

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Sustainability Appraisal Report has been prepared by LUC on behalf of South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council (the Councils) as part of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Health Impact Assessment (HIA) and Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA)) of their Local Plan.
- 1.2 This report relates to the Greater Cambridge Local Plan Issues and Options document, and it should be read in conjunction with that document. The Issues and Options consultation is the first stage in the plan-making process, which seeks the opinions of stakeholders and local people as to what the key issues are that the Local Plan should seek to address. Given the broad nature of this consultation, this SA Report contains a high level commentary on the sustainability considerations for the Local Plan, in relation to the themes discussed in the Issues and Options document. SA of the more detailed options for the Local Plan will be undertaken as they are developed.

Context for the Greater Cambridge Local Plan

- 1.3 Comprising Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District, Greater Cambridge covers approximately 360 square miles, with a total population of 290,000 people across the city. Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire have a unique relationship, in that South Cambridgeshire entirely surrounds Cambridge City. Greater Cambridge borders Huntingdonshire and East Cambridgeshire to the north; Central Bedfordshire to the west; North Hertfordshire, Uttlesford and Braintree to the south, and to the east, it borders St Edmundsbury in Suffolk.
- 1.4 Whilst Cambridge City is distinctly urban, South Cambridgeshire is a mainly rural district. With Cambourne in the west, Histon to the north and Sawston in the south being the most populated settlements in Greater Cambridge, after Cambridge City.
- 1.5 Cambridge is a city of international importance in terms of its world-class university, research, heritage, culture and science. Cambridge also plays a key functional role in planning terms as the dominant centre in Cambridgeshire and as a main nodal point of the Oxford-Milton Keynes-Cambridge Arc and M11 corridor.
- 1.6 As a prominent hub for research and the dominant centre of Cambridgeshire, Cambridge has strong north-south transport links to London and north Cambridgeshire via train and the M11 corridor. Approximately 23,367 people commute daily from South Cambridgeshire to the city. Whilst South Cambridgeshire currently has limited access to bus services and other more sustainable modes of transport, particularly in the more remote west and eastern parts of Greater Cambridge, the emerging Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Transport Plan sets out a number of measures to improve transport links in the area.
- 1.7 Greater Cambridge contains a wealth of historic assets, with over 4,000 listed buildings, 32 conservation areas and 24 registered parks and gardens across Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. A variety of mineral resources are also

found in the Greater Cambridge Local Plan area, including sand, gravel and chalk. These extensive deposits often occur under high quality agricultural land or in areas valued for their biodiversity and landscapes, such as river valleys.

The new Local Plan

- 1.8 Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council have committed to preparing a joint Local Plan for their combined area, referred to as Greater Cambridge, a strand of work which originated as part of the City Deal agreement with central government established in 2014. The individual Councils both adopted separate Local Plans in September and October respectively in 2018 which set out the development needs of the local authority areas up to 2031.
- 1.9 The adopted Local Plans acknowledged the commitment to an early review of their Local Plans beginning in 2019. This decision to take forward the early review of the Local Plans was made in order to establish what impact the anticipated changed infrastructure and economic growth in the area might have on housing need and other aspects of spatial and transport planning. Further, during Examination of the individual Local Plans, a number of issues were highlighted for specific attention. These related to the assessment of housing needs, progress in delivering the development strategy and in particular the proposed new settlements and provision to meet the requirements of caravan dwellers.
- 1.10 The plan period for the Greater Cambridge Local Plan is yet to be determined, but is likely to cover the period to either 2040 or 2050. It will replace the Cambridge Local Plan (2018) and the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2018). The Joint Local Development Scheme 2018 sets out the timetable for plan making, with public consultation on the Issues and Options for the plan in late 2019 and submission to the Secretary of State for examination proposed to be around the end of summer 2022.

Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 1.11 Sustainability Appraisal is a statutory requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It is designed to ensure that the plan preparation process maximises the contribution that a plan makes to sustainable development and minimises any potential adverse impacts. The SA process involves appraising the likely social, environmental and economic effects of the policies and proposals within a plan from the outset of its development.
- 1.12 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is also a statutory assessment process, required under the SEA Directive¹, transposed in the UK by the SEA Regulations (Statutory Instrument 2004, No 1633). The SEA Regulations require the formal assessment of plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment and which set the framework for future consent of projects requiring Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)². The purpose of SEA, as defined in Article 1 of the SEA Directive is “to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into

¹ SEA Directive 2001/42/EC

² Under EU Directives 85/337/EEC and 97/11/EC concerning EIA.

the preparation and adoption of plans...with a view to promoting sustainable development”.

- 1.13 SEA and SA are separate processes but have similar aims and objectives. Simply put, SEA focuses on the likely environmental effects of a plan whilst SA includes a wider range of considerations, extending to social and economic impacts. National Planning Practice Guidance³ shows how it is possible to satisfy both requirements by undertaking a joint SA/SEA process, and to present an SA Report that incorporates the requirements of the SEA Regulations. The SA/SEA of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan is being undertaken using this integrated approach and throughout this report the abbreviation ‘SA’ should therefore be taken to refer to ‘SA incorporating the requirements of SEA’.
- 1.14 **Table 1.1** below signposts how the requirements of the SEA Regulations have been met within this report.

