

# Chapter 10

## Building a Strong and Competitive Economy



Cambourne Business Park, South Cambridgeshire



## Chapter 10 Building a Strong and Competitive Economy

### Building a Strong and Competitive Economy

- 10.1 This chapter considers how the Council can assist the achievement of strong and sustainable local economic growth, where entrepreneurship, innovation and inward investment are actively encouraged.
- 10.2 South Cambridgeshire is intrinsically linked economically to Cambridge and the wider Cambridge Sub-Region. In developing the evidence base to support the plan review the Council has worked closely with partners including Cambridge City Council.
- 10.3 During the last 30 years, the Cambridge Sub-Region has developed into the premier location for high technology research and development in Europe. Planning policies favouring research and development and discouraging large scale office and warehouse development have helped foster one of the highest rates of job growth outside any of the UK's major cities.
- 10.4 The Council has recently adopted an Economic Development Strategy, seeking to maintain a progressive, modern, innovative, balanced and resilient economy and be open for new business. The Strategy was supported by an economic assessment, and developed through consultation with partners, stakeholders, businesses and residents. The findings and priorities of the Strategy have guided the development of options for the Local Plan which must anticipate growth sectors and capture opportunities provided by planned growth areas including Northstowe, and the urban extensions to Cambridge.
- 10.5 Recent evidence suggests that the local high-tech cluster is 'maturing' and that growth in the research and development sector will be slower than in the past, and other sectors will account for a higher proportion of growth. New sectors could include renewable technologies, the creative ICT sectors, digital, health/bioscience, professional business services, tourism and leisure.
- 10.6 The Local Plan needs to ensure there is sufficient employment land available, in the right places to support the economy, and provide the right balance between supporting growth, whilst protecting the quality of the built and natural environment.
- 10.7 The Local Plan must also address issues which underpin economic development including delivering strategic infrastructure such as affordable homes and services, and consider transport providing jobs close to people's homes, and where jobs can be accessed by means other than the car.

**Key Facts:**

- The District has a diverse high value economy with 81,200 jobs in 2011 (Source: Cambridge Econometrics).
- Sectors anticipated to grow in future include professional, computing and business services, construction, and health.
- Unemployment at 1.4% is lower than national level of 4%, and median pay levels are higher.
- The area has proved resilient of the impacts of the downturn with a range of successful business and research parks including Cambridge Science Park, Granta Park, and the Babraham Institute.
- Despite policies protecting employment in villages there is a gradual loss of premises.
- There is a significant agricultural sector with many farms diversifying into other sectors particularly tourism.
- There are a significantly higher proportion of micro businesses than regionally or nationally with 86% of businesses employing fewer than 10 people.
- Homeworking is growing making access to Broadband more important.
- Important local tourist attractions include Duxford Imperial War Museum, Wimpole Hall, the American Military Cemetery, Chilford Hall and Linton Zoo.
- Primary retail and service centres are outside the district (Cambridge and Market towns), but some larger villages provide services to smaller villages, and village shops are a vital service. New High Street facilities are planned for Cambourne and Northstowe.

**Employment Land Needs**

10.8 To support sustainable economic growth, Local Plans should objectively identify the development needs of businesses in the area and plan to meet those needs. The Council in partnership with Cambridge City Council commissioned an Employment Land Review (ELR), which has explored the need for different types of employment land up to 2031. The ELR has estimated the potential implications of the three economic growth scenarios identified in Issue 3, in terms of new employment building floorspace and land required to accommodate the number of jobs. Reflecting the anticipated jobs growth, the majority of the land requirement is focused on offices (use class B1a) and Research and Development (B1b).

**Figure 12: Jobs targets and forecast land requirements for South Cambridgeshire**

<b>Jobs Target (see Issue 3)</b>			<b>Office</b>	<b>R&amp;D</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Warehouse</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Low	14,000	Land (ha.)	21.3	10.7	-10.6	1.0	22.5
		Floorspace ('000 m2)	70.0	35.2	-44.4	5.2	66.0
Medium	23,100	Land (ha.)	30.6	15.3	-6.4	3.8	43.3
		Floorspace ('000 m2)	100.4	50.1	-27.2	19.5	142.9
High	29,200	Land (ha.)	36	19	-2	6	59
		Floorspace ('000 m2)	119.7	61.6	-9.9	30.1	201.5

Source: South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City Employment Land Review 2012 and Cambridge Econometrics Forecasts.

