



To: Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Transport: Councillor Kevin Blencowe

Report by: Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire

Relevant scrutiny committee: Full Council 23 February 2017

Wards affected: All Wards

**CAMBRIDGE LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION – FURTHER PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS FOR STUDENT ACCOMMODATION, GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS, AND ACCESSIBLE HOMES**

**Key Decision**

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**1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 The Councils submitted the Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Local Plans for examination on 28 March 2014. Hearings sessions have been held from November 2014 through to the present day. Further hearing sessions will take place during 2017.
- 1.2 During the course of the examination, a number of issues have arisen or changes in circumstances taken place that require further consideration by Members. This report has been produced to provide an update to Members on further work that has been undertaken on the Local Plan in relation to student accommodation, provision for Gypsies and Travellers and accessibility standards for new homes. Further proposed modifications and the justification for those modifications to the emerging Local Plan are set out at Appendix A. The Sustainability Appraisal of the further proposed modifications, which assesses the environmental, social and economic impacts of the proposed policies, is provided at Appendix B. The outputs of this further work, which form part of the Council's evidence base for the

emerging Local Plan, are presented in Appendices C, D and E. These appendices address:

- Student accommodation (Appendix C);
- Gypsies and Travellers accommodation needs (Appendix D); and
- Accessibility standards for new housing (Appendix E).

1.3 The report and its appendices were presented to Development Plan Scrutiny Sub Committee on 25 January 2017. Paragraphs 3.13 to 3.15 of this report provide a summary of changes arising from that meeting.

## **2. Recommendations**

2.1 The Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Transport recommends that Full Council approves:

- The further proposed modifications (Appendix A) and the Sustainability Appraisal (Appendix B) be approved for submission to the Inspectors examining the Local Plan;
- Agrees that the documents attached to this report as Appendices C, D and E are noted and submitted as part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan;
- To agree that delegated authority be given to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development to make any subsequent minor amendments and editing changes, in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Transport, Chair of and Spokes of Development Plan Scrutiny Sub Committee.

## **3. Background**

3.1 Since the submission of the emerging Local Plan to the Secretary of State in March 2014, changes to national policy and changing local circumstances have resulted in the need for further work to be undertaken in relation to the following areas:

- Student accommodation;
- Gypsies and Travellers accommodation needs; and
- Accessibility standards for new housing.

- 3.2 This report and its accompanying appendices set out a number of further proposed modifications to the emerging Local Plan to address changes in national policy and local circumstances, including evidence base work on the topics listed above which has been completed by the Council in recent months.

### **Student accommodation**

- 3.3 Cambridge City Council and Oxford City Council recently commissioned the Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research to investigate issues relating to the provision of student accommodation in both cities. The assessment work was identified as necessary by Cambridge City Council for the following reasons:
1. Since the emerging Local Plan was submitted for examination in March 2014, a new element of the National Planning Practice Guidance was introduced in 2015 in respect of student accommodation;
  2. The Council has dealt with a significant appeal for student accommodation on an existing housing allocation (App/Q0505/W/15/303586) at 315 – 349 Mill Road; and
  3. An increasing number of applications have come forward for student accommodation, with a particular emphasis on the provision of studio units as part of sui generis student accommodation.
- 3.4 The key findings of the student accommodation study are outlined in Section 7 of Appendix A to this report. The student accommodation study is provided as Appendix C *Assessment of Student Housing Demand and Supply for Cambridge City Council* to this report.
- 3.5 The student accommodation study shows that the number of students at educational institutions in Cambridge with a need for some form of accommodation is estimated at 46,132 in 2015/16. The types of accommodation used by students include purpose built student accommodation, shared housing, existing family housing and homestay.

