

A photograph of a residential development. In the foreground, there is a pond surrounded by dense green reeds and other aquatic plants. In the background, several modern, multi-story houses with light-colored facades and dark roofs are visible. The sky is a clear, pale blue.

Chapter 1 Introduction

Cambourne, South Cambridgeshire

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- 1.1 This consultation forms the first stage in preparing an updated Local Plan for South Cambridgeshire that will set out the vision for the district over the years to 2031. The plan affects all of us that live, work or study in South Cambridgeshire, or who come here to enjoy all that the area has to offer.
- 1.2 South Cambridgeshire is consistently recognised as one of the top places to live and work in the country due to our thriving economy and quality of life. Our successful local economy is important on a national stage and South Cambridgeshire is one of the fastest growing areas in the country.
- 1.3 It is important that we have a plan that strikes the right balance between growth and conservation, valuing what makes the area unique. It's about making sure jobs are created, and new homes provided, in the right areas, and that all transport needs are considered and people have a choice about where to live so they do not have to rely on cars for all of their journeys.
- 1.4 The Local Plan will set the levels of employment and housing development that should be provided over the plan period to best meet the needs of the area and establish a clear strategy for meeting development needs in the best way possible that protects the quality of life of existing and future residents. It will set policies to ensure that development is of high quality and will meet the challenges we face with an ageing population and changing climate. It will ensure that new development comes with the necessary schools, health facilities, shops, leisure facilities and open spaces that residents need to provide a good quality of life.
- 1.5 The Plan aims to set a strong framework for new development to meet the needs of the area and provide a clear statement for local residents, businesses, service providers and the development industry of what they can expect to happen in terms of change in the built and natural environment over the next couple of decades.
- 1.6 The updated Local Plan needs to respond to the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Localism Act 2011 and to proposed changes to the ways in which developers will contribute to funding supporting services and infrastructure.
- 1.7 Underpinning the whole of the Issues & Options consultation is the government's commitment to sustainable development. Taking account of local circumstances, the new Local Plan's development and other proposals need to meet the 3 overarching principles of sustainability:

- Economic - contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
- Social – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural well being; and
- Environmental – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, prudent use of natural resources, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

1.8 This consultation sets out the main Issues for the new Local Plan, as well as potential Options to address them. It raises a number of questions to assist stakeholders and residents respond to the consultation.

1.9 The overarching objective in national policy to secure sustainable development has strongly influenced the development of the issues and options in this document. The Council has prepared a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report that has helped us identify the key issues and sustainability objectives for the new Local Plan. An Initial Sustainability Report has also been prepared, which tests the sustainability merits of the options. It has been used as an integral part of the process of identifying the issues and options for consultation. The Initial Sustainability Report also includes within it an analysis of the issues we identified and the options available to address them. This provides additional information to support the issues and options contained in the consultation report (appendix 4 of the Initial Sustainability Report). Both sustainability reports form part of the consultation.

1.10 The consultation document is also supported by a raft of technical reports and studies, which are listed in Appendix 1 and available to view on the Council’s website here at www.scambs.gov.uk/ldf/localplan. Whilst they are not generally published as consultation documents, if you have any concerns about statements contained in the evidence documents, you can raise them as part of your response to the consultation questions.

1.11 The Report is structured around a number of topic areas. The intention is that when the Council comes to make decisions on which policies and proposals to put into the updated plan it will have the benefit of public and stakeholder comments.

- 1.12 The Report includes a vision, strategic objectives, and specific chapters relating to the future spatial strategy and other topic areas. Each chapter provides key facts about the topic. The chapters are as follows:
- **Chapter 1** is the introduction which describes the overall purpose of the document.
 - **Chapter 2** sets out a possible vision for South Cambridgeshire to 2031
 - **Chapter 3** contains the forecasts from which the plan will identify the development needs for jobs and housing.
 - **Chapter 4** concerns the spatial strategy and whether we should focus development on: the edge of Cambridge; new towns/new villages; and development in the villages.
 - **Chapter 5** sets out a number of site options for housing development. Detailed site options on the edge of Cambridge may be considered at a second consultation in the winter.
 - **Chapter 6** is concerned with sustainable development, climate change, water resources and flooding.
 - **Chapter 7** is concerned with design, landscape, and public realm.
 - **Chapter 8** sets out options to protect and enhance the historic built 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 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.
 - **Chapter 13** deals with site specific issues.
- 1.13 The Issues and Options Report contains 116 issues which need to be addressed in updating the Local Plan providing options where appropriate and asking questions to help the local community and stakeholders to respond to the consultation.
- 1.14 Consultation runs from 12 July to 28 September 2012 during which time a number of exhibitions will be held in South Cambridgeshire. The dates and times of these exhibitions will be widely advertised at the beginning of the consultation.
- 1.15 During the Issues & Options consultation the Council will be exploring with local communities whether they have development proposals of their own that they would want the Council to include as additional proposals in the new Local Plan, and wants to receive feedback on the issues and options in this report.

- 1.16 Answering the questions set out in the Issues and Options Report can be done in a number of ways. You don't have to answer all questions if you are only interested in some of them. The Council's preferred approach is for questions to be answered using our interactive consultation website which can be found here:

www.scambbs.gov.uk/ldf/localplan

But you can answer questions by e-mail or in writing using the forms provided. If you do provide answers by email or in writing and do not use a form, please include the question number that you are answering or we cannot guarantee that we will be able to identify the issues and options that interest you.

What Happens Next?

- 1.17 The expectation is that there will be a further consultation during the winter on any new issues that come out of this consultation which the Council might want to address in the Local Plan. Once all the consultation on Issues and Options is completed, answers to all of the questions will be considered to help develop the Council's preferred approach to the policies and proposals and a draft Local Plan.
- 1.18 Following this, the new Local Plan will be published for a further round of public consultation prior to being submitted to the Secretary of State for examination. Any objections received at that stage will be considered by a Planning Inspector at the examination of the Local Plan before the Council can adopt the new Local Plan.
- 1.19 The District Council is firmly committed to securing high quality development and welcomes the changes in national policy which require developers of proposals to consult local people at an early stage. Having a good plan is only half the story, getting the planning applications right comes next.