

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2012
Issues and Options 2 Report
Formal response
on behalf of
Histon & Impington Parish Council

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General

Histon & Impington Parish Council (HIPC) made many comments in response to the Options 1 consultation. These have been reconsidered and for those numerous topics not directly addressed in the Options2 consultation, HIPC wishes to reiterate the previous comments.

Urgency of developments

HIPC understands that the overall plan for the SCDC area needs to take account the total need for new housing and the typically slow progress (because of infrastructure and the planning timetable reasons) for new settlements (e.g. Northstowe, Bourn Airfield and Waterbeach) meaning that infill medium size developments that can be quickly realised are required.

HIPC notes that the Northstowe Phase 1 dates are now much more certain, even than at the time of writing the Options 2 paper. Moreover, the Wing development (entirely within the SCDC area) is expecting outline planning permission in July and full permission within 2013. The single developer is anticipating a very quick build out of between 1500 and 2000 homes.

Thus HIPC contends that the pressure to find other quick development sites has been much reduced and therefore strongly feels that the three sites within the settlement's green belt north of the A14 are no longer a priority, especially given that the local infrastructure is already at capacity and these sites will need new infrastructure in the same way manner as totally new greenfield sites.

Drainage, foul water sewerage and water resources

HIPC are appalled that none of these crucial constraints are mentioned in the discussion of sustainable development in the report.

Many sites will have dramatic impacts on drainage outside the proposed sites. For instance NIAB/Darwin Green 1, 2 and 3 will have a significant impact on many houses in our villages.

Foul water sewerage is inadequate in our village and does not have capacity to cope with new developments.

Furthermore, the Infrastructure Capacity study identifies a **critical** surface water project required to resolve issues in the settlement, costing £3M, for which no schedule currently exists.

Green Belt

HIPC notes that the Options 2 paper quotes the NAPPF on the uses of Green Belt.

In the following table we take each of the headings and demonstrate the importance of the current and complete green belt to our settlement.

Green Belt Purposes in NPPF

1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;

SCDC members are well aware of the desire by all the settlements within SCDC to maintain their independent integrity and this has been repeated often in the consultation process. In particular, Histon and Impington residents demand the retention of all the green belt north of the A14, to maintain the separation from the ever increasing scope of the City. This should be done as an SCDC policy irrespective of the clear expansion ambitions of the City Council.

2. To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;

Northstowe will be under a mile from the nearest house in Histon (with Oakington and Westwick in between). The plans to develop Cottenham clearly need the retention of green belt separation. The warehouses on Mere Farm again indicates, if unchecked a merging of Impington and Milton. Retention of the Green belt is essential to satisfy this NAPPF objective.

3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;

see above

4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and

“Towns” indicates clearly the point we are making as a village settlement – without the green belt we would soon become part of a larger town or even City.

5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

The recycling centre and landfill site (in Milton) will need designation as green belt once the current use finishes to achieve this objective.

Sites specific issues - sites considered

This response covers the following sites:

Part 1 - Joint Consultation

GB6 - Land south of the A14 and west of Cambridge Road (NIAB3)

CS4 - Land south of the A14 and west of Cambridge Road (NIAB3)

CS6 - Land between Milton and Impington, north of A14 (Union Place)

Part 2 - Further site options

H2 - Former Bishops Hardware Store, Station Road, Impington

PC1 - Parish Council's regeneration proposal, 'Station', Histon and Impington

PC2 - Parish Council's proposal to reinvigorate Cottenham

R1 - Land known as Bypass Farm, West of Cottenham Road, Histon

Part 1 - Joint Consultation

Site GB6 - up to 130 dwellings, employment development et al

Based on its experience with the Orchard Park site HIPC objects to this proposal on the following grounds:

1. Green Belt
 - a. threat to the principle of the green belt of preventing the coalescence of communities within it, and with Cambridge City
2. Much of the site is in the Air Quality Management area, and therefore unsuitable for development
3. The site is likely to require noise barriers (as Orchard Park) to shield housing from the A14. Since the A14 is less elevated at this point, these barriers will require to be significantly larger, and will have an unacceptable visual impact on this northern gateway to Cambridge
4. As has been effectively shown on the Orchard Park development, there is no realistic demand for employment development in this area - and therefore this is unlikely to be the envisaged mixed use development

Sites CS4, CS6 - Community Stadium proposals

It should be noted that both of these potential sites conflict with the existing stadium/business of Histon Football Club (HFC) at the Glass World Stadium, Bridge Road, Impington.

