 Given the limited land supply in Cambridge, it is often difficult to find land suitable for site provision and in order to help with this process, an assessment of sites has been undertaken. The assessment criteria and results are set out for information in Appendix H.

- 3.22 The assessment did not identify any appropriate sites within the built up area of Cambridge and provision for Gypsy and Travellers is specifically mentioned in Chapter 9 of the Issues and Options Report.

Sustainability Appraisal and Other Assessments

- 3.23 The options within the Issues and Options Report have been subject to sustainability appraisal (SA). This means that the options have been assessed against a range of social, environmental and economic topics in order to help identify any significant effects. The Interim Sustainability Appraisal (Appendix C) will be subject to consultation alongside the Issues and Options Report. Consultees will be able to draw on the findings of the SA to inform their representations to the Issues and Options Report. They will also be able to make comments on the findings of the SA.
- 3.24 The SA advises on ways in which any adverse effects could be avoided, reduced or mitigated or how any positive effects could be maximised. It will be used by the Council, along with the consultation responses received, to help decide on which options to take forward to develop as policies in the Local Plan. The SA will subsequently appraise policies as they are developed to ensure that they are in keeping with the aims of sustainable development.
- 3.24 As part of plan-making, other assessments are required. Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) is required under the European 'Habitats Directive' (92/43/EEC). It is an assessment of the potential impacts of implementing a plan or policy on European sites of nature conservation importance (Natura 2000 Sites) and aims to avoid any potential damaging effects.
- 3.25 There are no Natura 2000 sites within Cambridge City Council's boundary, and so any potential impacts would be related to potential changes to the water environment, which could have an impact on more distant sites such as the Ouse Washes. This will be taken into account during the development of the Local Plan.
- 3.26 A formal assessment will be undertaken when a draft Local Plan has been developed, before submission consultation, as it will not be until this time that the potential impacts can be properly assessed. This approach has been discussed and agreed with Natural England.
- 3.27 The Equality Act 2010 requires local authorities to consider how its policies and decisions impact disadvantaged groups and minimise this impact. The Council will undertake this through an Equalities Impact Assessment. This assessment will be undertaken when a draft Local

Plan has been developed, before submission consultation, as it will not be until this time that the potential impacts can be properly and fully assessed.

Duty To Co-operate

- 3.28 The NPPF states that public bodies have a duty to cooperate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, particularly those that relate to strategic priorities. Councils are required to work collaboratively to ensure that strategic priorities across local boundaries are properly co-ordinated and clearly reflected in individual Local Plans. The City Council will be expected to demonstrate evidence that it has successfully cooperated to plan for issues with cross boundary impacts when the Local Plan is submitted for examination. This could be by way of a memorandum of understanding or a jointly prepared strategy, which is presented as evidence of an agreed position. As part of examining the “soundness” of plans inspectors will be required to assess whether a plan has been prepared in accordance with the duty to cooperate.
- 3.29 At a County level, appropriate arrangements have been put in place to facilitate the duty to co-operate on strategic planning issues across the county, with the establishment of a Joint Strategic Planning Unit.
- 3.30 In addition, joint working arrangements are also being developed between the City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council and the County Council in order to address strategic cross boundary issues as part of the Local Plan review process for each Council as well as addressing transport related issues. The Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire and County Council Strategic Transport and Spatial Planning Group has been established and to date, two meetings have taken place.
- 3.31 Joint working between the City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council and the County Council is already well established. In particular, the City Council and South Cambridgeshire have jointly commissioned much of the evidence base to support Local Plan preparation because of the interaction between the two districts and to make best use of limited funding.
- 3.32 The interrelationship between the two areas means that decisions cannot be taken in isolation and the future approach needs to be a joined up and seamless approach to the proper planning of the area. On the whole South Cambridgeshire looks towards Cambridge as the main centre for services and facilities, and any decision relating to the

spatial strategy in South Cambridgeshire is likely to have an impact on Cambridge and vice versa.

Consultation Arrangements

3.33 In November 2011, the Council agreed a Consultation and Community Engagement Strategy for the Local Plan review:

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/democracy/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=184&MId=675&Ver=4>.

This recognises the importance of engaging the community from the outset of the review process and sets out the Council's general approach to consulting and engaging the community at each stage.

3.34 The planning regulations, establish minimum requirements for consultation and at the Issues and Options stage the Council is required to consult specific and general consultation bodies, as appropriate to the document. Appendix D includes the list of consultees.

