

Local Plan Workshops: March & April 2012

Summary of Issues Raised

1. Vision for South Cambridgeshire at 2031

MEMBERS

- Protect the diversity, distinctiveness and unique character of each of the villages.
- Provide a range of jobs, supported by appropriate infrastructure.
- Create a better balance between jobs and homes.
- Provide business space in the right locations and encourage smaller businesses to stay and grow in the district.
- Enhance the environment and preserve green spaces.
- Improve transport infrastructure to reduce congestion.
- Retain and increase local services and facilities.
- Ensure all development is of a high quality.
- Provide a variety of housing, including executive homes for chief executives and their families.
- Increase the University's link with businesses.
- Retain high quality of life for residents.

STAKEHOLDERS

- Develop sustainable transport opportunities and encourage use their use.
- Upgrade strategic infrastructure.
- Improve accessibility to the countryside.
- Provide high quality housing, executive homes and housing for local people.
- Provide suitable opportunities for young people to avoid rural isolation.
- Retain high quality of life.

HOUSEBUILDERS & AGENTS

- Make South Cambridgeshire more independent and less reliant on Cambridge City.
- Continue to positively plan for economic prosperity and housing growth.
- Retain high quality of life for residents.
- Provide business space and houses in the right locations e.g. where people want to live and work. Look more imaginatively at provision of business space and opportunities.
- Reduce congestion.
- Broaden the range of jobs available in the district.
- Provide more "affordable" market housing.
- Retain open space and access to the countryside.

PARISH COUNCILS

- Achieve a sustainable balance between housing and employment.
- Provide development proportionate to the scale of services and infrastructure provided in a village and within environmental and social limits.
- Encourage the use of advanced building techniques.
- Secure high quality development by providing more guidance on design and materials.
- Create an achievable renewable energy target and prevent wind farms from being developed within 2 km of residential development.
- Restrict growth unless strategic infrastructure is provided.
- Provide good quality broadband across the district.

- Retain and protect the district's heritage assets and also access to the countryside.
- Provide additional allotments, cemeteries and burial grounds.
- Reduce traffic through villages.
- Deliver the Community Infrastructure Levy.
- Protect employment sites from being lost to housing, and provide more smaller business units.
- Provide affordable housing for local people and facilities for young people.
- Protect the Green Belt from further development.

2. Options for the Development Strategy and Scale of Growth

MEMBERS

- Spread the growth across all villages either equally or proportionately based on current number of houses.
- Focus growth on a new settlement or urban extension, the villages that want to expand and the more sustainable villages.
- Develop a new settlement in a sustainable location.
- Incentivise village expansion by providing financial gain to communities that want to grow.
- Promote the reuse of empty and obsolete buildings.
- Preserve the separation and distinction between individual villages.
- Encourage developments that support the local economy.
- Development frameworks should be removed or enlarged to allow settlements to grow, or allow low-density development on the edge of villages outside the development framework.
- Settlement hierarchy should be focussed on clusters of villages rather than individual villages, and allow growth within the cluster.
- Create vibrant villages including mix of housing and employment.
- The settlement hierarchy constrains development – results in 'gaps' being 'filled up'.
- More flexibility should be allowed relating to the size of new housing developments allowed in different settlement categories.
- Settlement categories of villages should be reviewed – group villages currently covers a wide-ranging size of settlements, the sustainability of villages has changed over time through changes to public transport (e.g. Guided Busway).
- Consider simplifying the settlement hierarchy into two categories (i) Rural Centres & Minor Rural Centres and (ii) Group & Infill Villages.

STAKEHOLDERS

- Avoid dormitory towns and villages.
- Consider infrastructure requirements from the start and provide them early in the development.
- Ensure balance between jobs and housing.
- Consider potential linear city along the Guided Busway, extended as far as Alconbury, or consider realigning A14 further north and expand Cambridge northwards.
- Protect the natural environment, as the countryside makes the area attractive.
- Develop existing settlements to make them more sustainable and self-contained.
- Ensure that development does not harm the attractive qualities of villages.
- Provide employment opportunities within villages to reduce commuting.