### Employment Land Supply

- 10.9 South Cambridgeshire has a good supply and range of existing employment sites. Additionally commitments with planning permission provide a wide range variety of types and locations for employment development, including significant land areas at research parks. Planning permissions at March 2011 have a floorspace capacity of 160,000m2 with offices and research and development accounting for 55% of the total. In 2012 further planning permissions were granted at Granta Park and Cambridge Research Park for offices and research and development. Whilst there may be sufficient supply overall, not all sites are equally attractive to new employers. The ELR identified a particular need for office space in or on the edge of Cambridge. We must also consider sustainability and giving people the opportunity to live near their work.
- 10.10 A significant element of new employment provision is planned at Strategic Employment locations in Northstowe and Northwest Cambridge, delivering jobs in accessible locations close to new homes. The Northstowe Area Action Plan plans for approximately 20 hectares of employment land, including a substantial business area to be integrated with Northstowe town centre and a smaller area close to the Park and Ride site. Some of this land may come forward late, or even after, the plan period. The North West Cambridge site partly in Cambridge City is being developed to meet the needs of Cambridge University, and is planned to accommodate educational uses and research and development as part of a mixed use urban extension. Cambridge East was previously identified as a Strategic Employment Location but will not deliver in the lifetime of the Local Plan if at all.

## New Employment Provision

- 10.11 The ELR evidence suggests a shortage of office space, particularly focused on two areas of pressure: the city centre, and the northern fringe around Cambridge Science Park. To continue the success of the economy more office space is needed in these areas. There are two areas in South Cambridgeshire where more employment development is possible to address this issue.

### Issue 59: New Employment Provision near Cambridge

Further employment opportunities could be sought through development at:

- Cambridge Northern Fringe East, where a new railway station and transport interchange is planned providing opportunities for further employment development. (Greater detail in the Chapter 13: Site Specific Policies.)
- Cambridge Science Park, where some of the early 1970's phases were built at low densities, which offers scope for intensification or redevelopment. Increased accessibility provided by the guided bus and the new railway station means that higher employment densities are suitable.

A further possibility would be to allocate new land for employment on the edge of Cambridge. This could be purely employment, or as part of a housing development. Chapter 4: Spatial Strategy explores the potential for growth through Green Belt review on the edge of Cambridge, and identifies and assesses 10 broad locations for consultation.

### Question 59:

**The Local Plan needs to aim to meet in full the forecast employment growth in South Cambridgeshire depending on the option selected (at question 3), by providing a supply and range of employment sites over the Plan period.**

**Should employment provision be planned for:**

- i. Cambridge Northern Fringe East, and densification on the Cambridge Science Park?
- ii. On new allocations on the edge of Cambridge which have previously been designated Green Belt (See identified broad locations in Chapter 4: Spatial Strategy)
- iii. Both Option i and Option ii
- iv. Neither Option i or Option ii

Please provide any comments.

### Previous Allocations for Employment Land

10.12 The previous plan includes a small number of employment land allocations located in villages around the district.

#### Issue 60: Employment Allocations

Current employment allocations are substantially complete and remaining areas of undeveloped land do not warrant consideration for alternative uses although faster take up could be encouraged:

- Pampisford: West of Eastern Counties Leather, London Road (1.9 hectares Class B1 Employment uses)
- Over: Norman Way (1.7 hectares for Class B1, B2 and B8 Employment Uses)
- Papworth Everard: Ermine Street South (2.5 Hectares for Class B1, B2 and B8 Employment Uses)

One employment allocation is for a completely new employment site where development has not commenced:

- Longstanton (6.7 Hectares Class B1 North of Hattons Road up to the proposed bypass).

#### Question 60:

**A: Should the existing employment allocations where development is partially complete be carried forward into the Local Plan?**

**B: Should the existing employment allocation North of Hattons Road, Longstanton be carried forward into the Local Plan?**

**C: Are there any other areas that should be allocated in the Local Plan for employment?**

Please provide details, including a map.

### Local Development Orders

- 10.13 South Cambridgeshire would like to consider the use of Local Development Orders to help speed up employment development. A Local Development Order would identify certain types and scales of development that could take place without the need for planning permission within a defined area, such as a business park or planned development site. A Local Development Order can include a number of conditions just like a planning permission, and would have the same requirements for the development to pay for any necessary infrastructure.

