

Chapter 1 Introduction



Histon, South Cambridgeshire

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- 1.1 This is the Local Plan for South Cambridgeshire. It updates and replaces the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework which was adopted between January 2007 and January 2010 and covered the period up to 2016. The Local Plan's policies and proposals cover the period 2011 to 2031. The Local Plan is founded on an extensive evidence base of studies and two rounds of public consultation on issues and options which were held between mid-July and end-September 2012 and mid-January to end-February 2013. Consultation on the Proposed Submission Local Plan was undertaken in summer 2013, before the plan was Submitted for Examination in March 2014. Further consultation was carried out on proposed modifications in 2015 and 2018. The Local Plan has been prepared in close cooperation with Cambridge City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council and its policies and proposals have been subject to sustainability appraisal through all stages of preparation. The Council has also worked with the local authorities in Cambridgeshire, Suffolk and Norfolk to produce a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) to determine the amount of housing and jobs growth that will need to be accommodated by 2031 and agreed a memorandum of cooperation about how that need will be met.
- 1.2 The Local 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.

About South Cambridgeshire

- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 South Cambridgeshire is located centrally in the East of England region at the junction of the M11 / A14 roads and with direct rail access to London and to Stansted Airport. It is a largely rural district which surrounds the city of Cambridge and comprises over 100 villages, none currently larger than 8,000 persons. It is surrounded by a ring of market towns just beyond its borders, which are generally 10–15 miles from Cambridge. Together, Cambridge, South Cambridgeshire and the Market Towns form the Cambridge Sub-Region. South Cambridgeshire has long been a fast growing district and in 2011 had a population of 146,800 persons (bigger than Cambridge itself) and has become home to many of the clusters of high technology research and development in the Cambridge Sub-Region.

What the Plan Does and How it was Prepared

- 1.5 The Plan aims to strike the right balance between growth and conservation, valuing what makes the area unique. It is 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.

- 1.6 The Local Plan sets 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 most sustainable way that protects the quality of life of existing and future residents. Its policies aim 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.
- 1.7 The Local Plan sets 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.
- 1.8 The updated Local Plan responds to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2012¹), the Localism Act 2011 and to proposed changes to the ways in which developers will contribute to funding supporting services and infrastructure through Section 106 contributions and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- 1.9 Underpinning the whole of the Plan is the Government's commitment to sustainable development. Taking account of local circumstances, the new Local Plan's development and other proposals aim 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 wellbeing; 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 The updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (published in July 2018) states that the policies in the previous framework (i.e. NPPF 2012) apply where the Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination before 24 January 2019 (NPPF 2018, paragraph 214). The South Cambridgeshire Local Plan was submitted in March 2014 and references to the NPPF in this Local Plan refer to the NPPF 2012 and not the NPPF 2018.

- 1.10 The overarching objective in national policy to secure sustainable development strongly influenced the development of the Plan. The Council 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 was also prepared, which tested the sustainability merits of the issues and options which were considered and tested in producing the Plan. The draft Final Sustainability Report also includes an analysis of the issues identified, the options available to address them, the results of consultation on reasonable options, and how the proposed policies were arrived at. A Sustainability Appraisal Addendum was produced in 2015, to take account of new evidence prepared in response to the Inspectors' Letter during the Local Plan Examination. Following the Examination Hearings proposed modifications were also subject to sustainability appraisal.

What the Plan Looks Like

- 1.11 The Plan includes a vision, strategic objectives and specific chapters relating to the future spatial strategy and other matters which will affect how we live and work over the next two decades. Each chapter provides key facts about the topic. The chapters are as follows:
- **Chapter 1: Introduction** which describes the overall purpose of the document.
 - **Chapter 2: Spatial Strategy** sets out the vision and objectives and development needs for South Cambridgeshire to 2031 together with the spatial strategy which focuses development on the edge of Cambridge, at new towns/new villages; and in selected villages. It also has policies for small scale development in villages. It includes a policy about phasing, delivering and monitoring of the Plan to ensure that it continues to meet its objectives.
 - **Chapter 3: Strategic Sites** contains the strategic sites that will contribute most to the delivery of sustainable development in South Cambridgeshire.
 - **Chapter 4: Climate Change** is concerned with sustainable development, climate change, water resources and flooding.
 - **Chapter 5: Delivering High Quality Places** is concerned with design, landscape, and public realm.
 - **Chapter 6: Protecting and Enhancing the Natural and Historic Environment** contains proposals to protect and enhance the historic built and the natural environment.
 - **Chapter 7: Delivering High Quality Homes** is concerned with delivering high quality housing and includes village housing sites.
 - **Chapter 8: Building a Strong and Competitive Economy** deals with building a strong and competitive economy, including sections on employment, retail and tourism and development sites.
 - **Chapter 9: Promoting Successful Communities** is concerned with creating successful communities, including the provision of open space, leisure facilities and community facilities.

