

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan

Stakeholder Workshop

2 April 2012

Attendees

David Abbott	Highways Agency
Martin Baker	Wildlife Trust
Jonathan Barker	Marshall of Cambridge (Holdings) Ltd
Kirsten Bennett	Cambridgeshire ACRE
Andy Campbell	Stagecoach East
Jim Chisholm	Cambridge Cycling Campaign
Simon Crow	Cambridge Water
Dan Curtis	Environment Agency
Sian Derbyshire	The National Trust
Peter Fane	Country Land & Business Association
Carolyn Gohler	Cambridge Past, Present & Future
Jonathan Green	Ely Diocesan Board
Wendy Hague	Cambridgeshire County Council
Ted Hawkins	Cambridgeshire Constabulary
Peter Jones	Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service
Peter Landshoff	Cambridge Past, Present & Future
Stephen Miles	Cambridge City Council
Andrew Newton	Ely Group of Internal Drainage Boards
Inger O'Meara	NHS Cambridgeshire
Mike Sloan	Cambridge Water
David Thomson	Ely Diocesan Board
Sean Traverse Healy	Campaign for the Protection of Rural England
Jill Tuffnell	Cambridge Rambler's Association
Mark White	Homes & Communities Agency
Rohan Wilson	Sustrans (East of England)
Cllr Tim Wotherspoon	Northstowe & New Communities Portfolio Holder, SCDC
Jo Mills	Planning & New Communities Corporate Manager, SCDC
Keith Miles	Planning Policy Manager, SCDC
Caroline Hunt	LDF Team Leader, SCDC
Jonathan Dixon	Principal Planning Policy Officer, SCDC
Jenny Nuttycombe	Planning Policy Officer, SCDC

These notes are a record of points raised in open discussion sessions by those attending the workshop, where a wide variety of views and ideas were put forward. The notes capture the range of issues and views identified, sometimes by individual stakeholders, and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Council. They do not represent any specific decisions made.

Discussion 1: What is South Cambridgeshire like now?

Things to retain and protect

- Quality of life
- Dynamic economy – companies and people are attracted to the area and stay.

Things to improve

- Limited opportunities for cycling – the more attractive you make cycling, the more people will cycle.
- Not enough housing for local people – both affordability and availability. Needs to be variety of housing to cater for different levels of affordability. Affordability is based on availability (supply and demand).
- Not enough high quality housing and executive homes.
- High levels of in-migration justifies need for strategic infrastructure up front.
- Infrastructure deficit
- Not enough money for affordable housing, sustainability and infrastructure – money used to deliver affordable housing therefore not available to provide infrastructure.
- Rural isolation for young people who are not car drivers.
- Not enough people in all villages to provide fast and frequent bus services, therefore have to link villages together to provide a bus service or need subsidy. Makes the service less attractive to residents.
- Park & Ride sites generate car traffic, as most people don't get to the Park & Ride by sustainable transport modes e.g. other bus services, cycling – need to change this.
- Car trips tend to be longer rather than more trips. Result of people driving further to access services and facilities. Higher skilled workers are willing to commute further than lower skilled workers. Social behaviour results in more car trips e.g. driving children to school, more households have two people working – more women are working.
- Traffic on A14 in this district is largely local commuters, only small percentage is freight.

Discussion 2: What is the vision for South Cambridgeshire at 2031?

- Better network of cycle ways between villages to encourage residents to reduce car use, also allows greater possibilities for social interaction for children.
- Make the countryside more accessible by improving accessibility of footpaths and cycle ways e.g. all weather surfaces.

- Encourage more multi-modal journeys e.g. by providing cycle racks at all bus stops. This would result in more use of bus services therefore more viable.
- Upgrade strategic infrastructure.
- Provide 18 hour public transport service e.g. run later into the evening. Bus services are currently focused on 9-5 working.
- Connect Park & Ride services to other bus services to encourage people away from cars.