#### Issue 61: Local Development Orders

Although outside the plan making process, the Council could consider issuing LDOs to support economic development. We are therefore using this consultation to seek your views on the principle of making such orders and where they could be used help support employment development in an effective way.

#### Question 61:

**A: Should the Council consider issuing Local Development Orders to help speed up employment development?**

**B: If so, where?**

### Limitations on the Occupancy of New Premises in South Cambridgeshire

- 10.14 Earlier plans have encouraged high technology, research and development and related industries, which can demonstrate a need to be in the area. Large scale warehousing or industry that could locate away from the Cambridge area was not encouraged, due to the pressure on land resources and the need to protect the environment. Consultations leading to the Council's Economic Development Strategy highlighted that some businesses and stakeholders perceived planning policies to be insufficiently flexible (for change of use, extensions and new premises), and that the policy was a particular problem for small and medium sized businesses. A study on the future of the high technology cluster (The Cambridge Cluster at 50) also identified that the Cambridge area may not have been making the best use of its knowledge based assets, by discouraging large scale high value manufacturing, as well as headquarter functions of high-tech firms. The Cambridge area has nevertheless developed successfully whilst the policy has been in place, and pressure on resources remains. The policy has helped the development of existing clusters, and ensures there is enough land for these uses.

### **Issue 62: Limitations on the Occupancy of New Premises in South Cambridgeshire**

The review of the Local Plan should consider whether selective management of the economy as a policy approach should be continued, amended, or discontinued.

- Continuation of the policy could maintain a prioritisation of land for firms that can demonstrate a need to be here. This policy is a long running feature of planning policy for the area and it could be argued it has contributed to current economic success, and priorities land for uses that support the Cambridge clusters. However it also holds certain types of employment development back.
- Maintaining the policy on selected high technology business parks could continue to protect specific areas for research and development uses, whilst providing greater flexibility elsewhere.
- Amending the policy to additionally allow high value manufacturing and high tech headquarters could further support Cambridge's high technology research and development clusters, by encouraging them to further develop ideas into products and to bring high value jobs to the area.
- Maintaining a restriction on large scale warehousing and distribution, would mean new uses requiring a large land area but that do not need a Cambridge area location would not be permitted.
- Removing the restrictions entirely would allow the market to decide the type of employment use in new premises. This risks greater competition for land for uses such as research and development or lower value uses that need to locate here, but it could also allow other sectors to develop.

**Question 62:**

**What approach do you think the Local Plan should take to the Limitations on the Occupancy of New Premises policy?:**

- i. Retain the current policy approach to encourage high tech research and development but offices, light industry and warehousing being small scale local provision only.
  - ii. Retain the policy in its current form for specified areas:
    - Cambridge Science Park
    - Granta Park
    - Babraham Institute
    - Wellcome Trust
    - Melbourn Science Park
    - North West Cambridge (University)
  - iii. Amend the policy to allow for large scale, high value manufacturing and high tech headquarters to locate to South Cambridgeshire.
  - iv. Remove the policy apart from the restriction on large-scale warehousing and distribution.
  - v. Remove the policy entirely.
- Please provide any comments.

**The Promotion of Clusters**

- 10.15 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local planning authorities to plan positively for the location, promotion and expansion of clusters or networks of knowledge driven, creative or high technology industries. The Council's Economic Development Strategy identified a particular need for premises to support start-ups and enterprise, and low cost lab/office space.

**Issue 63: The Promotion of Clusters**

Current policy sets out the clusters that are fundamental to the success of the Cambridge Phenomenon and positively promotes development that can demonstrate a clear need to cluster in the Cambridge area. The policy also supports the development of a range of units, including incubator units.

**Question 63:**

**Should the Local Plan continue to include a policy supporting the development of clusters?**

Please provide any additional comments.

**Shared Social Spaces as part of Employment Areas**

- 10.16 The Cambridge Cluster at 50 study identifies the fact that a number of peripheral employment sites are perceived to be isolated, both in relation to each other and in relation to Cambridge City Centre. The lack of a social aspect could be making them less attractive places to locate to.

**Issue 64: Shared Social Spaces as part of Employment Areas**

The Local Plan could include a policy to promote shared social spaces on employment parks, such as cafes, restaurants, or social hubs.

**Question 64:**

**Should the Local Plan seek shared social spaces on or near employment parks?**

Please provide any additional comments.