Table 1.1: Requirements of the SEA Regulations and where these have been addressed in this SA Report

SEA Regulations Requirements	Where covered in this SA Report
Preparation of an environmental report in which the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme, and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme, are identified, described and evaluated (Reg. 12). The information to be given is (Schedule 2):	
a) An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes	See Scoping Report.
b) The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme	See Scoping Report.
c) The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected	See Scoping Report.
d) Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC.	See Scoping Report.
e) The environmental protection, objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental, considerations have been taken into account during its preparation	See Scoping Report.

³ <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/>

SEA Regulations Requirements	Where covered in this SA Report
f) The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors. (Footnote: These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects)	Chapter 3
g) The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme;	This will be addressed in later iterations of the SA when preferred options have been identified.
h) An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;	Chapter 2 explains how the Councils identified the themes and spatial strategies considered. No decisions have yet been made with regards to which options are to be taken forward.
i) a description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Reg. 17;	This will be addressed in later iterations of the SA when preferred options have been identified.
j) a non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings	A separate non-technical summary document is available alongside this document.
The report shall include the information that may reasonably be required taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment, the contents and level of detail in the plan or programme, its stage in the decision-making process and the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in that process to avoid duplication of the assessment (Reg. 12(3))	Addressed throughout this SA Report.
<p>Consultation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> authorities with environmental responsibility, when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information which must be included in the environmental report (Reg. 12(5)) 	The SA Scoping Report will be published for consultation alongside this document.

SEA Regulations Requirements	Where covered in this SA Report
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> authorities with environmental responsibility and the public, shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the draft plan or programme and the accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan or programme (Reg. 13) 	<p>This SA Report is being published for consultation alongside the Issues and Options document and the SA Scoping Report.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> other EU Member States, where the implementation of the plan or programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment of that country (Reg. 14). 	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Taking the environmental report and the results of the consultations into account in decision-making (Reg. 16)</p>	
<p>Provision of information on the decision: When the plan or programme is adopted, the public and any countries consulted under Reg. 14 must be informed and the following made available to those so informed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the plan or programme as adopted a statement summarising how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme and how the environmental report, the opinions expressed and the results of consultations entered into have been taken into account, and the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and the measures decided concerning monitoring 	<p>To be addressed after the Local Plan is adopted.</p>
<p>Monitoring of the significant environmental effects of the plan's or programme's implementation (Reg. 17)</p>	<p>To be addressed after the Local Plan is adopted.</p>
<p>Quality assurance: environmental reports should be of a sufficient standard to meet the requirements of the SEA Directive.</p>	<p>This report has been produced in line with current guidance and good practice for SEA/SA and this table demonstrates where the requirements of the SEA Directive have been met.</p>

1.15 As well as incorporating SEA, the SA also incorporates Health Impact Assessment (HIA) and Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) as set out below.

Health Impact Assessment

1.16 Health Impact Assessment (HIA) aims to ensure that health-related issues are integrated into the plan-making process. HIA of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan

will be carried out and integrated into the SA and will make recommendations for how the health-related impacts of the Local Plan can be optimised as the options are developed into detailed policies.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 1.17 The requirement to undertake formal Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) of plans was introduced in the Equality Act 2010, but was abolished in 2012. Despite this, authorities are still required to have regard to the provisions of the Equality Act, namely the Public Sector Duty which requires public authorities to have due regard for equalities considerations when exercising their functions. The SA will consider whether the Local Plan is likely to disproportionately affect any groups with particular 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act, as well as whether the Local Plan may disproportionately affect any other groups, such as different socio-economic groups.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 1.18 The requirement to undertake Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of development plans was confirmed by the amendments to the Habitats Regulations published for England and Wales in July 2007 and updated in 2010 and again in 2012 and 2017⁴. The Regulations translate Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Habitats Directive) and 79/409/EEC (Birds Directive) into UK law. The purpose of HRA is to assess the impacts of a land-use plan against the conservation objectives of a European Site and to ascertain whether it would adversely affect the integrity of that site.
- 1.19 The HRA will be undertaken separately but the findings will be taken into account in the SA where relevant (for example to inform judgements about the likely effects of potential development locations on biodiversity).

Structure of this report

- 1.20 This section has introduced the SA process for the Greater Cambridge Local Plan. The remainder of the report is structured into the following sections:
- **Chapter 2: Methodology** describes the approach that is being taken to the SA of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan.
 - **Chapter 3: Sustainability Appraisal Findings** presents the SA findings for the options set out in the Issues and Options document.
 - **Chapter 1: Conclusions** summarises the key findings from the SA of the Issues and Options document and describes the next steps to be undertaken.

⁴ *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017* (Statutory Instrument 2017 No. 1012) consolidate the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 with subsequent amendments.