Discussion 3: Options for the Development Strategy, Scale of Growth and Green Belt

- Avoid dormitory towns and villages.
- Provide infrastructure in first phase of development and consider all infrastructure requirements from the start.
- Ensure balance between jobs and housing.
- What is the impact of Alconbury Local Enterprise Zone on the scale of growth in South Cambridgeshire? Will it take some of the demand for housing?
- Where is the need to housing in South Cambridgeshire coming from?
- Is the level of growth sustainable? Especially in terms of community facilities and water resources.
- Potential linear city along Cambridge Guided Bus, extended to Alconbury.
- Strategy to create alternative employment generators to improve quality of life e.g. outdoor recreation such as Wicken Fen.
- Small and medium sized employers are being displaced, actively encourage them to South Cambridgeshire.
- Local Plan should facilitate independence e.g. for children and young people to travel independently by bike, bus or community transport.
- Continue to support businesses and diversification of business type.
- Try not to support commuting to London.
- The rate of growth is challenging for infrastructure providers (rate of growth has an impact on when new infrastructure will be required). Dispersed development is easier to accommodate through existing infrastructure.
- Current unsustainable practices relating to water and energy use need to be changed.
- Little attention given to community facilities (e.g. pubs, graveyards) – time lag before they are provided in new developments. Need to build in creating a community.

- Need to examine value of Green Belt on a case by case basis, some parts of Green Belt are more valuable than others. Some parts are not used to full potential as owners waiting for them to be released for development.
- Move A14 north and expand Cambridge northwards.
- Protect the natural environment surrounding Cambridge, as the countryside is what makes the area attractive. Occupiers of the high density urban extensions will want / need access to green space.
- Grow existing settlements to make them more sustainable and self contained e.g. Cambourne.
- Demand for access to the city centre needs to be managed through co-operation between districts.
- Need sixth form colleges outside Cambridge.
- Need to make sure that growth in villages does not destroy their attractive qualities.
- South Cambridgeshire needs to be part of the solution of making Cambridge more sustainable.
- To what extent will increased growth in the villages make services and facilities more viable? Exception sites are not enough.
- Are there opportunities for employment to be located nearer villages to reducing commuting?
- Create highway from Newmarket to Huntingdon for use by freight operators, they do not need to go via Cambridge. Would also develop other employment opportunities.

Discussion 4a: Key Issues relating to Sustainable Development & Climate Change

- Is 10% renewable energy requirement sufficient / appropriate?
- Need to ensure that developments are sustainable during construction as well as end result.
- NPPF defines sustainable development.
- Need to maximise water efficiency – but planning policies can only control new developments, many more older houses need to be retrofitted. Greater use of water efficiency features (e.g. rainwater harvesting, grey water recycling) in new builds may make technologies less expensive and more viable for retrofit projects.
- Reduce need to use vehicles.
- Adaptation is more important than mitigation – consider natural cooling, use of green spaces and trees etc.
- Encourage incorporation of sustainable energy generation into developments, including community owned local energy production.
- Require higher Code for Sustainable Homes standards ahead of the national requirements.

- Smarter local storage of water from rainwater harvesting or grey water recycling.
- Need to develop a scheme to encourage reduction of water consumption in existing stock.
- Zero carbon housing needs to consider transport as well e.g. make cycle parking more convenient than car parking at stations, supermarkets, doctors, homes.
- Plant more big trees with proper spacing and fit for climate change (e.g. olives and vines).
- What number and mix of houses is sustainable?
- Lag in planning system – need to make sure we get the Local Plan right now otherwise we're stuck with it for the next 10 years.
- Will what we build today still be sustainable in 2031?
- Need incentives so developers will provide sustainable features and still get a profit.
- Need to make sure developments are sustainable throughout lifetime of development and from the start – will ensure first residents don't get into unsustainable habits.

Discussion 4b: Key Issues relating to Economy & Growth

- Increasing productivity is increasing profitability but not resulting in more jobs as increasing use of self-serve and automation. Job growth may not be as high as predicted.
- Need to support new sectors of employment to create diversity e.g. encourage development of clean tech industry.
- Ensure include employment in new developments.
- Encourage University of Cambridge in remaining a world leader as has benefits for local economy.
- Economic growth should support quality of life.
- Exploit tourism potential.
- Help people set up home working.
- Improve digital infrastructure / broadband.
- Support clusters for synergy e.g. Genome project.
- Manufacturing still an important part of the local economy.
- Mix of starter units and larger units needed on business parks – reduces the need to relocate.

Discussion 4c: Key Issues relating to Housing & Affordability

- Need to ensure mix of housing – flats to executive homes.