**Broadband**

- 10.17 The Council's Economic Development Strategy highlighted uneven delivery of broadband across the district as an issue affecting business competitiveness and economic productivity in the district. Provision of quality broadband is particularly important for rural areas, for community integration to help ensure a vibrant rural economy and assist with farm diversification, and for home working. The Strategy includes the objective to improve utilities and infrastructure (e.g. Broadband and ICT) for residents and employers, including those located in the new communities and rural locations. The Northstowe Area Action Plan seeks broadband provision for the new town but currently the same approach is not applied across the rural parts of the district.

### **Issue 65: Broadband**

Provision for broadband (such as ducting for cables) should be designed and installed as an integral part of development, which minimises visual impact and future disturbance during maintenance. All telecommunications infrastructure should be capable of responding to changes in technology requirements over the period of the development.

### **Question 65:**

**Do you think that the Local Plan should include a policy seeking provision for broadband infrastructure in new developments?**

Please provide any comments.

## **The Rural Economy**

### **Established Employment Areas in the Countryside**

- 10.18 South Cambridgeshire includes a number of existing employment areas in the countryside. There are currently 12 sites identified: Buckingham Business Park; Cambourne Business Park; Cambridge Research Park, Landbeach; Site to North of Cambridge Research Park, Landbeach; Granta Park, Great Abington; Wellcome Trust Genome Campus, Hinxton; Norman Way Industrial Estate, Over; Land at Hinxton Road, South of Duxford; Convent Drive / Pembroke Avenue site, Waterbeach; Brookfields Business Estate / Park, Twentypence Road, Cottenham; Spicers Ltd, Sawston; Daleshead Foods Ltd, Cambridge Road, Linton. Policies generally restrict development in the countryside. However, these major employment areas do not form a typical part of the countryside.

### **Issue 66: Established Employment Areas in the Countryside**

Existing policy allows employment development within these areas, subject to the requirements of other policies in the plan. Two additional potential sites have been identified. Both are around 10 hectares, and provide areas of significant existing employment development:

- Eternit UK site between Meldreth and Whaddon;
- Barrington Cement Works (area of existing and former buildings)

**Question 66:**

**A: Should development within established employment areas in the countryside be allowed?**

**B: Should additional areas (both around 10 hectares), be included at:**

i. Eternit UK site between Meldreth and Whaddon;

ii. Barrington Cement Works (area of existing and former buildings)

Please provide any comments.

### **New Employment Development in Villages**

- 10.19 Supporting employment development in villages can help maintain them as vibrant sustainable communities where people can live and work. It can also help provide a variety of local employment opportunities.

#### **Issue 67: New Employment Development in Villages**

Current plans limit the scale of development to specific floorspace sizes. These policies have proven to be insufficiently flexible and may have discouraged employment which might have been appropriate in villages but just fell the wrong side of the policy limitations. The Local Plan could consider a more flexible approach.

**Question 67:**

**What approach should the Local Plan take to the scale of employment development in villages?**

i. Continue to restrict to small scale development (employing 25 people) and the size limitations: Offices (B1a): 400 m<sup>2</sup>, High tech / R & D (B1b): 725 m<sup>2</sup>, Light Industry (B1c):800sq m<sup>2</sup>, General Industry (B2):850 m<sup>2</sup>, Warehousing (B8):1,250 m<sup>2</sup>).

ii. A more flexible approach that development should be in keeping with the category, character and function of the settlement.

Please provide any comments.

## New Employment Buildings on the Edge of Settlements

### Issue 68: New Employment Buildings on the Edge of Settlements

The Council's current plan includes flexibility to utilise previously developed land adjoining or very close to the larger villages in the district for small scale employment uses. A more flexible approach could be to allow development of greenfield land adjoining the village frameworks of any villages. This could benefit the local economy, but could also impact on the rural character of the edges of settlements and could be exploited to secure inappropriate housing development on the basis that there was no demand for employment. Other considerations will include accessibility of the site, particularly for walking, cycling or public transport, and that it would not have an adverse impact on the character of the area. These will be addressed by other policies in the Local Plan.

#### Question 68:

##### **A: What approach should the Local Plan take to employment development on the edges of villages?**

- i. Flexibility to utilise previously developed land adjoining or very close to the village frameworks of any villages.
- ii. Flexibility to utilise green-field land adjoining, and logically related to the built form of the settlement of Rural, Minor Rural Centres [and Better Served Group villages if added as a new category of village – see question 13].

