

Independent Examinations of South Cambridgeshire District Development
Plan Documents

NORTHSTOWE AREA ACTION PLAN

STATEMENT BY THE INSPECTORS

At the close of the hearings into the soundness of the Northstowe Area Action Plan on Thursday 25 January 2007, we were requested to provide, if practicable, an interim statement of important findings to enable continuing work on the preparation of Master Planning and the revised planning application for Northstowe new town. We were specifically requested to indicate our decisions on recommendations to be made in relation to:

- 1 The size of the new settlement
- 2 Width of and uses within the Green Separation
- 3 Strategic Open Space/Country Park requirements

In addition, since it has necessarily been an initial consideration for us, we consider that it would be of value to indicate our conclusion on the most wide ranging challenge to the soundness of the Area Action Plan: whether the new town should straddle the Cambridge Guided Busway and extend to the north and east

Therefore, with the Council's agreement, the Inspectors provide the following information in advance of the submission of their report:

- 1 The recommendation on the size of the new settlement will be that it should maximise the development potential of the area with a new town having a target of 10,000 dwellings, the precise figure to be the result of Master Planning for the town;
- 2 The requirement for the green separation to be a minimum of 200m wide will be removed, as will the restriction on "urban" open land uses within the green separation.
- 3 The Council's policy for Strategic Open Space has no sound evidence base and is to be deleted from the Development Control Policies DPD. There will be no requirement to provide any country parks. As a result, the Strategic Open Space requirement resulting from the Northstowe development will have to be subject to negotiation based upon factors including the existing Strategic Open Space provision accessible to future Northstowe residents, the work on the Master Plan and considerations of economic viability.
- 4 The Northstowe Area Action Plan is sound to the extent that it provides scope for the development of a new town of up to 10,000 dwellings within its boundaries, subject to the matters dealt

with in 2 above and the need to provide for an area reserved for possible future development to the north west of Station Road. Because of the need to provide for a step-change in the delivery of housing development, the delay which would occur in revising the extensive front-loading planning work which has been undertaken, and the highly significant implications for changing important elements within the structure of the new town which would follow from any decision to take the town across the line of the Cambridge Guided Busway, the proposals put to us by The Fairfield Partnership are not necessary to make the plan sound, and would indeed make the document unsound due to failure when assessed against soundness Test IV (conformity with national planning policies, the RSS and other relevant plans, policies and strategies); Test VI (coherence and consistency between development plan documents); Test VII (most appropriate in all the circumstances having considered the relevant alternatives); and Test VIII (clear mechanisms for implementation).

Cliff Hughes

Terry Kemmann-Lane

End of statement

23rd February 2007