

NORTHSTOWE – PHASE 2 UPDATE

To: **Economy and Environment Committee**

Meeting Date: **10th March 2015**

From: **Executive Director: Economy, Transport and Environment**

Electoral division(s): **Papworth and Swavesey, Willingham, Bar Hill, Cottenham, Histon and Impington**

Forward Plan ref: **2015/030** *Key decision:* **No longer classed as a key decision**

Purpose: **To update Committee on the progress being made to resolve outstanding objections raised in the recently submitted County Council consultation response on the Northstowe Phase 2 outline planning application and seek agreement to lift objections where issues are resolved.**

Recommendation: **Committee is invited to:**

- a) **Agree to lift the County Council's objections to the Northstowe Phase 2 outline planning application on the four issues which have now been resolved to officers' satisfaction. (These are highways access strategy, transport modelling, design of cycle ways and removal of residential use from education land.)**
- b) **Delegate to the Executive Director: Economy, Transport and Environment in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Economy and Environment Committee the authority to remove the other 3 outstanding objections as detailed in paragraphs 2.7, 2.17, and 2.25 if subsequently resolved to officers' satisfaction, given swift progress is being made.**
- c) **Endorse a '4 plus 4' Member group comprising of Cambridgeshire County Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council Members, to give political steer to Section 106 discussions as detailed in paragraph 2.32. The membership from the County Council to be:**
 - **The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Economy Transport and Environment Committee**
 - **One nomination from both the Adults and the Children and Young People Committee**

Officer contact:		Member contact:	
Name:	Juliet Richardson	Name:	Councillor Ian Bates
Post:	Growth and Development Business Manager	Chairman:	Economy and Environment Committee
Email:	Juliet.richardson@cambridgeshire.gov.uk	Email:	Ian.Bates@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Tel:	01223 699868	Tel:	01223 699173

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 An outline planning application for Phase 2 of Northstowe was submitted by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) in August 2014 (planning reference number S/2011/14/OL). The application site covers 216 hectares and is comprised of two parts: the main Phase 2 development area and the Southern Access Road (West) (see Appendix 1). The area of the main Phase 2 development is bordered to the east by the route of the Guided Busway, and to the west by Longstanton. The area includes the former Oakington Barracks and surrounds the existing settlement of Rampton Drift, which comprises 92 properties.
- 1.2 A report was taken to the Economy and Environment Committee on 3rd February 2015. The report included the County Council's proposed formal consultation response to the Northstowe Phase 2 outline planning application, which Members were asked to consider and approve.
- 1.3 The County Council's response included the following key issues and objections:
 - (i) The proposed average of 1.5 car parking spaces per household is considered insufficient at this stage with an average of 2 spaces per household perhaps more suitable;
 - (ii) The suitability of the proposed highway access strategy can only be confirmed when officers have fully reviewed all of the model outputs submitted by the applicants within their Transport Assessment including potential additional sensitivity tests to further demonstrate the robustness of the analysis;
 - (iii) Further verification and cross referencing of transport modelling required to give comfort that the outputs are reasonable and correlate with other models and approaches;
 - (iv) The interim proposals for the unguided bus only road are for around 700m of this route to be shared by buses and general traffic, which would revert to dedicated use once Phase 3 is delivered;
 - (v) Further discussion required regarding the width and design of cycle routes along all roads and the busway, and east-west links particularly to the town centre. Further discussion is also needed with regards to agreeing the proposed off-site transport mitigation measures, which includes cycle network enhancements;
 - (vi) Part of the eastern education site being used for residential development;
 - (vii) The existing Officers' Mess building proposed to be re-used as a primary school.

- 1.4 Further work has been undertaken with South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) and the HCA on these points and we have made good progress on all of these issues since the 3rd February committee discussion, which is set out in this report. As negotiations and work on the issues are fast-moving a verbal update will be provided to the Committee.
- 1.5 Following Committee's consideration and agreement of these points SCDC will be notified of the County Council's position for consideration by the Northstowe Joint Development Control Committee (NJDCC) in determining the Phase 2 application. The HCA has asked that the NJDCC determines the application on 25th March.

2. MAIN ISSUES

Transport Assessment:

- 2.1 The Transport Assessment sets out a range of proposed highway and non-highway measures. These include local highway schemes, public transport provision including enhanced bus services, and new and improved walking and cycling routes. The overall approach that the developer has taken to developing the transport strategy is welcomed.
- 2.2 The key transport issues are highlighted below and work is ongoing with the HCA to resolve them. However, until all issues are resolved to the satisfaction of officers it is recommended that the County Council maintains a holding objection on two outstanding transport issues, these being parking provision and the unguided bus only road through the site.