##### **B: Should applicants be required to demonstrate there is a lack of suitable buildings and sites within the settlement?**

Please provide any comments.

## Extensions to Existing Businesses in the Countryside

- 10.20 There are many existing firms in the rural areas. In order to support the continued development of their business, they may need to adapt or expand their premises. Policies are generally restrictive towards new development in the countryside, but the Local Plan could consider how to support and retain these existing firms.

### **Issue 69: Extensions to Existing Businesses in the Countryside**

The Local Plan could continue to apply a generally restrictive approach to development in the countryside, and proposals would have to demonstrate exceptional circumstances, or it could support the appropriate expansion of existing firms in the countryside.

#### **Question 69:**

#### **What approach should be taken to extension of existing businesses in the countryside?**

- i. continue to apply a generally restrictive approach, where proposals would have to demonstrate exceptional circumstances; or
- ii. support expansion of existing firms where schemes are of an appropriate scale, do not have an adverse effect in terms of character and amenity, and can be justified through submission of a business case.

Please provide any comments.

### **Conversion or Replacement of Rural Buildings for Employment**

- 10.21 South Cambridgeshire contains a stock of agricultural buildings. When they are no longer needed for agriculture they can be converted to provide employment opportunities. There are many examples around the district of converted agricultural buildings supporting successful rural businesses. Where conversion would bring about environmental improvements and result in improvements in the design of the building and its integration with the surroundings, and result in a more sustainable form of development, the replacement with a building of the same size may have been accepted. It may also be important to consider whether development is in scale with its location, so that those attracting significant numbers of visitors or employees are located where they can be accessed by means other than the car.

### **Issue 70: Conversion or Replacement of Rural Buildings for Employment**

The Local Plan could continue to support the economic reuse of rural buildings, where they are appropriate to the location, and are appropriately accessible.

**Question 70:**

**A: Should the Local Plan should continue to prioritise employment uses for rural buildings where traffic generation is not a problem?**

**B: Should the Local Plan support extensions where they enhance the design and are not out of scale and character with the location.**

Please provide any comments.

### **Farm Diversification**

- 10.22 Farm diversification schemes, such as farm shops, holiday accommodation, and farm based food processing and packaging, can help maintain working farms.

#### **Issue 71: Farm Diversification**

The Local Plan could support farm diversification, where schemes directly support a working farm, are in scale with their location, reuse existing buildings where possible, and any new development forms part of an existing group of buildings.

**Question 71:**

**Do you consider that the Local Plan should continue to support farm diversification?**

Please provide any comments.

### **Retention of Employment Sites**

- 10.23 High land values for housing in the district mean there is considerable pressure to redevelop employment sites for housing, even when they are still in active use. Without appropriate policies, the uncontrolled loss of employment sites, particularly in villages, could reduce the availability of jobs, increase commuting levels, make it harder for those people less able to travel to access jobs, and impact on the vitality and viability of villages. Existing policy protects employment land in villages from change of use to non-employment uses unless certain criteria are met.

**Issue 72: Retention of Employment Sites**

The current approach is that conversion, change of use, or redevelopment of existing employment sites to non-employment uses in villages will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated as inappropriate for continued employment use (demonstrated by evidence of it being appropriately marketed for at least 12 months), overall community benefit outweighing the loss, or the existing use generating environmental problems (and alternative employment use would continue to generate problems).

Despite this policy, sites are being lost principally to housing development which is a cause of concern to a number of local communities who are sceptical about the marketing processes carried out to comply with the current Local Plan policy. Alternative tests could be:

- An impact assessment of the relative sustainability for the village including accessibility to alternative employment by modes of travel other than the car.
- Evidence of 12 months appropriate marketing of the facility for continued employment use. The marketing exercise should include extensive advertising. Both freehold and leasehold options should be made available without restrictive covenants preventing re-use as an employment use. All details of offers should be provided to the Council during the marketing period together with full reasons as to why any offer has not been accepted. The facility should only be marketed at an appropriate value agreed by the Council and an independent assessor for its existing use.
- Where an applicant is seeking to prove that the employment use is no longer economically financially viable, full financial evidence produced by a suitably qualified independent assessor must be presented which clearly demonstrates that the premises are no longer viable and cannot be made viable for employment use.

**Question 72:**

**A: Should the Local Plan continue to resist the loss of employment land to alternative uses:**

- i. in villages only;
- ii. include areas outside frameworks on the edges of villages.

