

**A RURAL STRATEGY FOR CAMBRIDGESHIRE: CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

*To:* **Cabinet**

*Date:* **27 April 2010**

*From:* **Executive Director: Community & Adult Services  
Executive Director: Environment Services**

*Electoral division(s):* **All outside Cambridge**

*Forward Plan ref:* **Not applicable** *Key Decision:* **No**

*Purpose:* **To consider the response from the Council to the draft  
Rural Strategy for Cambridgeshire 2010 – 2015**

*Recommendation:* **That Cabinet endorse the suggested response in section 3  
and Appendix A of the report.**

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## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In January 2009 the Cambridgeshire Together Board agreed that a new Rural Strategy should be created to ensure that its work adequately reflects the distinct set of social, economic and environmental issues which affect rural communities and businesses in Cambridgeshire. The Board commissioned Cambridgeshire Action with Communities in Rural England ((ACRE) the rural community council for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough) to develop the new strategy acknowledging the many changes that had impacted on rural areas and market towns since the last strategy was produced in 2006. These changes include the impact of the recession, further concentration of services in urban centres, increased house prices and closure of village facilities like post offices and pubs.
- 1.2 To inform the development of the new strategy, secondary data from a large range of national, regional and local sources was compiled to form a rural evidence base. The data was used to frame a set of 16 challenging enquiry questions as the basis of a consultation with stakeholders through four district based workshops, an on-line survey and an evening of rural debate.
- 1.3 A total of 231 responses were received including 100 from organisations. The County Council's comments were compiled by officers and agreed by the Cabinet Member for Communities and the Cabinet Member for Economy and the Environment, before submission in November 2009.

## 2. KEY ELEMENTS OF THE DRAFT RURAL STRATEGY

- 2.1 The draft Rural Strategy for Cambridgeshire 2010 – 2015 entitled Rural Cambridgeshire: Ensuring a Vibrant Future, comprises of two documents:
  - a succinct easy to read strategy document setting out the priorities for the 3 key themes, together with ambitions and success factors for each; and
  - an action plan identifying key actions with lead organisations and partnersA copy of the strategy can be found at:  
<http://www.cambsacre.org.uk/news-detail.php?eid=140>
- 2.2 The strategy's vision '**is of a rural Cambridgeshire that will flourish with sustainable rural communities that are prepared for the challenges ahead**'. It seeks to ensure that people living in rural Cambridgeshire will have access to the jobs and services they require; the rural economy will be successful and diverse; and the environment will be protected and enhanced.
- 2.3 The strategy has three key themes, each with a number of priorities:
  - 1) Living in the Countryside:
    - i. Preventing rural deprivation
    - ii. Building local homes for local people
    - iii. Protecting and enhancing rural services
    - iv. Providing access to local healthcare
    - v. Widening transport options
    - vi. Supporting and strengthening local communities

- 2) Economic Wellbeing:
    - i. Improving employment opportunities
    - ii. Maintaining and enhancing market towns as essential service hubs
    - iii. Improving skills through education and training
  - 3) Land and Environment:
    - i. Making the most of Cambridgeshire's unique landscape
    - ii. Mitigating the impact of climate change
    - iii. Ensuring sympathetic development
    - iv. Promoting Cambridgeshire's food
- 2.4 An on-line survey seeks responses to the following general questions on the Strategy:
- i. Has the Strategy captured the right vision for rural Cambridgeshire?
  - ii. Are the Strategy's ambitions the right ones?
  - iii. Do you have any comments on the actions that will be taken to deliver the Strategy's ambitions?