- Need to provide homes for local people.
- Is 40% affordable housing requirement a block to development? How will 40% be provided in future as less funding available?
- Don't let developers off the hook based on current economy and viability, the market will pick up again.
- Need criteria to allow a variety of density requirements based on location. High density developments are more difficult for service providers – where does the infrastructure go? Need to ensure green space is provided.
- Need to provide flexibility in the housing market to meet the requirements of older people.
- Need to provide for Gypsies and Travellers.
- Need affordable market housing – maybe need to allow more growth so that house prices will come down.
- Older peoples needs must be considered – ensure mix of dwelling types for young, old etc.
- Mix of market and affordable housing on exception sites will create more mixed communities.
- All small houses now have extensions.
- Cost of renting is high.
- Each village to provide a small amount of land each year for homes for local people.
- Need high quality housing for older people to encourage them to move to locations convenient for care and away from family homes.
- Develop intergenerational housing schemes – houses for young people and houses for old people, so can support each other. Some homes already occupied by multiple generations, is this choice or necessity?
- Some landowners of exception sites request that land is only used for affordable housing in perpetuity, how would this work with mixed tenure exception sites?
- South Cambridgeshire is one of the few areas where developers can afford to provide services and facilities and still get a profit.

Discussion 5a: Key Issues relating to Design & Heritage

- Development needs to respect context – sympathy for local setting and character.
- Need to balance aesthetics vs. functionality.

- Need to consider performance of the building over its lifetime.
- Build on local vernacular design.
- Make sure layouts are suitable for emergency vehicles and service providers to maintain / repair facilities – reduce number of bends in roads.
- Make sure design requirements don't cost more.
- Need variety of density standards.
- Ensure design of new homes is practical e.g. cupboard to store vacuum cleaner.
- Local celebration of good design.
- Sell concept of whole life costs, including running costs.
- Encourage volume housebuilders to build good quality and well designed homes.
- Try to future proof houses.
- Change peoples aspirations for their homes.
- Don't have to choose between heritage / conservation and new development, they can go hand in hand – taking care of heritage assists the economy. In some cases new development is needed to protect heritage assets.
- Can we make zero carbon homes attractive to the next generation?

Discussion 5b: Key Issues relating to Natural Environment

- South Cambridgeshire is relatively impoverished in landscape and wildlife, therefore restoration and enhancement is important to help improve quality of life.
- Need to work with landscape and natural environment as it already exists – work design around this, rather than destroy it and create new green space.
- Improve and promote accessibility to the countryside – also consider stewardship schemes, more rights of way. Benefits for health and wellbeing.
- Green Infrastructure Strategy is very good – need a policy to implement this. Huntingdonshire DC has a good policy.
- Encourage use of allotments and community gardens to create food security, also encourages social cohesion.
- Develop habitat corridors and green corridors.
- Need cross boundary working.
- Need high quality and imaginative open spaces, SuDS can help.

Discussion 5c: Key Issues relating to Travel

- Need to change behaviour and encourage fewer and shorter journeys.
- Encourage agricultural diversification.
- Water bus? E.g. Peterborough
- Garages are too small. Parking needs to be considered within the site design. Learn lessons from parking courts at Cambourne.
- Build a ring road (like M25) around Cambridge.
- Need to make shared cyclist and pedestrian routes safe for both users.
- Need to make cycle ways safe by including sustainable lighting / active lighting e.g. movement triggered.
- Need to create sustainable transport links between villages.
- Create transport nodes and develop integrated transport plans.
- Need shops to sell cycle lights that light your way (rather than just make you seen by others).
- Develop car free developments.
- Build on opportunities created by Chesterton Station.

Discussion 5d: Key Issues relating to Services & Facilities

- Develop electric car points.
- Plan for how people move and meet, and ageing population – consider co-location of services, facilities and access to public transport e.g. village pubs to become hubs including post office, shop etc.
- Encourage multi-use of buildings.
- Community governance needed from the start.
- Recognise the different circumstances of rural communities.
- Important to have strategic level brief for the development.
- Local authority to provide infrastructure from the start, costs to be recovered later from developers.
- Open access to green space needs to be promoted e.g. woodlands.
- Need to be careful with multi-functional open space – can end up with poor quality of each of the different functions.
- SuDS – need training to ensure they are effectively used.
- Village colleges should provide services for all generations – like original ethos for their development.

- Develop communities where people live and work – allows facilities to be supported e.g. community fire stations.
- Phasing of development and key infrastructure needs to be carefully considered.
- Managed growth of existing villages to make services and facilities viable.
- Recreation and leisure facilities are important – utilise existing footpaths and bridleways.
- Develop CHP (combined heat and power) solutions for higher density areas.
- Develop resilience planning for villages in view of climate change. Supported by Environment Agency.
- Develop winter storage of water – added wildlife benefits.
- Support and develop local music production, drama, football team, and scouts.