HOUSEBUILDERS & AGENTS

- Development should not all be focussed on Cambridge or all in one new settlement – need a mixed approach that spreads development across the settlement hierarchy.

- Ensure that growth in the villages does not impact on their character and attractiveness.
- Planned growth needs to meet historic, current and future needs.
- Make South Cambridgeshire more independent and less reliant on Cambridge City.
- Encourage provision of employment opportunities in the villages.
- Allow the level of growth required to support the Cambridge economy.
- Focus development on villages with existing services and facilities.
- Allow smaller villages to increase their sustainability by allowing development to support provision of services and facilities – need to ensure quantum of development is enough to make services and facilities viable.
- Increase development in locations where existing planned development and infrastructure is already being provided.
- Housing should be located to support existing employment opportunities and use sustainable transport options.

PARISH COUNCILS

- Large new settlements are good because they provide the required infrastructure whereas small developments in villages do not have the required infrastructure and services.
- Create new settlements that have an identity e.g. sports focussed.
- Small developments of 1-2 houses are acceptable in villages.
- Development outside the development framework boundary could be acceptable in some locations and consider expanding development framework boundaries.
- Locate housing close to existing jobs or good quality public transport (e.g. rail, bus) or create employment opportunities within villages.
- Should only develop rural areas if more rural transport options are provided.
- Concern over loss of farmland used for food production.
- Consider expanding existing planned developments.
- Retain village hierarchy but allow flexibility for local communities to expand beyond this if they want.
- Maintain village character including open spaces and 'gaps'.
- Restricting development in infill villages has resulted in loss of services and facilities, but large-scale growth of the village is not sustainable.
- Scale of growth should be bespoke and determined based on character of the village, rather than target driven.
- Develop mix of housing sizes and tenures to meet local needs.

3. Options for the Green Belt

MEMBERS

- Stop amending the Green Belt. Build out current allocations on land released from the Green Belt and then consider reviewing the Green Belt.
- Preserve the Green Belt to present coalescence between the individual necklace villages and Cambridge.
- Consider allowing more rural leisure facilities in the Green Belt.

STAKEHOLDERS

- Need to examine value of Green Belt on case-by-case basis, as some parts of the Green Belt are more valuable than others.

HOUSEBUILDERS & AGENTS

- Consider Green Belt a reasonable alternative for development.
- Green Belt is worthy of defence and should be retained to prevent coalescence.
- Create improved access to the Green Belt, particularly for residents living in higher density developments on the edge of Cambridge.
- Review of the Green Belt should be undertaken regularly and be based on need.

PARISH COUNCILS

- Retain and protect the Green Belt.
- Only allow development outside of the Green Belt.

4. Key Issues relating to Sustainable Development and Climate Change

MEMBERS

- All new houses should include greywater or rainwater harvesting systems.
- Local Plan should raise the environmental sustainability of buildings by requiring higher Code for Sustainable Homes standards. Market houses should be required to meet the same standards as affordable houses.
- Sustainable development has a variety of meanings to different people:
 - (i) a balance between conservation and adaption
 - (ii) mixed and balanced communities with homes, shops, pubs, public transport etc
 - (iii) reduction in carbon emission and use of renewable energy
 - (iv) using local resources and ensuring a long term future
- Incentivise sustainable living and sustainable buildings e.g. reduced Council Tax, provide water butts to residents (like blue bins).
- Design of new buildings should take account of advances in technologies and sustainable design features.
- Develop off grid energy sources e.g. anaerobic digestion plants.

STAKEHOLDERS

- Need to maximise water efficiency and develop smarter local storage of water from rainwater harvesting and greywater recycling systems.
- Ensure developments are sustainable during construction as well as the end result.
- Reduce the need to use vehicles.
- Adaptation is more important than mitigation e.g. use green spaces and trees to create natural cooling.
- Encourage use of renewable energy in developments or by local communities. Is the 10% renewable energy requirement still appropriate?
- Require higher Code for Sustainable Homes standards ahead of national requirements.
- Incentivise use of sustainable features in new developments and ensure developers can still achieve a profit.
- Zero carbon developments need to consider transport as well.