### **3. PROPOSED RESPONSE FROM CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

- 3.1 The Council's initial draft response was considered at a meeting of the Growth and Environment Policy and Development Group (PDG) on 17 March, that members of the Adult & Communities PDG also attended. A number of broad points were made in the joint PDGs' discussions, some of which were not related to the specific priorities of the Strategy. Key amongst these was that the strategy was considered to lack ambition, and focused on the detail whilst not looking at a more strategic level (see comments in Par 3.4 below). It was also suggested that the strategy should seek to extend the unique characteristics of Cambridge across the county, with a specific reference to use of the City to attract investment into the rural hinterland of the county. In addition, a number of points were made by members of the Group , including:
- it was suggested that adapting to climate change should be the objective, and only the legal minimum should be done to meet national indicators, plus those measures that were advantageous to the county e.g. reducing any liability for Landfill Tax;
  - it was observed that the main driver for the Strategy was Cambridgeshire Together, which would need all partners to contribute if it is to achieve its objectives.
  - it was commented that what happens in Peterborough is important to many of the rural northern areas of the county; it was suggested that it would be helpful to newer County Councillors, especially those from urban areas, to understand the rural issues faced in the county
  - it was commented that many issues could be addressed by having a better transport infrastructure, which would help to address the rural deprivation issues;
  - it was felt strongly that the county should not accept the national and regional drive for continuous rapid growth – there was little evidence that this was seen as desirable by Cambridgeshire residents, and the strategy should address the concern of the people who already live in Cambridgeshire's rural areas, e.g. building low cost homes for local young people, rather than housing growth being led by developers or the

- government's agenda;
  - it was felt strongly that jobs and the economy should be given greater precedence over issues such as climate change;
  - it was suggested that car transport should be a greater priority than the enhancement of bus and cycle routes, recognising that cars were the main mode of transport in most rural areas;
  - It was suggested that Section 106 funding should be invested into providing allotments.
- 3.2 Acknowledging the reservations above, the County Council in general supports the direction of the Cambridgeshire Together Rural Strategy and welcomes the aspiration of a flourishing rural Cambridgeshire with sustainable rural communities and a protected and enhanced environment.
- 3.3 The Strategy outlines identified priorities in a systematic and categorised approach. In order that these are achieved it will be essential for all involved to work together and for the strategy to complement existing and proposed stakeholder plans and reflect local, county, regional and national policy. Working together will contribute positively to the success of the Strategy. In this regard it will be essential that all the Thematic Partnerships of Cambridgeshire Together buy-in to this strategy and agree to play their part in its delivery. It is recommended that before its consideration by the Cambridgeshire Together Board, the strategy is brought to all the thematic partnerships for endorsement, and the actions built into partners' own plans and strategies.
- 3.4 The Council recognises that the Rural Strategy strives to plan for the future and attempts to set out a long term vision for Cambridgeshire's rural communities. However, it is considered that the **Vision and Priorities** are not yet robust enough and require strengthening. The vision could provide a stronger and more coherent message e.g. "Our vision is of a flourishing rural Cambridgeshire with sustainable communities, a diverse and successful economy, and a protected and enhanced environment that is prepared for the challenges ahead".
- 3.5 In addition consideration of how diverse groups of people such as disabled people, travellers and people from minority groups can contribute to and benefit from the strategy, should be acknowledged. If there was a general section at the beginning talking about population mix and including the numbers in Cambridgeshire's rural areas this would give a strong 'inclusive' message from the outset.
- 3.6 The strategy will have its own **Action Plan** to influence and co-ordinate existing activities to ensure the best approach is taken. The Action Plan should also take into account planned and future activities to ensure this. Further work is needed on how the action plan will be monitored, in terms of responsibility for data collection and the resource implications of monitoring against Key Performance Indicators proposed in the strategy. For example, KPI 8 (% of Cambridgeshire communities with a green infrastructure section within their community led plan) is something for which the Council does not collect data. More thought is required to the selection of KPIs to ensure these reflect achievement of the Strategy's priorities and in particular include more

environmental KPIs. It would be advisable for these to link with information already collected by stakeholders and within the National Performance Framework for Local Authorities. A large amount of information has already been collected for these which would form a useful baseline. Consideration of the Strategy by the six Thematic Partnerships of Cambridgeshire Together and their active involvement in the development of the Action Plan, selection of the performance indicators and establishment of the monitoring arrangements, would ensure that such issues are resolved, and furthermore, would ensure that monitoring and performance arrangements are embedded across Cambridgeshire Together without the need to set up more processes and bureaucracy.

