

CAMBRIDGE NORTHERN FRINGE EAST AREA ACTION PLAN – DRAFT ISSUES AND OPTIONS REPORT

To: Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire, County Council Strategic Transport and Spatial Planning Group

From: Head of Planning Services, Cambridge City Council
Director for Planning and New Communities, South Cambridgeshire District Council

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Cambridge Northern Fringe East (CNFE) area is a major regeneration priority for Cambridge and the wider area. Both the City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council have committed to its redevelopment through respective policies in their submitted Local Plans which both propose the preparation of a joint Area Action Plan (AAP) to guide and shape its future development. The proposed new station due to open in 2016 is a catalyst for regeneration of this area and an opportunity to bring employment led mixed use development and provide an attractive new gateway to Cambridge.
- 1.2 The area contains a number of key infrastructure uses that serve Cambridge such as the Water Recycling Centre (sewage treatment works) and the strategic aggregates railhead. The way these uses are provided and accommodated into the future will affect the way the area is developed. Given the multiple land uses and ownership, and the complexity of the area it is important to provide a clear and comprehensive public steer for its redevelopment. The planning system, through the AAP, can provide a clear planning framework for the development of the area to ensure there is an integrated, rather than piecemeal, regeneration approach which realises the potential of the area and ensures development opportunities are not missed or compromised.
- 1.3 The Councils are at an early stage of the AAP process and are moving towards the first stage of public consultation. The purpose of this report is to outline key issues and options for the AAP including a range of spatial options for the way the area could be regenerated. The Issues and Options Report for consultation is still being finalised and a draft version is attached as Appendix 1.
- 1.4 This report is being submitted to the JST&SPG for prior consideration and comment before being considered by Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council. The views of this group will be reported to and considered by the relevant decision making bodies of each council as part of their decision making processes. For the City Council, it will be considered by the Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Transport at the Development Plan Scrutiny Sub Committee on 11 November 2014, and for South Cambridgeshire, it will be considered by the Planning Portfolio Holder at his meeting on 18 November 2014.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Joint Strategic Transport and Spatial Planning Group recommends that the councils agree the draft Issues & Options Report for consultation as set out in Appendix 1.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The CNFE area has been the subject of ambitious initiatives and policy documents going back twenty years.
- 3.2 Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District 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 are due to start in November 2014.
- 3.3 Policy 14 in the submitted Cambridge Local Plan and Policy SS/4 in the submitted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 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 CNFE area.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 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.
- 3.6 Planning permission was granted on 18 December 2013 by the Joint Development Control Committee for the new Cambridge Science Park Railway Station on the Chesterton Rail Sidings.
- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 Therefore, in order to move forward with planning of this area Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council with support from Cambridgeshire County Council as a key stakeholder agreed to prepare an Area Action Plan (AAP) for this area on the 6th February 2014.
- 3.9 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

- 3.10 As highlighted above, the Issues & Options Report is the first stage in the preparation of the Area Action Plan for Cambridge Northern Fringe East. Please note that the Issues and Options Report for consultation is still being finalised and a draft version is attached as Appendix 1. 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.
- 3.11 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.
- 3.12 A do nothing (baseline) option has been rejected, because it would not meet the Vision and Development Objectives for the area. However, it is a useful starting point for comparing with other redevelopment options in the Interim Sustainability Appraisal which accompanies this document.
- 3.13 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.
- 3.14 The final development is likely to be combination of aspects of more than one option.
- 3.15 The Issues and Options Report recognises that the Water Recycling Centre performs a vital infrastructure service for the Greater Cambridge area. Discussions are ongoing 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. A meeting is being held with Anglian Water to discuss these issues and verbal update will be given at the meeting.
- 3.16 Options 3 and 4 would require significant changes to the Water Recycling Centre and would present significant 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.
- 3.17 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.
- 3.18 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.
- 3.19 It will also include consideration of implementation and delivery.
- 4. Next Steps**
- 4.1 Subject to the consideration and agreement by each Council, consultation on the Issues and Options Report is planned to take place on 8 December 2014 to 2 February 2015. The results of consultation will inform the preparation of a proposed submission Area Action Plan.

5. Background papers

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

Cambridge Local Plan 2014: Proposed Submission
South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2014: Proposed Submission
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Core Strategy 2011
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Site Specific Proposals Plan 2012

6. Appendices

6.1 Appendix 1: Draft Cambridge Northern Fringe East Area Action Plan Issues and Options Report

7. Inspection of papers

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

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