HOUSEBUILDERS & AGENTS

- Need to locally justify any requirements above national standards.
- Development must be located in most sustainable locations so residents are less likely to travel by car, and need better distribution of employment opportunities across the district.
- Is it sustainable to develop houses in villages with no sustainable fuel supplies?

PARISH COUNCILS

- Each village should be sustainable in its own terms by providing housing for local people, jobs etc. Prevent loss of existing services and facilities.
- Require higher sustainability standards e.g. higher Code for Sustainable Homes ahead of national requirements, all new houses to have 'green' energy supply, minimise energy and water use, consider passive design features.
- Encourage community level energy generation and solar panels on all public buildings.
- Improve communications infrastructure (e.g. broadband) to allow more home working.
- Carbon offsetting by investing in existing dwelling stock.
- Create more allotments and orchards and plant more trees.
- Sustainable development is a meaningless catchphrase.
- Locate employment and houses together.
- Create wide range of employment opportunities to provide jobs for all abilities.
- Create connections between education, jobs and new development e.g. develop skills programmes for house building.

5. Key Issues relating to Economy and Growth

MEMBERS

- Consider creating Local Development Orders that allow presumption of approval for employment generation. District wide? Along radial transport corridors?
- Identify new areas for employment.
- Provide a variety of employment opportunities across high tech, manufacturing etc.
- Requirement to provide employment within all mixed use development – equivalent of one job per house.
- Section 106 agreements could be used to secure funding for apprenticeships.
- Develop buildings incorporating green technologies and that can be easily converted to other uses.

STAKEHOLDERS

- Job growth may not be as high as anticipated as increasing productivity is being created through self-serve and automation.
- Need to support new sectors of the employment to create diversity.
- Include employment in all developments.
- Encourage University of Cambridge to remain as a world leader – has benefits for the local economy.
- Exploit tourism potential of the district.
- Improve communications infrastructure to help people work at home.
- Encourage mixture of sizes of units on business parks to support small businesses and also reduce the need to relocate.

HOUSEBUILDERS & AGENTS

- Allow conversion of rural buildings to employment uses.
- NPPF makes it easier to convert buildings from employment to residential use – could result in loss of employment buildings.
- Provide premises for small businesses located close to housing.
- Encourage a full range of employment opportunities across all sectors, including creating service sector jobs outside of Cambridge.
- Create employment equivalent of 'affordable housing'.
- Use reduced business rates to support local businesses.

PARISH COUNCILS

- Diversity the economy to create a range of jobs for all.
- Focus jobs in accessible locations.
- Improve communications infrastructure (e.g. broadband) to allow more home working.
- Allow more flexibility for new and expanding businesses and small starter units, including allowing existing businesses to expand within villages.
- Maintain agriculture by saving farmland of best quality.
- Encourage more employment in villages.

6. Key Issues relating to Housing and Affordability

MEMBERS

- Ensure provision of mixed communities.
- Collate housing lists to ensure robust evidence base of housing need.
- Issues of affordability now cover a much larger income range.
- Viability of development is important – need to develop capacity to undertake viability testing.

STAKEHOLDERS

- Ensure provision of a mix of housing including homes for local people and more ‘affordable’ market housing.
- Density should be determined by location, and ensure provision of open space.
- Ensure provision for Gypsies & Travellers.
- Provide flexibility in the housing market to meet the requirements of older people.
- Allow mix of market and affordable housing on exception sites to create more mixed communities.
- Suggest each village provides a small amount of land each year to provide homes for local people.
- Develop high quality housing for older people to encourage them to release family homes and also to encourage them to co-locate to make provision of care more convenient.