- 3.7 With regards to some of the proposed **Actions to be Taken** the Council has concerns regarding who will be responsible for funding and resources to take these forward e.g. encouraging businesses to take up renewable energy schemes (page 17 of the Strategy).
- 3.8 Detailed comments on the ambition statements and proposed actions under each of the priorities are set out in **Appendix A**. However it would be helpful if there was a definition of the rural areas within the county for the purposes of the strategy, to define the communities that the strategy is seeking to benefit and clarify whether it covers the whole of the County with the exception of Cambridge City.
- 3.9 There are a number of definitions within the glossary section of the rural strategy where it is suggested the wording is clarified and suggestions are shown in Appendix B. This also includes some detailed suggestions for improvements to the text.

#### **4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

##### **4.1 Resources and Performance**

The County Council is identified as the lead organisation for a number of the key actions within the Action Plan and the following bullet points list those where there are potential significant resource implications identified by officers

- Priority 5 – Widening transport options.

##### **4.2 Statutory Requirements and Partnership Working**

The County Council's statutory responsibilities apply equally to the residents of its rural areas as to its urban areas. To ensure the particular needs of people in rural areas are not overlooked or unintentionally disadvantaged, the policies, programmes and initiatives delivered by the County Council will be 'rural proofed.' Partnership working is seen as essential in delivering the strategy and achieving its ambitions. Cambridgeshire Together (through its Safer and Stronger Partnership) will be overseeing delivery of the strategy but other thematic partnerships will be expected to own actions.

##### **4.3 Climate Change**

Mitigating the impact of climate change is a priority for the Strategy and the proposed response seeks to increase the emphasis on adaptation to climate change. The key action where the County Council is identified as a partner is

to ‘work with parish councils to increase the awareness of the impacts of climate change to allow them to lead communities in making a difference.’

#### 4.4 **Access and Inclusion**

Access to services and inclusion are key strands of the strategy pervading many of the priorities and in particular under the Living in the Countryside theme:

- Priority 1 – Preventing rural deprivation
- Priority 2 – Building homes for local people
- Priority 3 – Protecting and enhancing rural services
- Priority 4 – Providing access to local healthcare
- Priority 5 - Widening transport options.

#### 4.5 **Engagement and Consultation**

Similarly engagement and consultation are other core strands of the strategy with a number of the ambitions and actions stemming from the priorities, emphasising this approach for example:

- Support local neighbourhood management / partnership working as a method of counteracting rural deprivation
- Support communities so that they are able to play a greater role in finding their own solutions for viable service provision
- Consult people in order to understand when, where and how they want to travel.

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
Rural Cambridgeshire: Ensuring a Vibrant Future A Rural Strategy for Cambridgeshire 2010 – 2015  Cambridgeshire Together Rural Strategy Action Plan	42 Castle Street, Shire Hall, Cambridge

## Appendix A

### Detailed response from Cambridgeshire County Council to the draft Rural Strategy for Cambridgeshire 2010 – 2015

Detailed comments on the ambition statements and success factors under each of the priorities of the strategy are set out below.

#### Key Theme 1 Living in the Countryside

##### Priority 1 – Preventing rural deprivation

- To ensure the allocation of resources takes account of all types of deprivation, including isolation and fuel poverty

*Comment: A 'deprivation map' for Cambridgeshire needs to be developed that takes greater account of rural deprivation and that can be applied to allocate County Council resources more clearly to address these needs.*

- To support local neighbourhood management/partnership working as a method of counteracting rural deprivation

*Comment: The County Council works with District Councils in Fenland and Huntingdonshire to develop neighbourhood management approaches in the more deprived (market) town and parish areas. The basic premise is that communities are enabled to join with the public services to make plans for their area. It will be important to identify the County Council more in the Action Plan as a 'partner' in these endeavours (as described in the County Councils Community Engagement Strategy). In particular it will be important to clarify a more developed 'locality' approach between the local authorities if communities are to truly be given more of a say in shaping local places. In addition the action that relates to social hubs could be clarified to explain how it will contribute to relieving rural deprivation.*