- 3.6 Having taken existing growth plans into account, the student accommodation study reports that if all current and potential future students were to be accommodated in purpose built student accommodation, there would need to be provision of 7,908 bed spaces to 2026 (excluding student accommodation currently under construction or with planning permission).
- 3.7 In the absence of a national policy requirement to provide purpose built student accommodation, the ongoing uncertainty about needs beyond the next ten years, and the provision of student accommodation which continues to be made through both allocations and windfall sites, it is considered there is no justification to conclude that the Council's current approach in the emerging Local Plan is not reasonable.
- 3.8 The emerging Local Plan acknowledges the competing development pressures in Cambridge, including student accommodation, and it has always considered it important that a balanced approach is taken within the remit of sustainable development in order to support the economic and social needs as well as quality of life and place in the city.
- 3.9 Given this, the Council is not suggesting a major change of direction in the strategy for student accommodation in the emerging Local Plan and considers that student accommodation can continue to be provided in a variety of ways, through allocations for student accommodation and through the delivery of windfall sites.
- 3.10 Appendix 1 of Appendix A: *Further Proposed Modifications to the emerging Cambridge Local Plan* includes proposed modifications to Policy 3: Spatial location of residential development, Policy 46: Development of student housing, and allocations R17: Mount Pleasant House and U1: Old Press/Mill Lane. These modifications address the need to ensure that proposed residential allocations are developed for market and affordable housing, restriction of student accommodation to institutions with a known need, requirements to ensure that new student accommodation meets the specifications of the institutions, and provision of additional capacity for student accommodation on two allocations which are well-located to meet the needs of the universities.

- 3.11 The student accommodation study established that there is no consistent approach made to dealing with the counting of student accommodation towards the housing requirement. Given concerns about this approach, it is advised that the Council does not count student accommodation towards the housing requirement for the time-being. The Housing White Paper issued on 7 February 2017 does not provide a clear steer on this issue. However, it is expected that changes will be made to the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance later this year. The Council awaits these changes.
- 3.12 The study also includes recommendations for the next Local Plan, which is proposed to be a Local Plan covering the Greater Cambridge area. This would involve further consideration of student accommodation in the next Strategic Housing Market Assessment and the Council's Housing Strategy, which follows therefrom, and the potential to release market housing stock by further provision of student accommodation.
- 3.13 In responding to issues raised at Development Plan Scrutiny Sub-Committee, two alterations were made to the text in paragraphs 4.4 and 7.7 within Appendix A: Further Proposed Modifications to the emerging Cambridge Local Plan – Student Accommodation, Gypsies and Travellers, and Accessible Homes. These textual changes were made for clarity.
- 3.14 An additional modification to paragraph 3.10 of the emerging Cambridge Local Plan is also proposed. This additional modification is proposed to clarify that this area of major change is in close proximity to Anglia Ruskin University's East Road campus and offers opportunities for student accommodation to meet the identified needs of Anglia Ruskin University. This additional modification is included in the table of further proposed modifications (Appendix 1) of Appendix A: Further Proposed Modifications to the emerging Cambridge Local Plan – Student Accommodation, Gypsies and Travellers, and Accessible Homes.
- 3.15 This additional modification has been subject to Sustainability Appraisal which comprises Appendix B to the report. The Sustainability Appraisal concludes that this is a minor change to supporting text which would not change the sustainability performance of the plan. The screening conclusion is that there would be no change to the results of the Sustainability Appraisal.

3.16 Prior to the emerging Local Plan being adopted and the development of new evidence base documents to support the next Local Plan, the Council will continue to receive applications for student accommodation development. There are a number of measures which can be undertaken to address current local concerns regarding student accommodation. These concerns include parking, enforcement of occupancy restrictions, monitoring of student accommodation, assessing the design, layout and affordability of student accommodation. Measures to address these issues are outlined in Section 9 of Appendix A to this report. The measures comprise:

**Parking** - Discussions between the City and County Councils to understand the programme for introduction of residents' parking schemes to restrict parking spaces available for student use. Discussions with the universities about proctorial control and parking enforcement.

**Enforcement of occupancy restrictions** - Assessment of existing legal agreements and planning conditions to scope any strengthening the wording of legal agreements/conditions for future development proposals. Where occupancy restrictions are not being complied with by developers/landowners, those will be the subject of investigation.