Parking Provision:

- 2.3 Officers' initial reaction was that (pending receipt of further information), residential car parking levels as currently proposed may be too low overall although it is recognised that a balance needs to be struck between over-providing (and potentially encouraging car use) and making provision that reflects current patterns of car ownership whilst seeking to encourage use of other modes. The proposed average of 1.5 car parking spaces per household meets current approved policy but an average of 2 spaces per household is perhaps more suitable and in line with emerging policy.
- 2.4 Given the issues and problems that have been experienced in sites elsewhere in the County there is Member support for seeking higher levels of residential parking spaces in Northstowe Phase 2 (beyond the 1.5 parking spaces currently proposed in the application). This does not take into account the currently unknown potential for Northstowe to have lower car ownership than the surrounding area given its good sustainable infrastructure. In addition, there needs to be careful consideration of the design of residential car parking, including the ability of residents to park cars within the curtilage of dwellings and garages of a size that cars can be parked in them. Particular consideration needs to be given to residential car parking in the town centre and that sufficient and accessible parking spaces are provided.
- 2.5 In addition, a detailed strategy with supporting analysis will be required for the town centre parking allocation to ensure that a balanced provision is made

that both encourages non-car access, but also ensures the town centre remains viable through adequate car parking being provided.

- 2.6 Initial reviews suggest that the proposed levels of cycle parking may be inadequate, particularly for households. This is also below emerging policy and is a key element in enabling residents to own and use a bicycle.
- 2.7 **Committee is invited to delegate to the Executive Director: Economy, Transport and Environment in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Economy and Environment Committee the authority to remove this outstanding objection if the applicant can satisfactorily demonstrate that providing an average of fewer than 2 parking spaces per dwelling would be sufficient for this particular development.**

Highway Access Strategy:

- 2.8 Modelling shows that development of Phase 2 can only happen with delivery of the HA's A14 Huntingdon to Cambridge scheme. The modelling also suggests that, for Northstowe Phase 2, suitable highway access capacity can be provided via a combination of:
- The northern signalised access on the B1050 proposed for Northstowe Phase 1; and
 - A new single carriageway southern access road connecting to a new roundabout on the B1050, together with a dual carriageway connection from that roundabout to an improved A14 Bar Hill Interchange (as proposed by the HA).
- 2.9 It is proposed that the southern access road west is initially built as a single carriageway to be upgraded to dual carriageway as part of Phase 3 works. In addition a southern access road east linking to Dry Drayton Road would also be provided in Phase 3. The suitability of this proposed highway access strategy can only be confirmed once officers have fully reviewed all of the model outputs submitted by the applicants within their Transport Assessment including potential additional sensitivity tests to further demonstrate the robustness of the analysis.
- 2.10 At the time of writing, County Council officers have most of the necessary information and are of the view that the issue could be addressed through an appropriately worded condition. **Officers therefore recommend that the holding objection on highway access is removed.**

Transport Modelling:

- 2.11 Modelling has been undertaken to give an indication of the predicted traffic flows associated with the development following adjustments to further improve the model in the area around Northstowe. Although it is considered that the applicant has applied a thorough approach to considering the transport impacts of the Phase 2 development through transport modelling, further verification and cross referencing has been requested to give comfort that the outputs are reasonable and correlate with other models and approaches. In addition, a further review of modelling undertaken by the Highways Agency (HA) in connection with the A14 Huntingdon to Cambridge scheme, has been requested to ensure a consistent understanding of the two sets of proposals.

- 2.12 This information has now been provided by the applicant to the satisfaction of officers. It is considered that the modelling work undertaken is of sufficient quality that officers are satisfied that the model outputs give as best a knowledge of transport patterns associated with the development as is reasonably possible. **Officers therefore recommend that the holding objection on transport modelling is removed.**
- 2.13 Should Members support this position officers also recommend that a condition is applied which requires that a traffic monitoring regime is implemented before, during, and after the development and that money should be set aside as part of a Section 106 agreement to implement local traffic management measures *should* monitoring suggest there are adverse Northstowe Phase 2 off-site impacts.