##### Priority 2 – Building local homes for local people

*Given the high cost of living in Cambridgeshire, it is suggested that innovative approaches should be taken for housing for young people in rural communities, so that they can remain in their community and are not out-priced by high housing costs. Initiatives such as self-build and low-cost timber framed housing might be solutions.*

- To work with planners to support the sustainability of smaller rural communities

*Comment: It would be helpful if it is clarified who will be working with planners in this context. This is an example of where the Managing Growth thematic partnership of Cambridgeshire Together could have a leading role to play. For the action 'Develop a countywide set of principles to ensure effective development in rural communities on rural exception sites, in agreement with the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)', it is unclear what is intended by this action and how this would relate to the existing policies in adopted Development Plan documents prepared by the Cambridgeshire districts. Also the RSS does not explicitly refer to rural exception sites when discussing affordable housing at the regional level (policy H2 - affordable housing).*

*For the action 'Continue to conduct an independent Housing Needs Survey where applicable to ascertain local needs and make people aware of the results', Housing Needs Surveys have been replaced by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the Cambridge (Housing Sub Region) which is co-ordinated by Cambridgeshire Horizons.*

*For the action 'Set affordable rural development targets for rural exception targets', it is unclear how this can be achieved where a criteria based policy has been used and specific sites have not been identified as is the case in the adopted Core Strategies for South and East Cambs (policies HG/5 and H4). Regarding the success criteria relating to vibrant communities for this priority, the words 'and support' should be added after infrastructure.*

- To build more homes on rural exception sites

*Comment: As these are exceptions to the general planning policies, widespread development is unlikely although, if a Parish Council has carried out a Housing Need survey and a willing land owner & housing association are on board, then the district council may be convinced if there are sufficient local services (shop, bus services, school places, utility services etc.) in the village.*

- To understand the scale of hidden homelessness in rural Cambridgeshire  
*Comment: Housing, especially access to affordable and relevant housing is a key issue for Cambridgeshire rural communities. This problem of hidden homelessness also impacts on newly arrived communities (migrant workers) and Travelling communities where there remains limited provision. These aspects need to be understood within the Strategy and Plan.*

### **Priority 3 – Protecting and enhancing rural services**

- To halt the decline of essential rural services:

*Comment: County Council budget proposals for libraries over the coming year include reductions to the mobile library service and work is currently underway to this end. Discussions to look at potential joint provision with other services would need, therefore, to be conducted quickly.*

- To support communities so they are able to play a greater role in finding their own solutions for viable service provision

*Comment: see commentary under Priority 1 and Priority 6.*

### **Priority 4 – Providing access to local healthcare**

- To address people's concerns relating to the perceived centralisation of healthcare services

*Comment: References to healthcare in this priority should also include social care. It is also not felt that the healthcare/social care issue is one of just access. It would be helpful if this ambition could be broadened to improving the health of the rural population, particularly in areas of relative deprivation.*

- To look for opportunities where healthcare services can be provided locally in existing community facilities

*Comment: See comment above re inclusion of social care.*



## **Priority 5 – Widening transport options**

*Public transport is important for the sustainability of rural areas, as many rural communities do not even have a weekly bus service, which should be expected as a minimum.*

- To encourage people to think differently about how they travel

*Comment: We also feel that more can be achieved to help address climate change and reduce carbon dioxide emissions by encouraging sustainable modes of travel. Whilst recognising the existing problems with lack of public transport services and high reliance on car journeys the strategy should be seeking to promote and encourage walking, cycling use of public transport, car sharing etc for all journeys. Actions identified (page 15) only cover encouraging walking and cycling on footpaths and bridleways.*

- To consult people in order to fully understand when, where and how they want to travel

*Comment:*

- To increase rural transport options

*Comment: A proposed action is to rollout a Demand Responsive Transport scheme across the county. Unfortunately funding for this has been withdrawn from the County Council's draft Improvement Plan so this is now unlikely to happen at least within the short term horizon of the action plan.*

## **Priority 6 – Supporting and strengthening local communities**

*The Council is concerned that given the current tightening of resources, it is paradoxical to propose strengthening local communities, when measures such as reducing library services are being considered. Involving other local bodies, e.g. schools and churches, not just parish councils, should be encouraged, so that all existing resources within a community could be utilised fully to benefit residents;*

