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NORTH EAST CAMBRIDGE AREA ACTION PLAN ISSUES AND OPTIONS 2019

INTERIM SA REPORT

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1. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

1.1 What is this report?

The Cambridge Northern Fringe Area Action Plan (CNF AAP) is being subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) to assess its effects on important sustainability issues. This report sets out an assessment of the Issues and Options Stage. The results of this assessment will be used by the Council when drafting the next stages of the plan.

Note: The plan is currently referred to as the Cambridge Northern Fringe Area Action Plan in the Councils' Local Development Scheme. Reflecting the more comprehensive vision being envisaged for the area, and the need to integrate development better with surrounding communities, the Councils consider that the plan should be renamed the 'North East Cambridge Area Action Plan', and they are seeking views on this.

From this point in this document onwards we refer to the Area Action Plan as the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan, and the area being considered as North East Cambridge (NEC).

1.2 The Area Action Plan

The Council's Local Plans identify Cambridge Northern Fringe east, located between the A14 and Chesterton, contains one of the last substantial brownfield sites within the city. The site straddles the administrative boundaries of Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council and therefore the Councils have decided to take a co-ordinated approach to development through providing a commitment to prepare a joint Area Action Plan (AAP) for the site. The proposed Boundary for the AAP was set out in the Local Plans under the associated Local Plan policies. Cambridge Science Park also has growth plans, and intensification of uses in this area is supported by the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan. It is now proposed that the AAP include both areas and be called the North East Cambridge AAP.

The Councils have prepared an Issues and Options 2019 consultation document which forms the important early stage in developing the AAP, setting out the blueprint for a comprehensive and co-ordinated regeneration of the area. This document identifies key issues, challenges and opportunities facing the area and set out different ways (options) that the Councils can deal with these. The Issues and options document is not designed to put forward any firm proposals for the development of the site, but to seek views on how the plan should be developed.

The Issues and Options 2019 consultation document is accompanied by an interim SA (this document). SA is a process which takes place alongside plan making to form part of the evidence base and will help inform the development of strategic development options through identifying potential positive and negative social, economic and environmental impacts. The overall aim of the appraisal process is to help ensure that the Councils' AAP makes an effective contribution to the pursuit of 'sustainable development'.

1.3 Sustainability Appraisal

The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process incorporates requirements of Strategic Environmental Assessment, a requirement to assess the significant environmental impact of plans which applies across Europe. The first stage of the Sustainability Appraisal process has been to produce a SA

Scoping Report for the AAP. This was produced in August 2014¹ and provides context for the appraisal and identifies issues of particular importance to the area. An Issues and Options 1 report² was produced for consultation in 2014³ and recognising the challenges involved in relocating the Anglian Water's Water Recycling Centre (WRC), the report set out four potential options for the potential redevelopment of the area. An Interim SA Report was prepared to accompany the 2014 Issues and Options 1 document and was subject to public consultation. While the results from the consultation indicated a strong preference for variations of Options 2 and 4, Cambridge City Council members considered the cost and challenge of relocating the Water Recycling Centre under Option 4 was unfeasible, rendering the option impossible to implement. Work on preparing the AAP was paused at this point to consider the way forward, and whilst the Councils Local Plans were progressed.'

Since consultation closed on the Issues and Options document, there have been a number of significant developments that both affect and inform the preparation of the AAP therefore a second Issues and Options document has been prepared and will be the subject of this SA appraisal. The Issues and Options 2019 consultation document and this SA report will be consulted upon with the public and stakeholders, which will offer the opportunity for people to provide further information of relevant to the development of the Plan.

1.4 What has been assessed?

As part of the SA process reasonable alternatives need to be defined and assessed. This includes defining and assessing reasonable alternative sites for development and reasonable alternative approaches to the spatial strategy and other planning issues.

The approach to the assessment of the options has been set out in Section 5 of this report. Not all approaches have been assessed or assessed against the full range of sustainability topics. This is because they will affect only some of the sustainability issues or because options have not been suggested (and the purpose of this stage of the assessment is to help the council decide between alternatives). A full screening table of the options is provided in Appendix 1.

1.5 What were the results?

The results of the assessments are shown in commentaries and assessment tables which show how each approach performs in relation to different sustainability objectives.

Please note that a significant negative effect does not mean that a particular approach should not be taken forward by the Council and a significant positive effect does not mean that the approach should automatically be taken forward.

The results of the assessment of the approaches is shown in Section 5 of this report.

The Council can use the results of the assessment to choose planning approaches that perform positively and can use the knowledge gained to ensure that mitigation measures are put in place to reduce any negative impacts identified.

¹ <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/2695/cnfe-aap-io-scoping-report.pdf>

² <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/2687/cnfe-aap-io-interim-sustainability-appraisal.pdf>

³ <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/2688/cnfe-aap-io-issues-and-options-report.pdf>

1.6 Next Steps

This report will be consulted on alongside the Issues and Options 2019 consultation . The findings of the SA and the comments received will be taken into account within the next stage of work. This will form Stages B3-B6 of the SA as set out in Table 2.