



# **Local Plan Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report**

## **Non – Technical Summary**

**July 2012**

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## **Introduction**

1. This document is the Non-Technical Summary of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report. It explains the purpose of sustainability appraisal, how it has been carried out, a brief overview of its findings, and what happens next.

## **The South Cambridgeshire Local Plan**

2. The Local plan will form part of the statutory development plan for South Cambridgeshire, and will replace a number of its existing plans.
3. The Local Plan will set the levels of employment and housing development that should be provided over the period to 2031 to best meet the needs of the area and a clear strategy for meeting development needs in the best way possible that protects the quality of life and existing and future residents. It will set policies to ensure that development is of high quality and will meet the challenges we face with a changing climate. It will ensure that new development comes with the necessary schools, health facilities, shops, leisure facilities and open spaces that residents will need to provide them with a good quality of life.
4. The Plan aims to set a strong framework for new development, 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.
5. The proposed vision for the Local Plan is that, 'South Cambridgeshire will continue to be the best place to live and work in the country. Our district will demonstrate impressive and sustainable economic growth. Our residents will have a superb quality of life in an exceptionally beautiful, rural and green environment.'
6. The preparation of the Local Plan is influenced by other plans and programmes. Particularly significant is the National Planning Policy Framework, published in March 2012. This includes a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development', and it will be for the Local Plan to guide what is considered sustainable in the context of South Cambridgeshire.

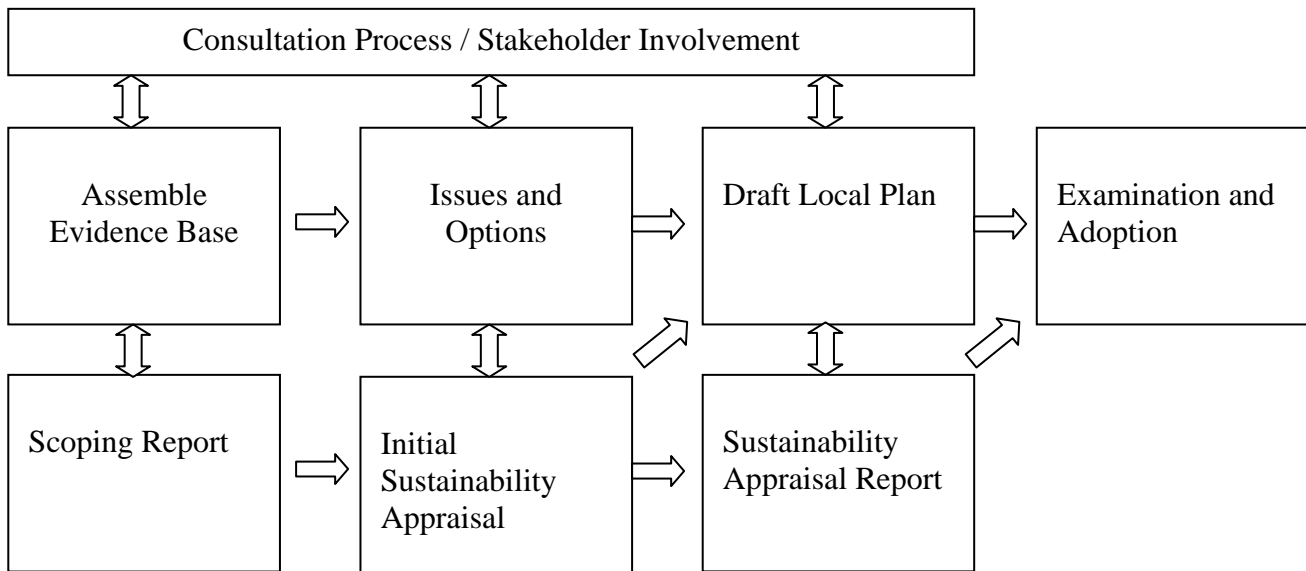
## **Local Plan 'Issues and Options' Consultation**

7. The first stage of producing a Local Plan is to consider the 'Issues and Options'. This document is not designed to put forward any firm proposals for development but instead sets out what the main issues are that face South Cambridgeshire and what options might exist to tackle those issues. The Issues and Options document sets out options for the level and location of growth, and options that could govern the form of development. It also identifies a range of potential site options for development.
8. It represents the first stage of public consultation, undertaken before a draft plan is prepared. Consultation is taking place from Thursday 12 July to Friday 28 September, with events for the public taking place across the district.