- To increase the role of parish councils in providing governance to their own communities

*Comment: Whilst developing the role of Parish Councils is supported, communities can form around a wide range of different purposes, issues and interests. This priority also needs to include reference to supporting the development of, and participation in community groups such as the gardening club, brownies, football club etc. The priority misses the essence of community by focussing solely on parish councils.*

- To facilitate all rural communities in developing a clear vision for their own future

*Comment: Reference could be made here to the way schools and extended school provision can contribute to supporting and strengthening local communities.*

- To ensure communities have the capacity to bring their plans to life

*Comment: As indicated in the commentary under Priority 1, the County Council has produced a Community Engagement Strategy that outlines a*

*clear set of commitments from the County to address community engagement and empowerment including supporting community/parish planning,*

*neighbourhood working/Forums, and Parish Council development as well as focussing on areas and communities of most need. However this is not reflected in the Action Plan where the County Council is not identified as a partner in some of these areas. Greater integration is required between these Strategies and Plans if we are to ensure synergies for local communities and avoid duplication of effort.*

*Regarding the success criteria for this priority, reference could also be made to including vulnerable people who are in need of social care support in the second bullet point.*

## **Key Theme 2 Economic Wellbeing**

**The Economic Prosperity thematic partnership of Cambridgeshire Together is likely to have a key role in coordinating delivery of the priorities under this theme**

### **Priority 1 – Improving employment opportunities**

- To improve business and social enterprise support in order to facilitate rural entrepreneurship

*Comment: The County Council supports this ambition and will aim to continue to work with Business Link East (in its new expanded role) and other business support agencies to encourage business start-up and growth in rural areas.*

*As accountable body for the Fens Adventurers Rural Development Programme, the Council will seek to ensure full allocation of the funds to support appropriate land based and micro businesses.*

- To encourage more high skilled jobs in rural areas to alleviate the need for commuting

*Comment: This will require continued efforts by partners to diversify the local economy, particularly in the Fens, and attract new inward investment into the market towns and where (appropriate) rural areas. The County Council will work with districts to support this aspiration and lobby for the re-instatement of funding for the new COWA facility in March.*

- To create the correct mix of business premises to allow business development and growth

*Comment: The County Council will continue to use its limited capital funding for economic development to work with districts and/or other partners to develop workspace in the market towns, in line with previous jointly funded developments in St Ives (under construction), March (Enterprise Centre), Chatteris (South Fens Business Centre) and Littleport (E-space north).*

*Regarding the action relating to reducing business rates both the small business rates relief scheme and the rural rates relief scheme have statutory limits on the rateable values that can be assisted They generally only apply to smaller properties, not large rural businesses.*

- To improve broadband or mobile phone connectivity

*Comment: First class internet connectivity should be a priority for the Rural Strategy, to fully facilitate access and inclusion.*

*In the immediate future it is important to promote the EEDA led EREBUS project to help map an accurate picture of demand for higher broadband*

*speed across the county and to support the EEDA bid for funding for the delivery of enhanced rural community broadband access through the*

*Songbird programme. The Council will continue to lobby with partners for better and faster broadband and mobile phone connectivity. A bid to EEDA for funding for a rural increased broadband speed pilot is currently being considered.*

*This priority needs to acknowledge the contribution that each person, including older people, BME and people with disabilities can make to*

*improving employment opportunities in rural areas, and also consider what needs to happen to get people from these groups into employment.*

## **Priority 2 – maintaining and enhancing market towns as essential service hubs**

- To support the tourism opportunities within and around market towns

*Comment: The market towns need to be service hubs for retail, leisure, education, employment, access to services, public realm and transport and not just tourism. Local people need to use their local towns not just visitors. Overall it is felt that there should be more ambitious promotion of the tourism opportunities in rural areas of the county. The Council will encourage and support the involvement of up to six market towns in the EU funded Sustainable Tourism programme being managed by EET, and more broadly, work with districts and the Tourism Partnership to promote rural parts of the county to day and short break visitors, and exploit opportunities arising from the 2012 Olympics.*