Not only is there the issue of the competition for spectators and therefore the impact on the business of HFC, established on this site from the late 1960s, but also thought must be given to the potential for simultaneous home games, and therefore higher volumes of traffic.

For that reason alone, both sites should be rejected.

CS4

HIPC objects to this proposal on the following grounds:

1. Green Belt
 - a. threat to the principle of the green belt of preventing the coalescence of communities within it, and with Cambridge City
 - b. development of the site would leave no green separation between Cambridge and Impington north of the A14
2. Area inadequate to provide additional ancillary facilities (eg all weather training facilities)
3. No provision for parking

CS6

This scheme is inappropriate in its Green Belt location, unacceptable for its impact on wildlife, does not have the necessary support from the community or potential key users.

HIPC objects to this proposal on the following grounds:

1. Green Belt
 - c. threat to the principle of the green belt of preventing the coalescence of communities within it, and with Cambridge City
 - d. no special circumstances, given the advanced state of the planning of the Cambridge Sporting Village, with a similar range of facilities and significant and key partner and stakeholder engagement
2. Unacceptable impact on a colony of the common toad, which is on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, is protected in the UK, and has been designated in the UK as a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority species
3. Conflict with Policy CS26 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Development Plan adopted July 2011 with respect to the area designated as the Impington Park & Ride
4. There is currently no case for the extension of the Milton Park & Ride site, nor the provision of a Park & Ride site at Impington
5. Unacceptable impact on the Traveller site north of the A14
6. Inadequate access - the only access being via the route under the A14
7. The conference centre and hotel expansion are not an integral component of the scheme - but are merely "tacked on" at the Impington site and there are no exceptional circumstances that justify the necessary removal of the land from the Green Belt.

Additional information is garnered from press materials, such as: <http://www.cambridge-news.co.uk/News/Rival-plan-launched-for-citys-community-stadium-28092012.htm>

We note that this makes it clear that there is no clearly identified source of funding - the article says: *"It is hoped funding would come from community contributions linked to housing developments, councils, and local businesses and organisations"*. *"community contributions linked to housing developments"* - ie S106 payments,

are already under considerable pressure to deliver essential education, transport and other services. It is highly unlikely that these would be able to provide any funding.

This scheme is clearly undeliverable financially.

In detail:

Green Belt

The purposes of the Green Belt include:

- To prevent communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with the City

The scheme considerably erodes the separation between Milton & Impington. Being totally dependent on developments in both Milton and Impington it cannot but do so.

In addition, the forecast 40% use of this facility by Cambridge Regional College demonstrates a spread from Cambridge City into the Green Belt. It is to be reasonably assumed that this access will be via the route under the A14

Note that the Green Belt protection to the south east used to extend from the village all the way to Kings Hedges Road. Building the A14 and then filling in the Orchard Park portion has already reduced the gap to a third of what it was when the green belt was originally designated. This continued erosion must be halted if the purpose of the Green Belt is to be retained.

Furthermore the Final Inspector's report into the South Cambridgeshire Site Specific Policies Development Plan (28th September 2009; para 18.3, page 60) confirms this view:

A sport village and community stadium, near Milton, would be inappropriate because the site is a substantial open area outside any settlement and is located in the Green Belt. The need for, and benefits of, development do not amount to the exceptional circumstances necessary to justify the removal of the land from the Green Belt. An allocation within the Green Belt would lead to development of a scale inappropriate in the Green Belt.

Toads

NB this information was gathered during the construction of the Guided Busway.

There is a local colony of common toads, which live in the fields north of the guideway, but breed in Cawcutts Lake, Impington. On one weekend in March 2010 local residents saved over 700 toads trying to cross the guideway to get to the lake. Toad tunnels were later installed under the guideway.

The number of common toads are dwindling as development and habitat removal increases. There are only five large (and hence sustainable) colonies in the UK and with over a thousand toads in the local colony this is probably the largest.

Histon Football Club

Histon Football Club, Glassworld Stadium, Bridge Road, Impington - capacity of 4300

Is approximately 1.3km from the proposed "community stadium".

Whilst at the time of writing Histon & Cambridge clubs are in different divisions they are competing for fans who wish to watch local football.