HOUSEBUILDERS & AGENTS

Housing Provision Issues

- Encourage provision of self-build.
- Phasing policies need to be flexible.
- Ensure flexibility to respond to changing circumstances by providing reserve sites.
- Allow and encourage a mix of different sized sites and locations.
- Consider the ageing population.
- Consider Community Right to Build and Community Land Trusts.
- Need to be realistic on the timing of delivery of large sites.

Housing Density Issues

- Density should vary depending on the location and should respond to the context.
- Quality of design is paramount.
- Ensure density and design of developments provides privacy and suitable gardens.
- Need more flexibility to provide smaller developments and opportunities for granny annexes to be provided within the plot.

Housing Mix Issues

- Ensure flexibility in space to accommodate elements of lifetime homes.
- Specify an indicative housing mix – analysis of need and demand to be undertaken at the time of an application. Current policy on mix does not meet market requirements and is imposed with no flexibility.
- Ensure diversity of plot sizes and floorspace of dwellings to accommodate varying needs.
- Provide homes for executives – consider introducing a quality panel to assess design and seek to integrate the dwelling into the landscape rather than hiding the house behind high walls.
- Provide bungalows in large plots.
- No market for 1-bed units.
- Mix of sizes and tenures can work together; so only need a single mix policy.
- Housing mix policy sometimes restricts smaller developments from coming forward.

Affordable Housing Issues

- The threshold at which affordable housing is required is too low and is discouraging development. It also creates difficult design issues and has an impact on small site viability.
- Allow cross subsidy on exception sites.
- Ensure robust viability assessment and viability process should be outlined in policy rather than an SPD. The HCA viability toolkit is not designed for small sites and is onerous for small developers.
- Consider local subsidy that would support local housebuilders and local economy.
- Focus on intermediate housing which has been neglected.
- Look at what South Hams have done.
- % affordable required is too high.

Issues relating to Housing in the Countryside

- No need for specific policy on housing in the countryside, rely on the NPPF.
- Consider allowing some development on the edge of villages but outside of the development framework.
- 15% and 50% extension rules are applied too rigidly, the % should be a guide only – for replacement dwellings, the size of the new dwelling should relate to the plot.
- Treat country houses as an exception to policy.

PARISH COUNCILS

- Need to define what affordable means in South Cambridgeshire.
- Ensure provision of more smaller dwellings and also 'affordable' market housing.
- Allow more flexibility on housing density.
- Current housing mix is unaffordable.
- Affordable housing should be for rent only.
- Encourage self-build and new building technologies.
- Consider allowing exceptions sites to include an element of market housing for cross subsidy.

7. Key Issues relating to Design and Heritage

MEMBERS

- Raise the profile of the District Design Guide and refine the guidance to make it more useable.

- Create opportunity for debate on what is good design.
- Design and quality of the development should be considered from the start.
- Ensure houses are designed so that rooms are a suitable size for their purpose.
- Seek variety of design in new developments.
- Design of developments should reflect local character and surroundings.
- Allow Listed Buildings to be altered to be 'fit for life' and also retain their integrity.
- Encourage preservation of non-listed buildings that are important to the community.
- Conservation is too focused on preservation, need to conserve in a modern way and integrate into developments.
- Build public art into the design of new buildings and developments, and involve local communities in making the choices.

STAKEHOLDERS

- Ensure design of new development respects local context, balances aesthetics and functionality, builds on local vernacular design, and interior design is practical.
- Make sure development layouts are suitable for emergency vehicles.
- Need a variety of density standards for different locations.
- Ensure design requirements do not cost more for developers.
- Celebrate good local design.
- Encourage national housebuilders to build good quality and well designed homes.
- Protection of heritage assets and new development can co-exist.

HOUSEBUILDERS & AGENTS

- Need a proportionate response to saving heritage assets – change is not always a bad thing.
- Ensure provision of Lifetime Homes that allow more flexible accommodation through design.
- Need constructive approach to proposals for development that involve the protection of heritage assets.
- Design Codes and SPDs are needed to ensure that the Local Plan does not become too long.
- Conservation and heritage policies must not be too prescriptive.