## Sustainability Appraisal

9. Sustainability Appraisal is a process which takes place alongside plan making, to assess the extent to which the emerging policies and proposals will help to achieve 'sustainable development', and by understanding potential adverse effects it provides opportunities for plans to be improved. The overall aim of the appraisal process is to help ensure that the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan makes an effective contribution to the pursuit of 'sustainable development'. The most widely-used definition of this concept is "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".
10. The process incorporates requirements of Strategic Environmental Assessment, a requirement to assess the significant environmental impact of plans which applies across Europe.

### The Sustainability Appraisal Process and Plan Making



### **The Scoping Stages**

11. The first stage of the Sustainability Appraisal process has been to produce a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report. It provides the context for the appraisal, and identifies issues of particular importance to the District that should be considered.
12. Evidence in the Scoping Report was gathered around ten themes, which taken together address the full range of sustainability issues.

### Sustainability themes

<b>Environmental</b>	<b>Social</b>	<b>Economic</b>
Land	Health	Economic Activity
Pollution	Housing	Transport
Biodiversity	Inclusive Communities	
Landscape And Townscape		
Climate Change		

13. For each theme, issues are explored through the Scoping process outlined below:

### **The Scoping Process**

#### **What is the policy context?**

Identifies the objectives and requirements of other plans policies and strategies ranging from national to local level that will influence development of the plan.

#### **What is the situation now?**

Existing characteristics of the district.

#### **What will the situation be without the plan?**

Considers what the district would be like if the Local Plan wasn't prepared.

#### **What are the Key Sustainability Issues and Problems?**

Identifies key sustainability issues for the district to be considered through plan making and the sustainability appraisal.

#### **What are the Sustainability Objectives?**

Using the sustainability issues identified above, establishes a framework for testing policies and proposals against.

#### **What indicators will be used to monitor significant effects?**

Considers what issues should be monitored in future to establish the actual impacts of the new plan.

### **Sustainability Objectives**

14. The outcome of the 'Scoping' stage of the SA process is a set of Sustainability Objectives created to address the sustainability problems. They reflect desired environmental, social or economic outcomes, rather than measures that would assist in achieving those outcomes (they focus on the ends rather than the means).

## Sustainability Objectives

THEME	SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE
LAND	Minimise the irreversible loss of undeveloped land, economic mineral reserves, and productive agricultural holdings, and the degradation / loss of soils
	Minimise waste production and support the reuse and recycling of waste products
POLLUTION	Improve air quality and minimise or mitigate against sources of environmental pollution
BIODIVERSITY	Avoid damage to designated sites and protected species
	Maintain and enhance the range and viability of characteristic habitats and species
	Improve opportunities for people to access and appreciate wildlife and green spaces
LANDSCAPE AND TOWNSCAPE	Maintain and enhance the diversity and local distinctiveness of landscape and townscape character
	Avoid damage to areas and sites designated for their historic interest, and protect their settings.
	Create places, spaces and buildings that work well, wear well and look good
CLIMATE CHANGE	Minimise impacts on climate change (including greenhouse gas emissions)
	Reduce vulnerability to future climate change effects
HEALTH	Maintain and enhance human health
	Reduce and prevent crime and reduce fear of crime
	Improve the quantity and quality of publically accessible open space.
HOUSING	Ensure everyone has access to decent, appropriate and affordable housing
INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES	Redress inequalities related to age, disability, gender, race, faith, location and income
	Improve the quality, range and accessibility of services and facilities (e.g. health, transport, education, training, leisure opportunities)
	Encourage and enable the active involvement of local people in community activities
ECONOMIC ACTIVITY	Improve the efficiency, competitiveness, vitality and adaptability of the local economy.
	Help people gain access to satisfying work appropriate to their skills, potential and place of residence
	Support appropriate investment in people, places, communications and other infrastructure
TRANSPORT	Reduce the need to travel and promote more sustainable transport choices.
	Secure appropriate investment and development in transport infrastructure, and ensure the safety of the transport network.

