



To: Executive Councillor for Planning and Climate Change: Councillor Tim Ward
Report by: Head of Planning Services
Relevant scrutiny committee: Development Plan Scrutiny Sub Committee 16/10/2012
Wards affected: All Wards

**CAMBRIDGE LOCAL PLAN - TOWARDS 2031
Issues and Options 2 – Proposed Methodology for Assessing Sites**

Not a Key Decision

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The next stage of consultation for the Local Plan Review, is Issues and Options 2 in January / February of 2013. This consultation will focus on potential sites to be allocated for different types of land use, such as housing, employment, retail.
- 1.2 This report sets out a proposed methodology for assessing sites for possible inclusion as allocations within the Cambridge Local Plan – Towards 2031. It is intended to be both rigorous and transparent. At the core of the appraisal is a pro forma which will be used to assess the suitability and deliverability of sites, and which fully integrates sustainability appraisal.

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 Climate Change.
- 2.2 The Executive Councillor is recommended:
 - a) To endorse the methodology for assessing sites to be included as allocations within the Cambridge Local Plan as set out in Appendix A.

3. Background

- 3.1 A separate report to Committee sets out the overall timetable for review of the Local Plan and progress to date. The focus of this report is in relation to sites. As with the 2006 Local Plan, the new Local Plan

will contain site allocations for different types of land use such as housing, employment, retail and designations for uses such as open space. These sites will be identified on the Proposals Map.

- 3.2 The Issues and Options Report which was consulted upon in June / July of this year set out broad locations for development and the location of some Opportunity Areas, however it did not propose detailed boundaries of potential sites for different types of land use. For many topic areas a question was asked in the Issues and Options Report calling for any potential sites. Another round of consultation is planned to ask the public, developers and stakeholders for their views on potential sites before any decisions are taken. This consultation is planned for six weeks in January and February 2013.
- 3.3 In order to identify potential sites, a methodology has been developed, which is set out in Appendix A. Only sites that are available, and suitable in planning and sustainability terms will be consulted upon, as these are the reasonable alternatives. The viability of sites, particularly housing sites, will also be assessed which may rule out further sites. The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive requires that 'reasonable alternatives' are considered. The Government's SEA Practical Guide (2006) is clear that only reasonable, realistic and relevant alternatives need to be put forward.
- 3.4 To assess the suitability of sites, a pro forma has been developed which sets out a list of criteria, against which each site will be assessed. The pro forma has been developed to fully integrate the Sustainability Appraisal (SA), and the criteria in the pro forma take into account the social, environmental and economic sustainability themes identified in the SA Scoping Report. The pro forma also builds upon the assessment that was carried out on potential housing sites in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).

Approach to Fringe Sites

- 3.5 The methodology sets out the difference in approach to sites within the urban area of Cambridge, and those at the edge of the City. The fringe sites were identified as broad locations within the Issues and Options Report. These broad locations were identified jointly with South Cambridgeshire District Council, because in most cases the sites cross the boundary and are within both Districts.
- 3.6 Part of the consultation in early 2013 will be joint with South Cambridgeshire District Council and will include site options on the edge of Cambridge as well as providing appropriate context on the development strategy alternatives for the wider Cambridge area.

Again, at this stage, all reasonable alternatives need to be considered and consulted upon before any decisions are taken.

Next Steps

- 3.7 Officers will be undertaking site assessment work and preparing for Issues and Options 2 consultation in January 2013. Joint working will take place with officers at South Cambridgeshire District Council, and the County Council. The draft Issues and Options 2 consultation will be presented to Development Plan Scrutiny Sub Committee in December 2012 and will be seeking agreement to consult between January to February 2013.

4. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The cost of preparing a new Local Plan is a significant one but this has been budgeted for.

(b) Staffing Implications (if not covered in Consultations Section)

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

(c) Equal Opportunities Implications

- 4.3 There are no direct equal opportunity arising from this report. An Equalities Impact Assessment will be prepared as part the draft Plan stage.

(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) Procurement

- 4.5 There are no direct procurement implications arising from this report.

(f) Consultation and communication

4.6 The consultation and communications arrangements for the Issues and Options 2 consultation will be agreed at Development Plan Scrutiny Sub Committee in December 2012.

(g) **Community Safety**

4.7 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:

- Cambridge Local Plan – Towards 2031 Issues and Options Report June 2012 (can be accessed at: <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/public/docs/local-plan-review-issues-and-options-report.pdf>)

6. Appendices

Appendix A – Cambridge Local Plan – Towards 2031: Proposed Methodology for Assessing Sites for Allocation in the Local Plan

7. Inspection of papers

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

Author's Name: Myles Greensmith
Author's Phone Number: 01223 457171
Author's Email: Myles.greensmith@cambridge.gov.uk