- To ensure all market towns have appropriate master plans for their future development

*Comment: It is proposed to commission some research as part of the RSS review on the potential of the market towns to 2031. This will identify the role of Cambridgeshire's eleven market towns in the wider economy and issues affecting their potential for long term growth up to 2031 and beyond, and should be helpful in informing how this priority for each town could be fulfilled. The rural strategy proposes that all market towns in the county should have master plans but these aren't a part of the local development framework provisions under the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act. Master plans are causing some confusion in East Cambs as the proposals in them differ from the proposed statutory Local Development documents and their status is uncertain. Another concern is the resource implications of preparing a Masterplan outside of the LDF process for each of the market towns in the county. For example the Ely, Soham and Littleport Masterplan work has been reliant upon funding from Cambridgeshire Horizons.*

## **Priority 3 – Improving Skills through education and training**

- To enhance training and educational provision across all rural areas and at all skill levels

*Comment: The Council will continue to lobby for the early allocation of funding to support the new COWA facility in March and support the establishment of vocational skill centres in rural secondary schools to provide access to vocational training locally; centres providing training for sectors with growth*

*prospects will be particularly encouraged. The BSF programme rollout will similarly enhance learning opportunities in rural areas.*

- To reduce the barriers to young people in accessing education, vocational training and apprenticeships

*Comment: The County Council will seek to maintain its own apprenticeship programme and encourage both public and private sector organisations in rural Cambridgeshire to develop apprenticeship programmes in association with their local FE college.*

*An additional thought under this priority is whether the strategy should seek to try to address the issue of migrant workers and the applicability of their skills to many of the jobs they take, and the implications this has for the lower skilled resident population.*

*The success criteria that Cambridgeshire has an adequate workforce is a little underwhelming and could be better re-worded as "Cambridgeshire has a workforce that is well placed to meet the current and future requirements of employers."*

### **Key Theme 3 Land and Environment**

**The Environmental Sustainability Partnership (ESP) thematic partnership of Cambridgeshire Together is likely to have a key role in coordinating delivery of the priorities under this theme**

#### **Priority 1 – Making the most of Cambridgeshire's unique landscape**

- To ensure that the planning of green spaces in and around rural parishes takes into account social, economic and environmental considerations

*Comment: The focus on green spaces is welcomed and that these should take account of social, economic and environmental considerations. The Council's work is already contributing to the actions to be taken through:*

- *projects with communities to improve local biodiversity and working with parishes on developing accessible Local Nature Reserves, and*
- *by hosting the County Green Infrastructure Project Manager. 'Green infrastructure' may be a more appropriate term than green spaces as it covers a wider range of spaces and reflects the vision of the Strategy in a more concise manner. It would cover the development of Green Infrastructure Strategies.*

*However opportunities should not be limited to landscape improvements but should include the addition of green infrastructure or green spaces for biodiversity and public access as appropriate, and their maintenance. This would be consistent with the emerging Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy.*

#### **Priority 2 – Mitigating the impact of climate change**

*It is suggested that the greater emphasis of this priority should be on adapting to climate change.*

- To support communities with programmes of climate change adaptation and mitigation

*Comment: Adaptation to and mitigating the impacts of climate change have become an increasingly prominent issue at local, county, regional and national levels. It is essential, therefore, that this Strategy reflects the importance of*

*this and should be strengthened. It is important to address both elements. Adaptation builds capacity to, and delivers actions that increase the resilience to climate change while mitigation is action taken to reduce the impact of*

*human activity on the climate system. The Council's Climate Change and Environment Strategy, with its accompanying Action Plan, will be reviewed during 2010. As part of this, an assessment of climate risk across the organisation has been conducted, and during 2011 will result in a plan to ensure we are prepared to adapt to the changing climate. There is likely to be a key role for the Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Partnership of the ESP in this priority.*