**Monitoring student accommodation and assessing design, layout and affordability** - the Council proposes that a working group is set up to assist in proactive monitoring and coordination of student accommodation issues. This working group would involve representatives of the University of Cambridge and its Colleges, and Anglia Ruskin University. This would allow an opportunity to work collaboratively to address known needs and address design, layout, affordability and maintenance of student accommodation developments. This working group could produce a design guide and checklist for speculative developers of student accommodation in order to ensure that student accommodation units meet the requirements of the two institutions with the greatest identified need for student accommodation. This working group could also produce up to date work on affordability of student accommodation

across the city and address other issues with student accommodation as and when issues occur. The Council's Annual Monitoring Report will provide an opportunity to feedback issues which the working group has dealt with over the monitoring year and will allow the Council to update the known needs of the institutions.

### **Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs**

- 3.17 The emerging Local Plan includes Policy 49 regarding provision for Gypsies and Travellers. This policy has not been the subject of a hearing session as yet. It is anticipated that a joint hearing session with South Cambridgeshire District Council will be held to discuss policies on Gypsies and Travellers during 2017.
- 3.18 In August 2015, a new *Planning Policy for Traveller Sites* (PPTS) was published by the Government which sets out a new definition for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. The key change that was made to both definitions was the removal of the term 'persons ... who have ceased to travel permanently', meaning that those Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople who have ceased to travel permanently will not now fall under the definition of a "Gypsy and Traveller" for the purposes of national planning policy.
- 3.19 Reflecting the national policy changes, and also the need to update the previous 2011 study in light of national policy changes and appeal decisions across Cambridgeshire, a new Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) was commissioned in 2015 to provide up to date and robust evidence of need. The *Cambridgeshire, King's Lynn and West Norfolk, Peterborough and West Suffolk Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment* (October 2016) is included as Appendix D of this report. The new GTAA has been produced by Opinion Research Services (ORS), a professional consultancy which undertakes this type of work for local authorities across England and Wales. The study was commissioned by a consortium of eight neighbouring local authorities, covering the administrative areas of Cambridge, South Cambridgeshire, East Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Peterborough, Kings Lynn and West Norfolk, Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury. It provides an up to date evidence base for the

Local Plan and has been taken through the committee processes of a number of partner councils, including South Cambridgeshire District Council.

3.20 In Cambridge, there are currently no authorised Gypsy or Traveller sites and no authorised Travelling Showpeople yards. For Cambridge, there were only two Gypsy or Traveller households identified, both living on a mobile home park not conditioned for occupancy by Gypsies and Travellers. Neither household have any identified current or future accommodation needs. There were no Travelling Showpeople households identified in Cambridge. As a result of this information, the GTAA did not identify any need for accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in Cambridge.

3.21 Section 10 of Appendix A outlines the current position in relation to accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers. It also includes proposed modifications to Policy 49 and its supporting text. These modifications have been proposed to ensure that the Local Plan is aligned with the latest evidence on Gypsies and Travellers' accommodation needs and the *Planning policy for travellers sites*, which was issued by the Government in August 2015.

### **Accessibility standards for new housing**

3.22 In March 2015, the Government published a ministerial statement which stated that requirements for accessible dwellings should only be set in relation to the new national optional standards which have been introduced as Part M4(2) and Part M4(3) of the Building Regulations.

3.23 A dwelling built to Part M4(2) is one which makes 'reasonable provision for most people to access the dwelling and incorporates features that make it potentially suitable for a wide range of occupants including older people, those with reduced mobility and some wheelchair users'.

3.24 A dwelling built to Part M4(3) is one which makes 'reasonable provision, either at completion or at a point following completion, for a wheelchair user to live in the dwelling and use any associated private outdoor space, parking and communal facilities that may be provided for the use of the occupants'.



3.25 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning authorities should ‘plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (such as, but not limited to, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own home’ (paragraph 50). The NPPF also states that ‘The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities’ (paragraph 69).

3.26 The Planning Practice Guidance states that the following should be taken into account when identifying the need for accessible dwellings:

- The likely need for future housing for older and disabled people (including wheelchair user dwellings);
- Size, location, type and quality of dwellings needed (for example retirement homes, sheltered homes or care homes);
- The accessibility and adaptability of the existing housing stock;
- How needs vary across different housing tenures;
- The overall impact on viability.