3.35 In accordance with the Consultation and Community Engagement Strategy, consultation arrangements include:

- Consultation for 6 weeks between 15 June to 27 July 2012;
- Letters and emails informing Consultees of consultation dates and how to view and respond to the consultation material;
- A public notice
- All documents to be made available on the Council's website and Customer Service Centre including a small exhibition.
- Libraries to receive hard copies
- Article in the summer edition of Cambridge Matters which goes to every household in the city;
- Publicise through the Council's Facebook page and Twitter as well as developing a Local Plan news blog.

3.36 A series of exhibitions across the city are also being planned. Possible dates and venues are outlined below:

Organisation/Event	Dates	Where
West Cambridge Exhibition	Tues 19 th June 3pm - 8 pm	West Cambridge Sports Pavillion, Wilberforce Road, CB3 0EQ
North Cambridge Exhibition	Sat 23 rd June 10am - 3pm	The Meadows Community Centre
East Cambridge Exhibition	Tues 26 th June 3pm - 8 pm	Venue to be confirmed
South West Cambridge Exhibition	Sat 30 th June 10am - 3pm	Trumpington Village Hall
South East Cambridge Exhibition	Tues 3 rd July 3.30pm - 8 pm	Cherry Hinton Village Centre
Central Cambridge Exhibition	Wed 4 th July 10am - 8 pm	Small Hall – Guildhall

Organisation/Event	Dates	Where
Central Cambridge Exhibition (Stall with ChYPPS)	Sat 7 th July 10am - 3pm (to be confirmed)	The Big Weekend
North East Cambridge Exhibition	Tues 10 th July 3pm - 8 pm	Brownsfield Community Centre
Central Cambridge Exhibition	Mon 16 th July 10am - 8 pm	Small Hall – Guildhall
East Cambridge Exhibition	Sat 14 th July 1pm - 5pm	Ross St Community Centre

3.37 A specific event is being organised by FeCRA, primarily for Resident Associations, on 16 June 2012. Officers are attending other resident association meetings to discuss the Report and how to respond. A smaller feedback group of residents associations is also being set up to work with officers and provide ongoing feedback as the plan progresses.

3.38 Specific sessions with young people and other groups are also being planned.

Next Steps

3.39 Once consultation on the Issues and Options Report has finished, all of the representations received will be considered and used to develop the Council's preferred approach prior to drafting the Submission Plan.

3.40 A further round of consultation has been scheduled for autumn /winter 2012 on sites options for particular types of development such as housing, employment, community facilities, shopping. This will show specific site boundaries on maps and bring together information from other studies such as the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and the Open Space Strategy.

3.41 Following this, the new Plan will be drafted including a further round of public consultation prior to being submitted to the Secretary of State for examination.

4. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report, the cost of preparing a Local Plan is a significant one but which has been budgeted for. The agreed approach of preparing one single Local Plan rather than three separate Development Plan Documents will mean that considerable cost and time savings can be achieved.

(b) **Staffing Implications**

4.2 There are no direct staffing implications arising from this report.

(c) **Equal Opportunities Implications**

4.3 There are no direct equal opportunities arising from this report. An Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of preparing a new development plan for Cambridge.

(d) **Environmental Implications**

4.4 There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report. The new Local Plan for Cambridge will assist in the delivery of high quality and sustainable new developments along with protecting and enhancing the built and natural environments in the City. This will include measures to help Cambridge adapt to the changing climate as well as measures to reduce carbon emissions from new development. Overall there should be a positive climate change impact.

(e) **Consultation**

4.5 Consultation arrangements are set in paragraphs 3.33 to 3.38 and are consistent with the Councils Code of best practice on consultation and community engagement.

(f) **Community Safety**

4.6 There are no direct community safety implications arising from this report.

5. Background papers

These background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Localism Act 2011

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

6. Appendices

Appendix A: Issues and Options Report

Appendix B: Summary Document

Appendix C: Interim Sustainability Appraisal

Appendix D: Consultee List

Appendix E: Inner Green Belt Boundary Appraisal 2012

Appendix F: Housing and Employment Provision – Technical Background paper

Appendix G: Cambridge Sub-Regional Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment 2011

Appendix H: Gypsy & Traveller Provision in Cambridge – Site Assessment Process 2012.

7. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

Author's Name:	Sara.Saunders@cambridge.gov.uk
Author's Phone Number:	01223 - 457186
Author's Email:	sara.saunders@cambridge.gov.uk