15. The Scoping Report was subject to consultation in February 2012 with the Environment Agency, English Nature, and English Heritage who have a key role in ensuring it addresses environmental issues appropriately. Their comments have been taken into account to get the scoping report to this stage. Comments can also be made on the Scoping Report at the Issues and Options stage.

## **Aim of the Initial Sustainability Report**

16. The initial Sustainability Appraisal was carried out to support the Local Plan Issues and Options consultation. Its purpose has been to help identify reasonable alternative options that the plan could implement, and test them to identify the potential impacts and their relative sustainability. The Initial Sustainability Report is being published for consultation alongside the issues and options report to provide the public and statutory bodies with an opportunity to express their opinions on it, and so that views can be considered before the Local Plan is drafted.

## **Who has carried out the assessment?**

17. The assessment has been completed by officers of the Council, drawing in specialists to guide consideration of specific topics or issues. In particular in reviewing site options external views were sought from specialist stakeholders, such as County Council Highways and the Environment Agency, and from infrastructure providers such as Cambridge Water and Anglian Water.

## **How is it carried out?**

18. The Initial Sustainability Appraisal has considered how the options proposed in the Issues and Options Report perform against the Sustainability Objectives, whether there is likely to be positive or negative impacts, and the significance of the impact. The information is captured in the form of matrix tables for each option.
19. The Council has also completed a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, which has reviewed sites submitted following a 'call for sites' in 2011. This identified whether sites were 'available, suitable, and deliverable'. These sites have then been subject to sustainability appraisal. To assist in making impacts quantifiable, measurable and transparent, and for direct comparison between sites to be made, quantifiable gradings have been identified to provide a means by which the relative sustainability of each site can be established in comparison with other sites.

## **The Difference the process has made**

20. South Cambridgeshire has tried to make the Sustainability Appraisal process as integral to the plan making process as possible. The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping process has been used to help identify and summarise the issues arising from the evidence base to support the plan making process.
21. The sustainability appraisal process has helped to identify alternative options, and whether options could be revised to be more sustainable. It also helps to highlight the pros and cons of particular ways of tackling an issue. It has also been central to identifying whether sites were reasonable options for development, and their relative merits.

## **Summary of Results**

### **Comparison of the Draft Local Plan Objectives with the Sustainability Objectives**

22. The objectives of the Local Plan set out what it is aiming to achieve in spatial planning terms and set the context for development of policies. They form the link between the high level vision and the more detailed strategy and policies. Objectives

are related to addressing the issues facing the districts, and the needs that have been identified. The following objectives have been proposed in the Issues and Options Report:

- A. To support economic growth by supporting our position as a world leader in research and technology based industries, research, and education; and supporting the rural economy.*
- B. To protect the character of South Cambridgeshire, including its built and natural heritage. New development should enhance the area, and protect and enhance biodiversity.*
- C. To provide land for housing that meets local needs and aspirations, and gives choice about type, size, tenure and cost.*
- D. To deliver new developments that are high quality and well-designed with distinctive character that reflects their location, and which responds robustly to the challenges of climate change.*
- E. To link development with local facilities and services, and sustainable transport including buses, walking and cycling.*
- F. To ensure that all new development provides or has access to a range of services and facilities that support healthy lifestyles and wellbeing for everyone, including shops, schools, doctors, community buildings, cultural facilities, local open space, and green infrastructure.*

- 23. The objectives have been reviewed to see whether they will support achievement of the sustainability objectives.
- 24. In summary at least one Local Plan objective directly corresponds to each of the Sustainability Objectives.
- 25. A number of Local Plan objectives relate to enabling new development. This has clear positive implications for a number of sustainability objectives, but will have an absolute impact on resource use, such as land, and generate additional waste and greenhouse gases. Impact will depend on scale, location of development and how it is designed.
- 26. The development of policies provides an opportunity to mitigate many conflicts, by steering the location and form of development, and ensuring any negative impacts are minimised. The suitability of individual developments would be also assessed through normal planning application processes.
- 27. Through the Issues and Options consultation the objectives may be adapted/changed, in which case they will be re-appraised in the next stage.