- **Chapter 10: Promoting and Delivering Sustainable Transport and Infrastructure** deals with promoting and delivering sustainable transport and other kinds of infrastructure.

1.12 Responding to the introduction of Neighbourhood Development Plans under the Localism Act 2011, the Local Plan includes Parish Council proposals where there is clear local support, as an alternative to the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans.

What Comprises the Development Plan for South Cambridgeshire

1.13 In the past, strategic planning for South Cambridgeshire was undertaken at a 'higher plan-making level', most recently through the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and the Regional Spatial Strategy (the East of England Plan 2008). Both these documents have now been revoked and strategic planning is now undertaken at a local level, coordinated by a statutory 'duty to cooperate'. This cooperation has in part been through the oversight provided by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Joint Strategic Planning Unit which was set up to help coordinate the development of strategy with South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and other local planning authorities and stakeholders in the area.

1.14 On adoption of this Plan, the statutory development plan for South Cambridgeshire will comprise:

- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan;
- Northstowe Area Action Plan 2007 (excluding Policy NS/3(1g), which is replaced by Policy SS/5: Northstowe Extension);
- Cambridge Southern Fringe Area Action Plan 2008;
- Cambridge East Area Action Plan 2008 (excluding policies CE/3 and CE/35, which are replaced by Local Plan Policy SS/3: Cambridge East);
- North West Cambridge Area Action Plan 2009; and
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Development Framework – Core Strategy and Proposals Map C 2011, Site Specific Proposals Plan and Proposals Map A and B 2012.

Policy LP/1: Superseded Policies referred to in Adopted Area Action Plans

Where policies of the Local Development Framework referred to in adopted Area Action Plans are superseded by policies of this Local Plan, the more up to date Local Plan policies will be applied, as set out in Appendix B.

1.15 The adopted Area Action Plans remain part of the development plan, and in places make reference to policies in other parts of the Local Development Framework, in particular the Core Strategy DPD and Development Control Policies DPD. For clarity on the policies to be applied in decision making

involving the Area Action Plan sites, where reference is made in an Area Action Plan to a policy elsewhere in the Local Development Framework, the replacement policy in the Local Plan will apply. A schedule is included in Appendix B of the plan, identifying the relevant references in the adopted Area Action Plans that are superseded by the Local Plan and the Local Plan policies that will be applied.

- 1.16 Also on adoption of the Local Plan, the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2007, Development Control Policies DPD 2007, Site Specific Policies DPD 2010 and saved Policy CNF6 from the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 will be revoked in their entirety and will no longer form part of the development plan.
- 1.17 The Local Plan proposes the preparation of new Supplementary Planning Documents and an Area Action Plans to guide development in three areas of large scale development:
- Bourn Airfield new village Supplementary Planning Document;
 - Waterbeach new town Supplementary Planning Document; and
 - Cambridge Northern Fringe East Area Action Plan – prepared jointly with Cambridge City Council.
- 1.18 These documents will be prepared after the Local Plan is adopted.

Strategic policies and neighbourhood planning

- 1.19 There is a list of basic conditions in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 that must be met by a Neighbourhood Plan before it can be successful at independent examination and ultimately adopted by a Local Planning Authority. One of these is that any draft Neighbourhood Plan must be in “general conformity” with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the district. According to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2012) a local planning authority should set out clearly the strategic policies for their area (paragraph 184).
- 1.20 The Council has therefore used the guidance provided within the NPPF (2012) and in the National Planning Practice Guidance to define the strategic policies in the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan. Appendix E includes a list of the identified strategic policies to provide clarity for neighbourhood plan purposes.