The close proximity of the community stadium would present unfair and unreasonable competition for Histon.

Parking

The plans for parking are inadequate. The site is intended to include:

- a 10,000 seater stadium
- an ice rink
- a concert hall

In order to be financially sustainable, the concert hall will be multi-functional. We can reasonably assume, therefore, that all these facilities will all be operating simultaneously some evenings, and also weekend afternoons.

We note also that Histon Football Club, with a capacity of 4300, is less than a kilometre from the Impington Park & Ride and fans attending matches there may well use the new parking site.

The busiest times for Park & Ride facilities tend to be weekends (for shopping etc in Cambridge). It is not clear, therefore, how the marginal increase in capacity proposed will meet demand.

Whilst access from the guideway is theoretically attractive, it is not without risks - requiring patrons to cross the guideway, and also assumes that the relevant connections are in place. This is not the case - for example there is only one of the guideway services (A) that stops more than once an hour at the Railway Station - and that is required to use single deckers since it originates at the Trumpington Park & Ride, and therefore has limited capacity.

Part 2 - Further site options

H2 - Former Bishops Hardware Store, Station Road, Impington

HIPC supports redevelopment of this site **within** the regeneration proposals PC1

PC1 - Parish Council's regeneration proposal, 'Station', Histon and Impington

HIPC were delighted to be able to present the supporting material at the Public Consultation held in the village on January 22nd. The only negative comments arose from the common misunderstanding that defining an area PC1 that the whole of the area was being proposed for development. This was not the intention of the Parish Council which thought it useful to delineate the area that would be directly affected by the requested site specific policies on the three nominated sites within the PC1 area.

Apart from the misunderstanding, there were no adverse comments to the proposal from attendees at the exhibition/consultation.

There were many adverse comments to the proposal to replace the warehouse employment site (ref H2) with residential development. All said this was too valuable a keystone site within the gateway area to the settlement that to use for pure residential development was a shameful waste of the potential for the site.

The Parish Council is in the middle of a Public Consultation, including:-

1. A web site with scope for placing comments
2. delivering a leaflet (including a response slip, links to the web site and invite to a public meeting) to all houses within the area and those within 150m and west of the B1049
3. Consulting all the business within the PC1 area
4. Holding a public meeting on February 28th in the Recreation Ground Community Room

The results of the consultation will be reported to SCDC (and of course the residents)

PC2 - Parish Council's proposal to reinvigorate Cottenham

HIPC is deeply concerned at this point, and with the given level of detail, of the impact of an adequate scale of development to fund the proposed bypass and the traffic arising there from.

These proposals might work for the inhabitants of Cottenham but would be disastrous for Histon and Impington, even on low (unrealistic) estimates of the extra commuter traffic generated by the new housing of one house in three, this would swamp the capacity of the B1049 and in particular the traffic light crossing at the Green where morning tailbacks to Cottenham are now common.

HIPC has therefore to strongly object to these proposals given the likely impact of traffic generated on the B1049.

If SCDC were minded to accept those proposals we would demand significant improvement to the B1049 throughout its passage through our settlement.

R1 - Land known as Bypass Farm, West of Cottenham Road, Histon

HIPC believes that it has made the case for redesignating this as recreation space on the basis of the chronic shortage of public accessible open space in the settlement, the two previously designated areas not being available (with owners wishing to retain ownership) and the lack of alternative open space.

Since the submission, HIPC has been further encouraged by the land owner still being willing to discuss a long term lease. A working group of the Parish Council and co-opted residents have examined potential uses and pre-application planning advice has been sought to determine which of the proposed changes are acceptable in planning terms.

To date, it is clear that:

1. There is extensive need for informal recreation space
2. There are some activities not catered for at all which have the support of many to be provided
 1. Croquet
 2. Adventure play for teenagers (skate park, zip line and associated equipment)
3. The current Scout and Guide HQ is a wooden structure which has limited expected future life and is situated where there is no open space and the Scouts and Guides are considering positively having a replacement facility on this site
4. A perimeter firm path winding through trees would be useful asset for the north end of the settlement

Other uses are still being considered.

Highways advice has been obtained from Cambridgeshire County Council officers and they have no objections to having an access to the site, an uncontrolled pedestrian/cycle crossing from the walkway/cycleway on the B1049 and, possibly, having a lay-by for the north bound bus-stop.