Unguided bus only road through the site:

- 2.14 The scheme currently proposes a new length of dedicated unguided bus only road which would pass through the new town. This accords with the Area Action Plan and is therefore welcomed. However the interim proposals are for around 700m of this route to be shared by buses and general traffic, which it is anticipated would revert to dedicated busway use once Phase 3 is delivered, allowing the applicant to defer the cost of the road infrastructure to Phase 3. However, whilst it might be possible to introduce this as an interim measure, it could be difficult to remove it and return the road to bus only use at a later date and bus priority would be needed in the interim. Discussions with the applicant are continuing for an acceptable planning and legal solution.
- 2.15 Members' views are sought on the appropriateness of the proposal for shared use for around 700m of the unguided bus only road by buses and general traffic. The building of separate vehicular and busway infrastructure in the Phase 2 of the application has significant financial and viability implications for the application.
- 2.16 For temporary sharing of the busway to work, officers recommend planning conditions requiring that sufficient bus priority is provided on the shared use section and at junctions to ensure that buses are not delayed by general traffic. There should also be no on-street parking, and motorised vehicle access from this section of the shared street to land uses along it, so as not to compromise in any way its return to future bus-only use.
- 2.17 **Officers are seeking delegation to the Executive Director: Economy, Transport and Environment in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Economy and Environment Committee the authority to remove the outstanding concern subject to the applicant demonstrating satisfactorily that the risks can be mitigated.**

Cycling Provision:

- 2.18 Members were previously made aware that further discussion was required on the width and design of cycle routes along all roads and the busway, and east-west links particularly to the town centre and to agreeing the proposed off-site transport mitigation measures.

- 2.19 The applicant has subsequently made proposals for much improved cycle routes across Phase 2 linking to the town centre. These improvements include wider paths along the busway, primary and secondary streets, and the provision of segregated routes along secondary streets. These measures combined provide a comprehensive high quality bicycle network across Phase 2. Links to surrounding villages could form part of the S106 negotiations. **As a result of this additional information being provided officers' concerns on these issues have now been addressed and it is recommended the County Council removes its objection to this issue.**

Eastern Education Site:

- 2.20 The eastern education site is proposed to contain the secondary school, which will ultimately expand to provide 12 Forms of Entry (FE), 1,800 places, 3 FE primary school (630 places) with early years provision, Post-16 and Special Education Needs provision. At 16.7 hectares this area is 2 hectares smaller than the Council would typically require for that range of provision. The Council has already indicated the potential to link the secondary school and community sports provision which would mitigate this shortfall and mean that the Council would not raise an objection to the deficiencies in the overall site area. The Council is willing to accept this smaller site area because it is recognised that the special school is not needed to solely mitigate the impact of the Northstowe development, but will mitigate a shortfall in provision across a wider area. This is in line with the approach to mitigate pressure on special school provision across the county approved by Cabinet in July 2013.
- 2.21 However, the Council previously objected to the proposal that part of the eastern education site may be used for residential development, further reducing the land available (see Appendix 3 plan (a)). County Council officers have recently received revised application plans from the HCA which indicate that this land has been returned to solely education use (see Appendix 3 plan (b)). **On the basis that the plans represent a formal submission and amendment to the application it is recommended the County Council removes its objection to this issue.**

Re-Use of Officer's Mess:

- 2.22 The site of the second primary school currently contains the existing Officer's Mess building, which the applicant is proposing to re-use as a primary school (see Appendix 2). The County Council has previously stated that without evidence that the re-use of the building will enable the delivery of a high quality and sustainable education environment, and that the ongoing maintenance costs will not challenge the financial viability of the school, the Council objects to this proposal.
- 2.23 After positive work with the Applicant, County Council officers have now reached a shared position with the HCA that the main Officer's Mess building would make a suitable and interesting building for part of the primary school. The other existing buildings on site are deemed to be unsuitable and would be demolished and rebuilt to form the rest of the primary school.
- 2.24 However, further details are anticipated shortly on a number of outstanding points, including; inclusion of early years provision on-site, pedestrian access

to the site, and use of the external site area. In addition, the Council also has concerns that the cost of making the building suitable for educational use will have a detrimental impact on the overall Section 106 (S106) list of requirements and still requires further information on the cost of the re-use of the building. This information is required in order for the objection to be removed.

- 2.25 Officers are seeking delegation to the Executive Director: Economy, Transport and Environment in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Economy and Environment Committee the authority to remove the outstanding education objections above subject to receiving satisfactory information and confirmation of the Applicant's intentions.**

Section 106 Requirements:

- 2.26 Should the Phase 2 development at Northstowe be granted outline planning permission, then a Section 106 Agreement (S106) will be required setting out the financial contributions and works that the developer will be committed to provide to ensure that the community needs of the development are delivered. This would include County Council contributions for a number of services and infrastructure provision.
- 2.27 The level of S106 contributions is informed by the viability of the development. HCAs viability assessment for Northstowe Phase 2 has recently been shared with the local authorities and this is now with the viability consultants for analysis. This will include testing elements such as land values, revenue, development costs, cash flow and affordable housing.