**B: Should the Local Plan include the alternative more detailed tests in Issue 72 for determining when alternative use of an employment site should be permitted?**

Please provide any comments.

## Tourist Accommodation

- 10.24 The area draws large numbers of visitors every year generating significant demand for visitor accommodation. Cambridge City Council has undertaken a study of the need for Hotel Accommodation for Cambridge, and is exploring options in their Local Plan. Taking account of existing and planned facilities in and on the edge of the city, additional need is limited. The South Cambridgeshire Local Plan does not therefore need to allocate land specifically for tourist accommodation but can continue to provide policy guidance for any new or expanding accommodation businesses that come forward.

### Issue 73: Tourist Accommodation

Whilst major hotel facilities should continue to be focused in the City of Cambridge, the Local Plan could support appropriately scaled development in villages, and the conversion/redevelopment of rural buildings for small scale visitor and holiday accommodation. Alternatively, the Local Plan could additionally provide greater flexibility, and permit the use of previously developed land in the countryside for small scale holiday and visitor accommodation.

#### Question 73:

- A: Should appropriately scaled development for visitor and holiday accommodation in villages, and the conversion or redevelopment of rural buildings in the countryside be supported?**
- B: Should the Local Plan provide greater flexibility for new visitor accommodation by allowing redevelopment of any previously developed land in the countryside for small scale holiday and visitor accommodation?**

Please provide any comments.

### **Tourist Facilities and Visitor Attractions**

- 10.25 Within the District, there are a number of assets which have become major tourist visitor attractions, such as the WW2 airfield at Duxford which is now home to the Imperial War Museum, and Wimpole Hall which is owned by the National Trust. Facilities such as these can only be developed where the assets exist.

#### **Issue 74: Tourist Facilities and Visitor Attractions**

New development or expansion of existing tourist facilities and visitor attractions in the countryside could be permitted where the need for a rural location has been demonstrated, and the use cannot be located elsewhere. The need for new buildings should be demonstrated, including evidence that opportunities for reuse or replacement of existing buildings have been explored. Proposals must also not detrimentally impact on landscape, be in scale with the location, and provide appropriate transport accessibility, including by sustainable modes.

#### **Question 74:**

**A: Should the Local Plan contain a policy supporting the development of appropriate tourist facilities and visitor attractions?**

**B: Could these be located in the countryside?**

Please provide any comments.

### **Retail**

#### **The Retail Hierarchy**

- 10.26 The NPPF aims to maintain the vitality and viability of town centres, promoting their competitiveness, and requiring plans to deliver sites to meet retail needs. It requires the operation of a sequential approach to development, focusing development of major retail and other main town centre uses into town centres. In South Cambridgeshire primary centres are located outside the district, in the City of Cambridge, and the ring of Market Towns surrounding the district.

**Issue 75: The Retail Hierarchy**

The Local Plan needs to establish a retail hierarchy for the district.

The new town of Northstowe will have a new town centre.

Village centres at Rural Centres and other villages fulfil the role of local centres, providing a small rural hinterland with local shopping facilities. These out of town locations are not a suitable location for uses that serve wider urban areas that would be subject to the sequential test. New Local Centres are proposed in the growth areas on the edge of Cambridge and at Northstowe to meet the local shopping needs generated by these new developments. Again, these centres would not be suitable for large scale uses serving a wider area.

**Question 75:**

**Where should new retail and service provision occur?**

- i. New retail provision and main town centre uses should be in scale with the position of the centre in the retail hierarchy as follows:
  - a. Town centres: Northstowe;
  - b. Rural Centres village centres;
  - c. All other villages.
- ii. New facilities should be provided differently – if so, how?

Please provide any comments.

**Assessing the Impact of Retail Development**

10.27 It is important that the impact of retail proposals large enough to have an impact on the vitality and viability of other centres and on the rural economy, including village shops, is properly assessed. The NPPF sets a default threshold of 2500m<sup>2</sup> gross retail floorspace above which impact assessments would be required. Only the very largest superstores in the district would reach this threshold. Given the rural nature of the district it is likely that a much smaller development could impact on the viability of other village centres. It is therefore reasonable to consider whether the Local Plan should set a lower threshold.