### **Sustainability appraisal of site and policy options**

- 28. The initial sustainability appraisal provides a review of each individual site and policy approach against the set of sustainability objectives. The following section summarises the most significant impacts identified from site and policy options on each of the sustainability objectives.

## Summary of Appraisal on Individual Objectives

<b>Minimise the irreversible loss of undeveloped land, economic mineral reserves, productive agricultural holdings, and the degradation / loss of soils</b>
<p>Reflecting the nature of the district a large number of site options would involve development of greenfield land. Much of this is agricultural land, although a portion of sites are actually disused agricultural land. Until the package of sites is finalised it is difficult to determine the cumulative impact, but due to the scale of growth it is likely to be significant.</p> <p>Options to deliver housing and employment growth (issue 3 and 4) have the potential to require significant use of previously undeveloped land. Approach to village frameworks (issue 15) proposes a number of options regarding village frameworks. Frameworks restrict growth on the outer edges of settlements, they therefore perform a role in minimising loss of agricultural land. More flexible approaches could have a negative impact on achievement of the objective, but the scale of the impact would depend on the implementation.</p> <p>The construction methods policy option (issue 23) proposes to seek careful management of soils.</p>
<b>Minimise waste production and support the reuse and recycling of waste products</b>
<p>The objective is considered to be primarily related to design rather than the location of an individual site.</p> <p>The scale of development proposed (issue 3 and 4) will have implications overall for waste generation. The construction methods policy option (issue 23) also seeks to encourage recycling of waste products.</p>
<b>Improve air quality and minimise or mitigate against sources of environmental pollution</b>
<p>Impact on air quality, and whether a site can provide an appropriate residential environment is addressed in the assessment of individual site options. Cumulative impact would depend on the eventual package of sites, and for example any resulting traffic.</p> <p>A number of policy options are proposed to directly address environmental pollution of different kinds, in particular light noise and odour issues (issue 93), contaminated land (issue 94) air quality (issue 95), low emissions strategy (issue 96) and planning for sustainable travel (issue 97). The implementation of these would clearly have significant positive impacts on achievement of the objective.</p>
<b>Avoid damage to designated sites and protected species</b>
<p>Impact on designated sites and species is addressed in the assessment of individual options. Sites where potential significant negative effects that could not be mitigated have not been identified as reasonable options.</p> <p>Biodiversity (issue 32) directly proposes to protect designated sites from unacceptable adverse impacts. A number of other options have the potential for positive impacts.</p>
<b>Maintain and enhance the range and viability of characteristic habitats and species</b>
<p>Impact on biodiversity is addressed in the assessment of individual options. Sites where potential significant negative effects that could not be mitigated have not been identified as reasonable options. Many individual site options would actually provide opportunities to provide biodiversity enhancement, as many sites actually have a limited range of existing habitats and species. Cumulative impact would depend on the package of sites identified.</p>