Level of Affordable Housing:

- 2.28 The S106 agreement and viability negotiations will consider the proportion of affordable housing to be provided on-site. The application currently states that Phase 2 will make provision for an affordable housing contribution of 20% and that provision will be discussed further during the determination process.
- 2.29 At the Economy and Environment Committee in February Members questioned what impact a higher percentage of affordable housing would have on the educational requirements for Phase 2. The Phase 2 requirements are currently 1x2FE Primary School and 1x3FE Primary School, and are based on the 20% affordable housing figure contained within the submitted application.
- 2.30 A review of the demographic forecasts has been undertaken by the Council's Research and Performance Team. A review of the impact of increasing the % of affordable housing up to the policy level of 40% indicates that, with a standard housing mix, the total demand could increase by around 50 places across all year groups.
- 2.31 In the longer-term, this level of demand could be accommodated within the provision which is currently proposed for phases 1 and 2. In the short-term there may be some pressure on capacity to secure provision for the peak demand, especially in Key Stage 1 year groups where Infant Class size regulations need to be met. However, with further phases of development planned, the additional schools proposed would provide a mechanism through

which these pressures could be managed.

'4 + 4' Member Group:

- 2.32 Section 106 negotiations are very important for both County and District Councils and can be very fast-moving. In the past, it has sometimes been helpful to have a small, joint member group of District and County Council members, to steer negotiations. For Northstowe Phase 2, we are proposing a group of 4 members from each of South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council, which would feed in views to the Northstowe Joint Development Control Committee, as the determining body. For the County Council, it is proposed the membership to be the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Economy and Environment Committee (as the lead Committee), plus one member each from Adults' Committee and Children and Young People Committee, as both have a strong interest in the new development. The Chairmen of the Highways and Community Infrastructure and Health Committees would be kept informed. **Members' endorsement of the Group and of its County Council membership is sought.**

3. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- The development of Phase 2 of Northstowe will increase the ability for people to both live and work in the local area, thus enhancing economic growth. The planning application states that the proposed Phase 2 employment floor space has the potential to generate 2,088 gross jobs, which when combined with the wider provision of employment generating uses is estimated to be 2,248 gross jobs created by Phase 2.
- Phase 2 of Northstowe strengthens the relationship between jobs and houses within Cambridge and its surrounding hinterland.

3.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- Providing a full range of public services, such as education, early in the development will assist in meeting this priority.
- The design of the Phase 2 development will be required to build in routes and networks of footpaths and cycle paths that will assist movement in and around Northstowe and into the surrounding area by modes of transport that can help deliver this objective.

3.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people

The following bullet point sets out details of implications identified by officers:

- An important element of Northstowe will be the provision of affordable housing on site, which will help to assist those in housing need and who cannot afford to buy a property in the local area. Affordable housing will include social rented housing as well as intermediate housing (including provision for key workers). The precise proportion and tenure mix will be subject to negotiation during the planning application determination process.

- Alongside community building, appropriate support will be needed for vulnerable groups and ensure the health and wellbeing of residents (e.g. the role of the Locality Team and mental health community workers).

4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Resource Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- Although Northstowe is an important part of the development strategy for the area, the various costs of bringing forward Phase 2 must be carefully assessed and managed to ensure the County Council's objectives are fully met. The viability of the scheme will be an important consideration in order to ensure the development is deliverable but also contains all the important and necessary services and facilities.
- Innovative approaches to service provision at Northstowe could bring financial benefits in terms of capital and revenue savings and will assist the overall viability of the scheme. These savings could be secured by spending less capital in providing new facilities through a more flexible approach to service provision, such as the co-location of community facilities and services.

4.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications

There are no significant implications for statutory, risk and legal.

4.3 Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no significant implications for equality and diversity.

4.4 Engagement and Consultation Implications

The following bullet point sets out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- The proposals for Phase 2 of Northstowe have been subject to a robust consultation process. This has included consultation with statutory consultees, the Northstowe Parish Forum and the local community (including local public exhibition events). A Stakeholder and Community Engagement Report is included within the outline application and provides further details of this.

4.5 Localism and Local Member Involvement

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- The Northstowe Phase 2 application will be determined by the Northstowe Joint Development Control Committee, which comprises of local Members from South Cambridgeshire District Council as well as Cambridgeshire County Council Members.
- Views on the emerging proposals for the Phase 2 scheme have been sought through regular workshops with the Members of the Northstowe Parish Forum.