### **Issue 76: Assessing the Impact of Retail Development**

When assessing applications for retail development or change of use development outside of town centres, which are not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan,

local planning authorities should require an impact assessment if the development is over a proportionate, locally set floorspace threshold. The following options have been identified:

- a) 2500m<sup>2</sup>. The default scale set by the National Planning Policy Framework(NPPF). Only large superstore proposals would be assessed. Example: Most large superstores in the district are significantly above this threshold. An equivalent size would be approximately twice the size of Budgens in Sawston.
- b) 500m<sup>2</sup>– The size of the larger central village supermarkets in the Rural Centres. Setting this threshold would enable village scale supermarkets to be developed without a retail assessment, but there could be less consideration of cumulative impact than setting a lower threshold. Example: Similar in scale to Tesco Express Great Shelford
- c) 250m<sup>2</sup> – Reflects the scale of a more typical village shop. Using this threshold would enable continued development of small shops, but larger stores would require an assessment. This could mean additional information required from applicants, but it would enable greater consideration of cumulative impact. Example: Similar in scale to Co-op at Melbourn.

NOTE: floorspace figures are gross (the whole of the retail premises), not net (the sales floor area only).

#### **Question 76:**

**What should be the floorspace threshold above which retail impact assessments are required?**

- i. 2500m<sup>2</sup> - large superstore
- ii. 500m<sup>2</sup> - village scale supermarket
- iii. 250m<sup>2</sup> - typical village shop

Please provide any comments.

### Meeting Retail Needs

- 10.28 In order to explore future needs for retail development, Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council commissioned the Cambridge Sub-Region Retail Study 2008. This showed that retail in Cambridge was performing well and provided an assessment of the need for new floorspace for both comparison goods (items not generally purchased on a frequent basis e.g. clothing, shoes, electrical goods, furniture, books.) and convenience goods (everyday and essential items e.g. food and drink) to 2021. It identified that additional needs were generally related to serving the planned major developments such as Northstowe.
- 10.29 A Supplementary Retail Study commissioned in 2010 examined the specific retail needs of the northwest Cambridge area. This was necessary because a number of sites were being planned in the same area, and there was a need to consider how their shopping needs could best be accommodated. It provided a partial update of the 2008 study and led to the adoption of Informal Planning Policy Guidance on foodstore provision in North West Cambridge.

#### Issue 77: Meeting Retail Needs

Informal planning policy guidance for North West Cambridge sets out a strategy for two medium sized supermarkets of 2,000 m<sup>2</sup> net floorspace, one in the local centre at the University site and one in the local centre at the NIAB site (planned in the Cambridge City part of the development), and one small supermarket in the local centre at Orchard Park. The Informal Planning Policy Guidance also sets out a number of development principles in relation to the development of foodstores and local centres, which should be followed by developers. The Local Plan could incorporate the information guidance into policy.

#### Question 77:

**Should the Informal Planning Policy Guidance on foodstore provision in North West Cambridge be reflected in the new Local Plan?**

Please provide any comments?

- 10.30 Depending on the nature of any new developments allocated in the Local Plan, additional retail provision may be needed in order to meet the needs generated. This will depend on the nature and location of development.

### Village Shops and Related Local Services

- 10.31 Village shops are a vital local amenity, important for ensuring people can access services locally, and maintaining the vitality of village communities.

### **Issue 78: Village Shops and Related Local Services**

The Local Plan should support development of new or improved village shops of an appropriate size related to the scale and function of the village.

#### **Question 78:**

**Do you think that the Local Plan should support development of new or improved village shops and local services of an appropriate size related to the scale and function of the village?**

Please provide any comments.

### **Retail in the Countryside**

- 10.32 Sporadic development in the countryside could result in unsustainable patterns of development, and harm the vitality and viability of villages, but some retail is appropriately found in the countryside, supporting the local economy and farm diversification.
- 10.33 This includes sales from farms and nurseries of produce and craft goods, where the majority of goods are produced on the farm or in the locality, and sales support farm diversification and local businesses. There may also be cases where sales of convenience goods ancillary to other uses are appropriate, for example at a garage forecourt.

### **Issue 79: Retail in the Countryside**

In the countryside, retail development should not be permitted, other than sales from farms and nurseries of produce and craft goods, where the majority of goods are produced on the farm or in the locality, or sale of convenience goods ancillary to other uses, where it does not have a significant adverse impact on surrounding villages.

#### **Question 79:**

**Do you think that retail development in the countryside should be restricted?**

- i. As described.
- ii. To include additional facilities.

Please provide any comments.