<p>A number of policy options directly address habitats and species. Biodiversity (issue 32) also aims for development proposals to achieve a net gain in biodiversity where possible. Other options also propose to address biodiversity gain, including Green Infrastructure provision (issue 33), and securing high quality design (issue 28).</p>
<p><b>Improve opportunities for people to access and appreciate wildlife and green spaces</b></p> <p>Larger development options, and in the general locations on the edge of Cambridge, have the potential to deliver additional green infrastructure, although the scale of impact is uncertain at this stage.</p> <p>Green Infrastructure (issue 33) has the most potential for significant positive impact on this objective.</p>
<p><b>Maintain and enhance the diversity and local distinctiveness of landscape and townscape character</b></p> <p>The impact on landscape and townscape has been examined in relation to individual site options. Where options would have a significant negative impact, they have been rejected, as they are not considered reasonable options for development. A number of options provide opportunities for landscape or townscape improvement. The cumulative impact on any package of site selected for the draft plan will be considered in the final Sustainability Appraisal.</p> <p>Potentially significant negative impacts on landscape or townscape have been identified for the general locations around Cambridge, although it would depend on the scale and location of any specific site option.</p> <p>A number of issues make direct reference to protecting landscape and townscape, either directly or indirectly, for example referring to development which is in scale with its location.</p> <p>A number of options propose greater flexibility on the edges of settlements, including the approach to Village Frameworks (issue 15), which creates greater uncertainty whether the objective will be achieved. A number of policies have potential for significant positive impacts, in particular landscape character (issue 30), Protected Village Amenity Areas (issue 37), Important Countryside Frontage (issue 39), impact of development on the Green Belt (issue 34), and securing high quality design (issue 28).</p>
<p><b>Avoid damage to areas and sites designated for their historic interest, and protect their settings</b></p> <p>The impact on heritage assets has been examined in relation to individual site options. Where options would have a significant negative impact, they have been rejected, as they are not considered reasonable options for development. A small number of options offer opportunities to improve setting of heritage assets, including Papworth Hospital.</p> <p>The assessment of locations on the edge of Cambridge identified a number of heritage assets that could be affected by development, but impacts would depend on the scale and location of site development.</p> <p>A number of economic policies would enable the reuse of rural buildings (issue 70 and issue 71), which could support the preservation of historic buildings. Options with potential for significant positive impact are heritage assets (issue 42), assets of local importance (issue 43), which directly addresses the issue for planning purposes. Options with potential for negative impact include those that provide greater flexibility for development on the edges of villages (Approach to village frameworks issue 15), as this could impact on the historic</p>

setting of villages, but the scale and nature of impact would depend on other policies, which could be applied to address the issue.

**Create places, spaces and buildings that work well, wear well and look good**

This objective has not been directly assessed in relation to site options, as it depends significantly on how a site is actually developed.

Securing high quality design (issue 28) has potential for significant positive impact on achievement of this objective, as it proposes a range of issues that contribute to development quality. A range of other options which seek services and facilities, and to help the mix of uses would have a positive impact. Some options propose a design led approach, such as parking standards (issue 98). This has potential for a significant positive impact as it could adapt individual development to their circumstances, although it would create greater uncertainty.

**Minimise impacts on climate change (including greenhouse gas emissions)**

As sustainable transport is addressed elsewhere, the appraisal of the objective particularly focuses on impacts of development on energy use. No specific opportunities for renewable energy were identified by the site appraisals, although this does not mean opportunities will not be present.

Overall energy use will increase as a result of the scale of development (issues 3 and 4). Other options have the potential to contribute to achievement of this objective – Mitigation and adaptation to climate change (issue 17), Renewable energy and low carbon developments (issue 18), renewables in new developments (issue 19), community energy fund (issue 20), and sustainable design and construction (issue 21). The scale of positive impact would depend on the approach selected, with options such as requiring higher level of the code for sustainable homes having the most significant impact, compared with approaches that would reflect building regulations standards.

**Reduce vulnerability to future climate change effects**

Flood risk has been a key element in determining whether site options were reasonable, utilising the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment to filter out any sites that were at significant flood risk and should be rejected. The review of Green Belt locations on the edge of Cambridge identified some areas at significant flood risk, but in all cases it would be possible to develop whilst avoiding these areas.

A number of options would have direct positive impacts of adapting to climate change. The absolute impact of the scale of development will be to increase demand for water, in what is classified as an area of serious water stress by the Environment Agency, and has potential to negatively impact on achievement of the objective (issues 3 and 4). Options related to water efficiency could reduce overall water use (issue 21 and 24) generated by development compared to normal building regulations standards, depending on the level selected the impact could be significant.

Options on managing flood risk (issue 27), and utilising Sustainable Drainage Systems (issue 26) also have potential for significant positive impact. Mitigation and adaptation to climate change (issue 17) proposes to address wider adaptation issues, including the orientation of buildings to address cooling, and landscaping to provide shade. Green Infrastructure (issue 33) would also have a role in climate change adaption, supporting urban cooling and water management.