PARISH COUNCILS

- Need stronger design policies and more village design statements.
- Create a better balance between conservation and economic development, and integrate conservation into new developments.
- Ensure provision of high quality development including adequate gardens.
- Design should reflect the village character and should encourage interaction with neighbours.

8. Key Issues relating to Natural Environment

MEMBERS

- Continue promotion of provision of green spaces, including orchards.
- Retain and improve access to the countryside through provision of more footpaths and cycle ways.
- Preserve trees and areas of best landscape.
- Ensure balance between preserving landscapes and encouraging renewable energy generation.

STAKEHOLDERS

- Encourage restoration and enhancement of the countryside and biodiversity to help improve quality of life.
- Incorporate the existing natural environment into the design of new developments.
- Improve access to the countryside.
- Develop a policy to implement the Green Infrastructure Strategy.
- Encourage provision of allotments and community gardens and development of habitat and green corridors.
- Create high quality and imaginative open spaces.

HOUSEBUILDERS & AGENTS

- Be creative in use of green and open space.
- Use the Green Infrastructure Strategy to seek enhancements to the countryside.
- Need to create more woodland.

9. Key Issues relating to Travel

MEMBERS

- Encourage the use of sustainable forms of transport and create links between different forms of transport e.g. provide cycle ways to transport hubs, cycle racks at transport hubs, and free parking for cyclists at Park & Ride sites.
- Work with supermarkets to provide shopping minibuses.
- Look at Dutch sustainable transport model.
- Consider reopening stations along existing railway lines and provide additional Park & Ride sites on the Guided Busway.
- Will need some subsidised services to allow infill villages to have opportunities to access sustainable transport.
- Need to provide more parking spaces in high-density residential development – consider underground parking or multi-storey car parks. Limiting parking encourages parking on roads and pavements.
- Garages and driveways are not used, increased parking should be provided on street e.g. lay-bys, wider roads etc.
- Consider providing more parking spaces for larger properties e.g. linked to number of bedrooms.
- Ensure parking spaces are suitable for self-employed van drivers – linked to encouraging live/work developments.
- Consider implementing car sharing schemes centred around a cluster of villages.

STAKEHOLDERS

- Encourage fewer and shorter journeys.
- Consider opportunities for waterbuses.
- Parking needs to be considered within the site design.
- Build a ring road around Cambridge.
- Ensure shared cyclist and pedestrian routes are safe for both users – consider sustainable lighting.
- Create sustainable transport links between villages.
- Develop car free schemes.
- Build on opportunities created by Chesterton Station.

- Develop electric car charging points.

HOUSEBUILDERS & AGENTS

- Parking standards need to consider the local context.
- Deliver improved public transport and better planned footpaths and cycle ways.
- Need to plan for on street parking through lay-bys, wider roads etc.
- Make sustainable forms of transport easily accessible, efficient and cost effective.
- Cars using greener technologies may be more sustainable in future.

PARISH COUNCILS

- Where public transport provision is poor, policies need to allow more car parking spaces.
- Develop opportunities to use sustainable transport e.g. more and better connected cycle ways, local shuttle buses to key services and facilities, extend Guided Busway, improved bus services and community transport, additional park & ride sites, car sharing.
- Reduce congestion.
- Complete the Cambridge ring road between the A14 and M11.

10. Key Issues relating to Services and Facilities

MEMBERS

- Services and facilities must be delivered alongside housing and provided at the start of the development.
- Section 106 agreements need to include carefully thought out trigger points for the provision of services and facilities – need to balance need to provide facilities at the start of the development with ensuring enough development to make the facility viable.
- A meeting place should be provided from the outset to help create a community.
- Provide flexible buildings that can be used for alternative facilities over time.
- Protect village services and facilities – ensure that facilities cannot be lost through permitted development.
- Encourage innovative multi-use of buildings early in the development.
- Create a policy for the provision of allotments on developments of a specific size.
- Open space should be less sterile and more rural and naturalistic in design and could include community woodlands, orchards or community growing schemes.
- Need to provide more informal open space and green corridors.
- Public composting should be encouraged.
- Children's play areas should be made of natural materials.