3.27 To assist local planning authorities in taking the above into account, the Planning Practice Guidance also includes a data sheet which contains a number of useful data sources, some of which have been used in this analysis.

3.28 An appropriate requirement for Cambridge has been identified through consideration of a range of data. The evidence base document on accessible housing in Cambridge is provided as Appendix E to this report.

3.29 The National Planning Practice Guidance states that Local Plan policies for wheelchair accessible homes (M4 (3)) should only be applied to those dwellings where the local authority is responsible for allocating or nominating a person to live in that dwelling. In the interests of creating mixed and balanced communities, the Council wishes to encourage developers to deliver wheelchair accessible market homes. Text to this effect has been included in the additional modifications to the supporting text of Policy 51.

3.30 It is proposed that Policy 51 is modified to reflect that the Lifetime Homes and Wheelchair Housing Design Standards have been replaced by optional standards M4(2) and M4(3). These optional standards can only be required through planning policy at a local level and then implemented via Building Regulations. In order to include the standards in Policy 51, assessment of need and viability has been undertaken.

### **Next Steps**

3.31 The Inspectors have timetabled hearing sessions on housing, including student accommodation and accessible homes, for late April 2017. The hearing programme is available at <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/local-plan-examination>. These hearing sessions are contingent on the further proposed modifications being approved by Full Council on 23 February 2017. Once approved, the Council will submit material to the Planning Inspectors for consideration.

## **4. Implications**

### **(a) Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The costs of preparing the Local Plan has already been budgeted for and included in the budget.

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

There are no direct staffing implications arising from this report. The review of the Local Plan has already been included in existing work plans.

### **(c) Equality and Poverty Implications**

There are no direct equal opportunity implications arising from this report. The Local Plan has been subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment, which demonstrates how potential equalities issues have been, and will be addressed.

### **(d) Environmental Implications**

The new Local Plan for Cambridge will assist in the delivery of high quality and sustainable new development along with protecting and enhancing the built and natural environments in the city. While national policy changes have had some impact on the level of ambition that can be included in the plan in relation to the reduction of carbon emissions from new housing developments, wider policies in the plan related to climate change and sustainable development mean that the plan should still overall have a positive climate change impact.

**(e) Procurement**

There are no direct procurement implications arising from this report.

**(f) Consultation and communication**

The consultation and communication arrangements for the Local Plan are consistent with the agreed Consultation and Community Engagement Strategy for the Local Plan Review, 2012 Regulations and the Council's Code of Best Practice on Consultation and Community Engagement.

**(g) Community Safety**

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

## **5. Background papers**

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- National Planning Policy Framework:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>
- National Planning Practice Guidance:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>
- Cambridge Local Plan 2014: Proposed Submission:

[https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/public/ldf/draft\\_submission/Full%20Plan/Full%20Draft%20Plan%20with%20title%20pages%20reduced%20size.pdf](https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/public/ldf/draft_submission/Full%20Plan/Full%20Draft%20Plan%20with%20title%20pages%20reduced%20size.pdf)

- Planning policy for travellers sites (CLG August 2015):  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/457420/Final\\_planning\\_and\\_travellers\\_policy.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/457420/Final_planning_and_travellers_policy.pdf)
- Written Ministerial Statement: Planning Update, 25 March 2015:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/planning-update-march-2015>
- Building Regulations 2010: Access to and use of buildings (Part M) 2015 edition incorporating 2016 amendments:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-and-use-of-buildings-approved-document-m>

## 6. Appendices

- Appendix A: Further Proposed Modifications to the emerging Cambridge Local Plan
- Appendix B: Sustainability Appraisal of Further Proposed Modifications;
- Appendix C: Assessment of Student Housing Demand and Supply for Cambridge City Council (January 2017);
- Appendix D: The Cambridgeshire, King's Lynn and West Norfolk, Peterborough and West Suffolk Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (October 2016);
- Appendix E: Accessible Housing in Cambridge (January 2017).

## 7. Inspection of papers

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

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