**Maintain and enhance human health**

The health impact objective was considered to be primarily addressed by site specific

design rather than site location, although there are a range of other objectives which impact on health, such as air quality, sustainable transport and access to services addressed by other objectives.

A range of options have potential for significant positive impacts on achievement of the health objectives, in particular securing high quality design (issue 28).

Health Impact Assessments (issue 80), developing new communities (issue 82), open space standards (issue 87), planning for sustainable travel (issue 97), and options which address air quality and pollution (issues 93, 94, 95 and 96). Addressing targets for Gypsy and Traveller pitches (issue 57) has particular benefits due to the healthy inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers. A range of other policies have potential for minor or indirect benefits.

#### **Reduce and prevent crime and reduce fear of crime**

Another objective where it is considered to be primarily related to design rather than the location of an individual site.

The objective is primarily addressed by the Securing high quality design (issue 28), which has potential for significant positive impact.

#### **Improve the quantity and quality of publically accessible open space**

Most sites have been identified as neutral impact on achieving the objective, as they would be required to deliver open space to meet the needs generated by development, reflecting open space standards. Some sites, particularly major developments would provide potential for significant additional provision, and could therefore have a significant positive impact on the achievement of the objective. No sites would result in the loss of existing public open space. The assessment of locations on the edge of Cambridge identified one option which could result in the loss of existing public open space in Cambridge.

Policy options proposing open space standards (issue 87), on-site open space (issue 89) requiring for development to address open space needs generated, and protection of existing playing fields and recreation facilities (issue 91), and provision of infrastructure and services (issue 107) will have significant positive impact on securing the objective.

#### **Ensure everyone has access to decent, appropriate and affordable housing**

Site options for housing development all have the potential to support achievement of this objective, proportionate to the scale of housing they would deliver.

Strategic options related to the scale of development (issue 4) that should be planned in the district have a key link to achievement of this objective. The targets reflect the anticipated level of need depending on economic circumstances. As such they all have potential to significantly contribute to the achievement of the objective. If a lower target is selected, but the economy grows at a faster rate, this could have a negative impact on achievement of the objective. The highest option has the greatest potential impact on meeting affordable housing needs.

Policy options that could significantly assist achievement of the objective include housing mix (issue 46), flexible housing to support reduced mobility (issue 47), affordable housing (issue 48), exception sites (issue 49). A range of options are proposed in relation to each of these issues. Where options propose flexibility or to not provide guidance these give the greatest uncertainty whether the objective will be achieved.

Options regarding Gypsy and Traveller sites (issue 57) propose targets to meet identified need, which would clearly have significant positive impact on achieving the objective.

<b>Redress inequalities related to age, disability, gender, race, faith, location and income</b>
<p>Another objective where it is considered to be primarily related to design rather than the location of an individual site.</p> <p>A wide range of options have potential to contribute to achievement of this objective. In particular those which would improve or protect access to services and facilities, and deliver housing and employment to rural areas, to address issues of rurality. Securing high quality design (issue 26) also proposes to ensure areas are accessible for all, and meet the needs of the community. No options were identified that would have a negative impact on achievement of the objective.</p>
<b>Improve the quality, range and accessibility of services and facilities</b>
<p>The assessment of site options considered the accessibility of individual sites to service centres, utilising the settlement classification of centres as a proxy for the level of services available, and considered the distance to the centre. Accessibility has been a key issue when determining reasonable site options for development, with sites with poor access being rejected. Some sites offer particular opportunities for improvements in the range of services and facilities available.</p> <p>Development Strategy options (issue 9) which propose development close to Cambridge, or in new settlement have the greatest potential to deliver access to the widest range of services and facilities. This is linked to the Green Belt review (issue 11). Scale of Housing Development at Villages (Issue 14) will determine the approach to development in the different scale of villages. Focusing development on better served locations could have the greatest positive impact on achievement of this objective. Options providing the greatest flexibility for growth in small villages could potentially have a significant negative impact on achievement of the objective. Providing greater flexibility for development beyond village frameworks, or removing frameworks (issue 15), could create potential for more development in smaller villages, delivering more development in areas with less access to services.</p> <p>Planning for sustainable travel (issue 97), provision of infrastructure and services (Issue 107), protection of village services and facilities (issue 81), developing new communities (issue 82), securing high quality design (issue 28), retail hierarchy (issue 75) all have the potential for significant positive impacts. Assessing the Impact of Retail Development Proposals (issue 76) identifies a potentially negative impact if the default threshold for requiring retail impact assessment was applied, as only the impact of larger stores would be considered.</p>
<b>Encourage and enable the active involvement of local people in community activities</b>
<p>Assessments of site options identify where new community facilities or village halls are referred to in development proposals.</p> <p>Developing new communities (issue 82) and provision of infrastructure (issue 107), and securing high quality design (issue 28) provide significant positive impact on achievement of the objective due to their links with provision of community facilities.</p> <p>Localism and the relationship with neighbourhood plans (issue 7) identified the positive role the local plan could have in meeting local aspirations, and therefore encouraging community involvement.</p>
<b>Improve the efficiency, competitiveness, vitality and adaptability of the local</b>