STAKEHOLDERS

- Consider co-location of services, facilities and access to public transport.
- Encourage multi-use of buildings.
- Local authority should provide the initial infrastructure and recover the costs from developers later.
- Promotion of open access to green space e.g. woodlands.
- Village colleges should provide services for all generations – refer to original ethos.
- Development of communities where people work and live allows facilities to be supported and remain viable.
- Phasing of development and key infrastructure needs to be carefully considered.
- Recreation and leisure facilities are important.
- Support and develop local groups e.g. scouts, music, drama etc

HOUSEBUILDERS & AGENTS

- Parish Council and local communities to feed into early stages of development proposals for provision of services and facilities.
- Use CIL to fund upfront infrastructure costs.

PARISH COUNCILS

- All villages need broadband to encourage home working and encourage provision of other employment opportunities.
- Provide more services and facilities in rural areas – the local community should identify the requirements.
- Ensure provision of services for older people and young people, allotments and cemeteries.

11. Key Issues relating to Water and Drainage

MEMBERS

- Minimise non-porous ground cover in new developments.
- Surface water run-off after construction of a new development should be no more than from the previous use.
- Promote drought mitigation and SuDS and ensure designed into the development from the start – consider dual use of SuDS for drainage and open space.
- Promote partnership approach to flood management.
- Provide community greywater and rainwater recycling storage schemes.

STAKEHOLDERS

- Develop winter storage of water.
- Environment Agency supports resilience planning for villages in view of climate change.

12. Policy Feedback

MEMBERS

- Size limits on employment uses are too restrictive, especially for existing businesses that want to expand.
- 50% restriction on extending dwellings in the countryside is limiting people's quality of life and sustainable development does not mean small houses. Could allow some larger houses on the edge of villages / near villages e.g. for executives.
- 40% affordable housing policy has been very successful although viability has led to less being achieved recently. Likely that developers will seek to reduce proportion in the process of preparing the new Local Plan, this should be resisted. The policy wording on considering viability should be strengthened.
- Promote use of green technologies and increase the Code for Sustainable Homes levels required for market housing across the district.
- Ensure that high grade agricultural land is protected, even though there is a demand for the use of the land for renewable energy uses.
- Provide more guidance for householders submitting planning applications for extensions – clear guidance on what is meant by overbearing, amenity etc.
- Large developments (size to be defined) should be required to undertake pre-application consultation with local residents.
- Allow third party (e.g. parish councils) right of appeal on district council decisions.

- Comments from statutory consultees are given more weight than comments from local residents / parish councils e.g. comments on sewage, highways.
- Public art policy should be amended so that any money received is passed on to the community for them to choose the art and artist.
- Local development orders should be developed for business parks to speed up employment development.
- More consideration should be given to residential amenity.
- Conservation policies seem to work well most of the time, need to ensure they work well more of the time, that they are retained and that they continue to be applied especially as development pressures increase.
- Need policies for Gypsies & Travellers.

HOUSEBUILDERS & AGENTS

- Policy NE/1 (energy efficiency) – relates to elemental method in building control regulations which is now out of date, also refers to ‘current’ and unclear whether this is current at the time of the policy or at the time of a planning application, and although referred to in decision notices it is not explicitly considered in committee reports.
- Policy ST/3 (reuse of previously developed land) – requirement for high percentage could limit the delivery of much needed development.
- Policy DP/7 (development frameworks) should be retained as it provides clarity, but development framework boundaries need to be up to date and any anomalies removed.
- Policy HG/8 (conversion of buildings in the countryside to residential use) – this refers to market demand OR planning considerations, planning officers interpret this as AND.

PARISH COUNCILS

- Village frameworks are very important.
- Poor enforcement of conditions.
- 50% extensions policy is not being applied consistently.
- Need stronger policies to protect local character.