- To fully understand the effects and concept of 'peak oil' and 'peak water'  
*Comment: We advise that in taking forward any actions regarding scenario planning the recent UKCIP09 projections on climate change are used. These are at <http://ukclimateprojections.defra.gov.uk/content/view/515/499/>. The intended outcome of the action to undertake scenario planning (page 17) 'to fully understand the effects and concept of 'peak oil' and 'peak water' (Page 10) should be made clear. Is it to help raise awareness or inform further action? The action also implies the preparation of a consultant's study as it is reliant upon relevant knowledge in relation to these issues. This study would have significant implications in terms of identifying funding sources and officer time. There is likely to be a key role for the Cambridgeshire Climate Change Partnership of the ESP in this priority*

- To support businesses with schemes which promote green technologies and energy efficiency  
*Comment: We would also like to see not only businesses encouraged to take up renewable energy schemes, green technologies and energy efficiency measures, but also potential developers and residents to ensure that all forms of development and improvement are helping to meet the ambitions of this priority. Building energy, water and waste efficient homes also supports the development of sustainable communities (Living in the Countryside, Priority 2: Building local homes for local people).*

### **Priority 3 Ensuring sympathetic development**

- To recognise the character and distinctiveness of rural parishes across Cambridgeshire

*Comment: We support the ambition and the necessity to utilise available services to maintain the rural environment. Parish churches have the potential to play a pivotal role as a community facility. Often, and especially in smaller villages, the parish church is the last community facility left. Increasingly local people are looking for alternative additional uses of their church buildings, including more diverse functions. The Church of England has encouraged the use of church buildings for extended and additional uses. Please see: <http://www.churchcare.co.uk/develop.php?FC>. For examples of how this has been accomplished please see: <http://www.churchcare.co.uk/develop.php?FE> From a conservation point of view, churches are key elements of the landscape and the historic environment, and sympathetically keeping them in use is one of the best ways of protecting them. By adopting such methods, not only will this help mitigate the decline of essential rural services but also protect significant rural assets.*

#### **Priority 4 – Promoting Cambridgeshire's food**

***It is considered that this priority would fit better if it was included under the Economic Wellbeing theme.***

- To address the issue of global food security by Cambridgeshire-specific interventions

*Comment: This is highly ambitious as Global Food Security, is a highly complex, contentious and multi - faceted issue. We feel that the ambition is not realistic and should aim to address issues on a more local and regional scale. Actions should address suitability of crops, sustainable land management practices and adaptation to climate change. For example:-*

- *although not strictly a food security/supply issue, the restoration of traditional orchards as part of community orchard projects enhances the county's traditional orchard habitat. These are habitats of national importance (listed as a Habitat of Principal Importance in England in Section 71 of the NERC Act 2006), help towards achieving local Biodiversity Action Plan targets and enhance biodiversity within the county.*
- *the promotion of schemes / projects that encourage sympathetic farmland management for the benefit of wildlife (e.g. Higher Level Stewardship grants scheme) also play a role in protecting the local environment.*
- *information for landowners from experts where available, on the implications for crop mixes of the projections for climate change.*

*In addition the most unsustainable part of the food chain is the wastage of food that is fit for consumption. The Love Food: Hate Waste campaign is an important tool in addressing this problem.*

*It should also be recognised that the county is also important for other agricultural and horticultural production as well as food. The role of ornamental production is crucial to a healthy and satisfied society and the county produces a significant amount of trees, shrubs, flowers and plants.*

- To develop better local food supply chains and clearer labelling

*Comment: We need to be careful what we mean by local food supply chains so as not to potentially disadvantage some of our biggest producers who, in order to secure supermarket contracts, produce crops in other countries so they can offer year-round supplies. This means they can employ people in Cambridgeshire year-round as well rather than having to close down operations when crops cannot be grown in the county because of our climate.*

*Increased sourcing of local food by public sector agencies in Hampshire has been successfully trialled and efforts should be made to engage Cambs Catering Services in a similar trial here.*

- To develop a better understanding of food production

*Comment: This ambition needs to be re-worded to explain its purpose and what a better understanding will contribute to because without the proposed actions it isn't clear.*