## **economy**

Site appraisals identify options which propose additional employment provision, and others which would result in the loss of employment land.

A key issue for the plan is the projected jobs growth (issue 3), issues are linked with housing provision (issue 4). Impacts could be significant, but depend to a significant extent on the wider economy, therefore there is some uncertainty. Planning for a low forecast could hold back growth if the economy performs better, planning for a high forecast could overprovide if the economy does not perform.

Options identified that could deliver significant positive impacts include new employment provision near Cambridge (issue 59) and the related issue of the Cambridge Northern Fringe East (issue 110), promotion of clusters (issue 63), established employment areas in the countryside (issue 66), new employment development in villages (issue 67), retention of employment sites (issue 72), and provision of infrastructure (issue 107). Part of the objective is to support the shopping hierarchy and the vitality and viability of centres, which is directly addressed by the retail hierarchy (issue 75). There are a number of other options with positive impacts.

A number of options are proposed in relation to limitations on the occupancy of new premises (Issue 61), but the scale of impacts are unclear. Overall, a policy which reserves employment land to uses that need to be in the area would minimise use of land and resources. There is some evidence that the current policy may hold back development of the high tech economy, and therefore permitting greater flexibility could have a more positive economic impact.

## **Help people gain access to satisfying work appropriate to their skills, potential and place of residence**

Site appraisals considered access to work, measuring the time taken to access the nearest major employment area to enable a site comparison.

Access to work could be affected by strategic growth issues identified in the previous objective (issue 3 and 4). Achievement of the objective will be influenced by delivery of jobs, but also the relationship of jobs with the number and location of homes.

Options identified that could deliver significant positive impacts include new employment provision near Cambridge (issue 59) and the related Cambridge Northern Fringe East (issue 110), promotion of clusters (issue 63), established employment areas in the countryside (issue 66), new employment development in villages (issue 67), retention of employment sites (issue 72), and provision of infrastructure (issue 107). There are a number of other options with positive impacts.

Scale of housing development at Villages (Issue 14) will determine the approach to development in different scale of villages. Options proving the greatest flexibility for growth in small villages could potentially have a significant negative impact on achievement of the objective as it could result in growth in less accessible to workplaces. Addressing Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation needs could also support access to work (issue 57).

## **Support appropriate investment in people, places, communications and other infrastructure**

Site assessments identified capacity in existing infrastructure, including foul drainage and schools, to accommodate development, and where additional investment would be required.

Options to deliver housing and employment growth (issue 3 and 4) could bring with them investment in places. Options identified that could deliver significant positive impacts include

developing new communities (issue 82) and provision of infrastructure (issue 107).

### **Reduce the need to travel and promote more sustainable transport choices**

Site options were subject to detailed assessment to explore their accessibility by means other than the car, including distance to public transport, frequency and journey length of the service, and cycling distance to a major centre. These were combined to give a score for each site.

Housing provision (issue 4) identifies options for scales of growth. In terms of transport infrastructure, and achieving sustainable transport, more homes could simply be more people on the networks and using cars. However, the relationship is not that straightforward, as delivery of homes in the right places, enabling more people to live close to jobs and services, could actually reduce the need to travel, and support use of sustainable modes. This would clearly depend on how growth is implemented, determined by other options.

Delivery of housing could support putting homes near to jobs, and have positive impacts on commuting patterns. Development Strategy options (issue 9) which propose development close to Cambridge, or in new settlements have the greatest potential to deliver access to the widest range of services and facilities. This is linked to the Green Belt review (issue 11). Scale of Housing Development at Villages (Issue 14) will determine approach to development in different scales of villages. Options provide the greatest flexibility for growth in small villages could potentially have a significant negative impact on achievement of the overall objective, by increasing the need to travel, and reducing opportunities to use sustainable modes of travel.

Options identified that could deliver significant positive impacts include securing high quality design (issue 28), new employment provision near Cambridge (issue 59), Cambridge Northern Fringe East (issue 110), retail hierarchy (issue 75), planning for sustainable travel (issue 97), Transport Assessments and Travel Plans (issue 98), cycle parking standards (issue 103), provision of infrastructure and services (issue 107). Impacts of options for car parking standards are uncertain, due to the potentially indirect relationship between car ownership and frequency of car use.

### **Secure appropriate investment and development in transport infrastructure, and ensure the safety of the transport network**

Highways capacity issues have been explored in relation to individual site options. Where sites were incapable of being appropriately served, and issues weren't capable of mitigation, sites were rejected.

Options to deliver housing and employment growth (issue 3 and 4) will result in increased pressure on transport networks, but will also support investment in new infrastructure. Cumulative impacts for transport in the Cambridge sub region will be explored through Cambridgeshire County Council's new transport strategy.

Options identified that could deliver significant positive impacts include planning for sustainable travel (issue 97), developing new communities (issue 82), provision of infrastructure (issue 107) and Cambridge Northern Fringe East (issue 110).

## **The Habitats Directive Assessment**

29. Alongside the sustainability appraisal, the Council is also required by the Habitats Directive to examine whether plans would have any significant effects on European designated habitats. The Scoping report includes a section dedicated specifically to Habitats Regulations Assessment, which further explains the process, and provides information on relevant sites in the District and surrounding area, their characteristics and current condition. The Initial Sustainability Appraisal includes a screening exercise, to identify any potential significant effects of options. No significant effects were identified at this early stage, although further work will be needed as the plan progresses to complete appraisal this process.

## **The Next stages of the Plan Making and Sustainability Appraisal Process**

30. Once the issues and options stage of plan making is completed, a draft plan will be prepared. This will be subject to sustainability appraisal, in the form of a Draft Final Sustainability Report. Both will be subject to consultation before the plan is submitted to the Secretary of State for adoption. Should any significant changes be made to the plan as a result of public consultation, additional appraisal work will need to be carried out and the final Sustainability Report amended to reflect the results.

31. At the draft plan stage the appraisal will assess the draft policies and allocations selected for the final plan, considering the likely significant effects of the plan as a whole, how they can be mitigated or enhanced, and how impacts can be monitored. At this point the appraisal will also identify reasons why other options were eliminated.

## **How to comment on this report**

If you would like to comment on any aspect of the report, you can make your comments in the following ways:

Online at [www.scams.gov.uk](http://www.scams.gov.uk)

By emailing your comments to [LDF@scams.gov.uk](mailto:LDF@scams.gov.uk)

By posting your comments to:

Director for Planning and New Communities  
South Cambridgeshire District Council  
South Cambridgeshire Hall  
Cambourne Business Park  
Cambourne  
Cambridge  
CB23 6EA

Please ensure that we receive your comments by Friday 28<sup>th</sup> September

If you have any questions on this Initial SA Report, or the SA process in general, please telephone the Planning Policy team on 03450 450 500, or email [LDF@scams.gov.uk](mailto:LDF@scams.gov.uk)