## Suggestions for Changes to the Glossary and text

## Appendix B

Location:	Suggestion:	New:
Glossary:	We recommend the inclusion of:	Affordable housing. This is not something that is purely provided on exception sites. Most district authorities have planning policies that require a proportion - potentially up to 50% - of new housing on allocated sites to be affordable, without taking into account the 'bonus' of exception sites for local needs housing. Suggest the words "which is built on rural exception sites" from the definition are deleted.
Glossary:	We recommend the inclusion of:	Rural Exception Sites. The key is the parish providing evidence of local housing needs. Suggest the words "and local needs" between "affordable" and "housing" are added.
Glossary:	We recommend the inclusion of:	Climate Change Scenario: A coherent and internally consistent description of the change in climate by a certain time in the future, using a specific modelling technique and under specific assumptions about the growth of greenhouse gas and other emissions and about other factors that may influence climate in the future.
Glossary:	We recommend the inclusion of:	Climate Change Adaptation: Adaptation can represent both policies and actions that: a) Increase knowledge, support and legislation relating to climate change to allow us to make informed judgments on future impacts, b) Deliver actions that increase the resilience of a region to climate change.
Glossary:	We recommend the inclusion of:	Climate Change Mitigation: Action taken to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate system, primarily through reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
Glossary:	We suggest the removal of the Green Space definition and should be replaced by:	Green Infrastructure: Green infrastructure is a network of new and existing spaces, in both rural and urban locations, which have a range of uses that supports the natural environment and the health and quality of life of communities.
Glossary:	We suggest alteration of the Biodiversity definition to read:	Biodiversity: Biological diversity means the variability among living organisms, including diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.
Glossary:	We recommend the removal of the <u>Global Food Insecurity</u> definition as this not referred to in the main body of the Strategy. We suggest the definition of Global Food Security should be added to the glossary.	Global Food Security: "food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life".
Location:	Previous:	New:
Where are we now? Living in the Countryside, Page 4:	'...a key challenge for the future is to ensure new development is <b>more</b> environmentally sustainable...'	'...a key challenge for the future is to ensure new development is environmentally sustainable ...'
Where do we want to be? Page 5:	'Our vision is of a rural Cambridgeshire that will flourish with sustainable rural communities that are prepared for the challenges ahead.'	'Our vision is of a <b>flourishing</b> rural Cambridgeshire <b>with sustainable communities</b> that are prepared for the challenges ahead'.

Living in the Countryside – What do we need to change? Page 7 and Page 14: Section 2: Building Local Homes for Local People.		We would like to see the priority to include <b>‘an ambition to build energy, water and waste efficient homes’</b>
Living on the Country – What do we need to change? Page 8 Section 5: Widening Transport Options:		We would like to see the priority to <b>‘Encourage sustainable modes of travel’</b>
Land and Environment – What do we need to change? Page 10 Section 2: Mitigating the impact of climate change.	<u>Mitigating the impact of climate change.</u>	<b>‘Adapting to and</b> mitigating the impact of climate change.’
Section 4: Promoting Cambridgeshire's Food, Our Ambitions (Page 11): What will success look like? Bullet Point One	<i>‘Changes in local farming practices to mitigate the effects of climate change and to protect the local environment.’</i>	‘Changes in local farming practices to <b>adapt to and</b> mitigate the effects of climate change and to protect the local environment.’
What Action will be Taken? Land and Environment, page 17: Priority 1: Making the most of Cambridgeshire's unique landscape: Bullet Point One	<i>‘Develop a project where parishes are supported to create green infrastructure plans’</i>	‘Develop a project where parishes are supported to create Green Infrastructure Plans <b>that relate to and support other Green Infrastructure Strategies.</b> ’
What Action will be Taken? Land and Environment, page 17: Priority 2: Mitigating the impact of climate change	<i>‘Mitigating the impact of climate change’</i>	<b>‘Adapting to and</b> mitigating the impact of climate change.’
What Action will be Taken? Land and Environment, page 17: Priority 2: Mitigating the impact of climate change. Bullet Point 3	<i>‘Encourage businesses to take up renewable energy schemes, green technologies and energy efficiency measures’</i>	‘Encourage businesses, <b>potential developers and residents</b> to take up renewable energy schemes, green technologies and energy efficiency measures’.