4.6 Public Health Implications

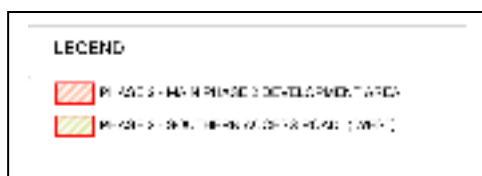
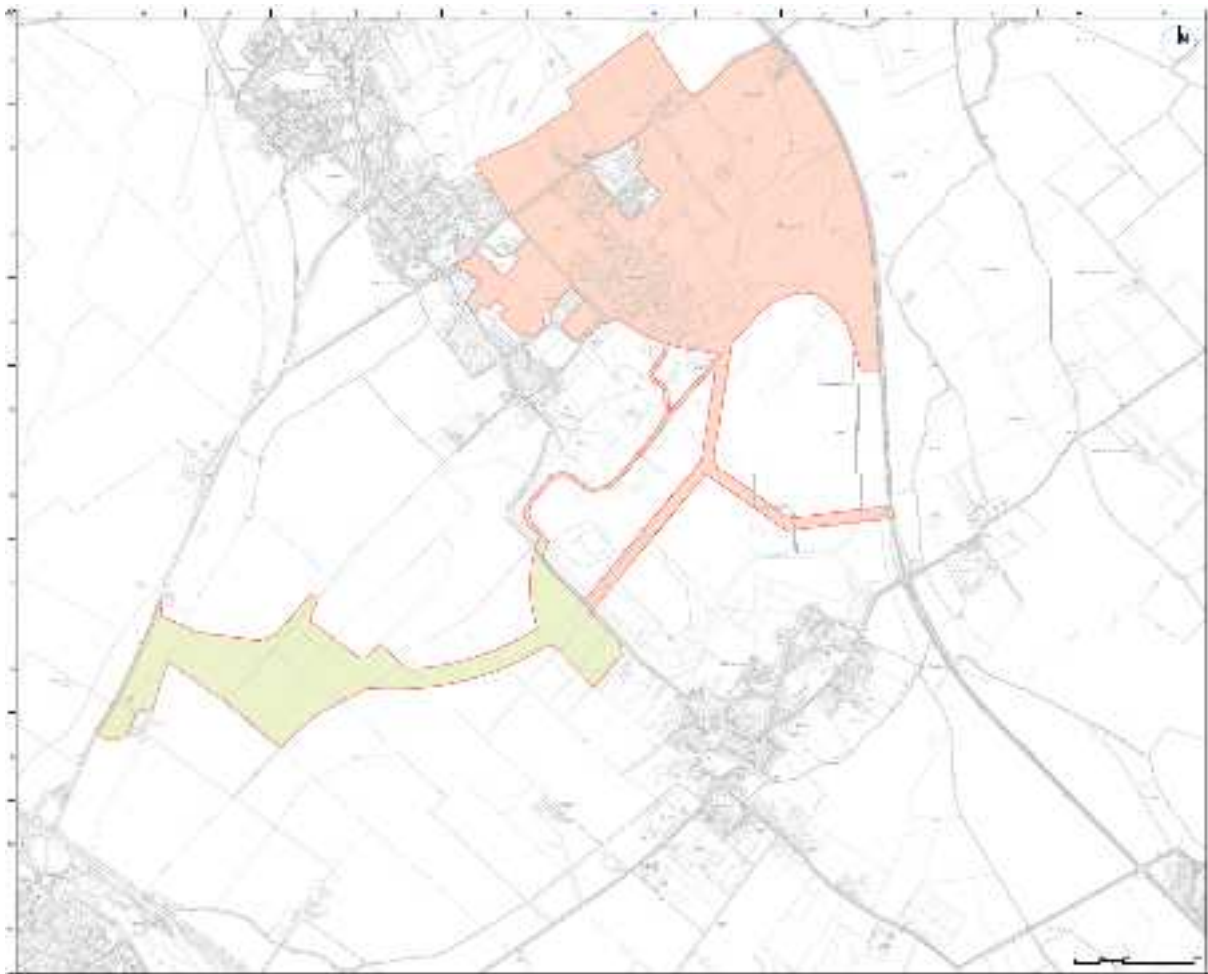
The following bullet points sets out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- Northstowe will need to ensure that it has a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of its residents, both mentally and physically.
- A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) has been submitted as part of the application. The HIA is a comprehensive account of the potential health impacts which could affect both the existing nearby residents or the future residents of Northstowe Phase 2.
- The design of the Phase 2 development will be required to build in routes and networks of footpaths and cycle paths that will assist movement in and around Northstowe and into the surrounding area by modes of transport that can help deliver this objective.
- Health and community development infrastructure will be needed.

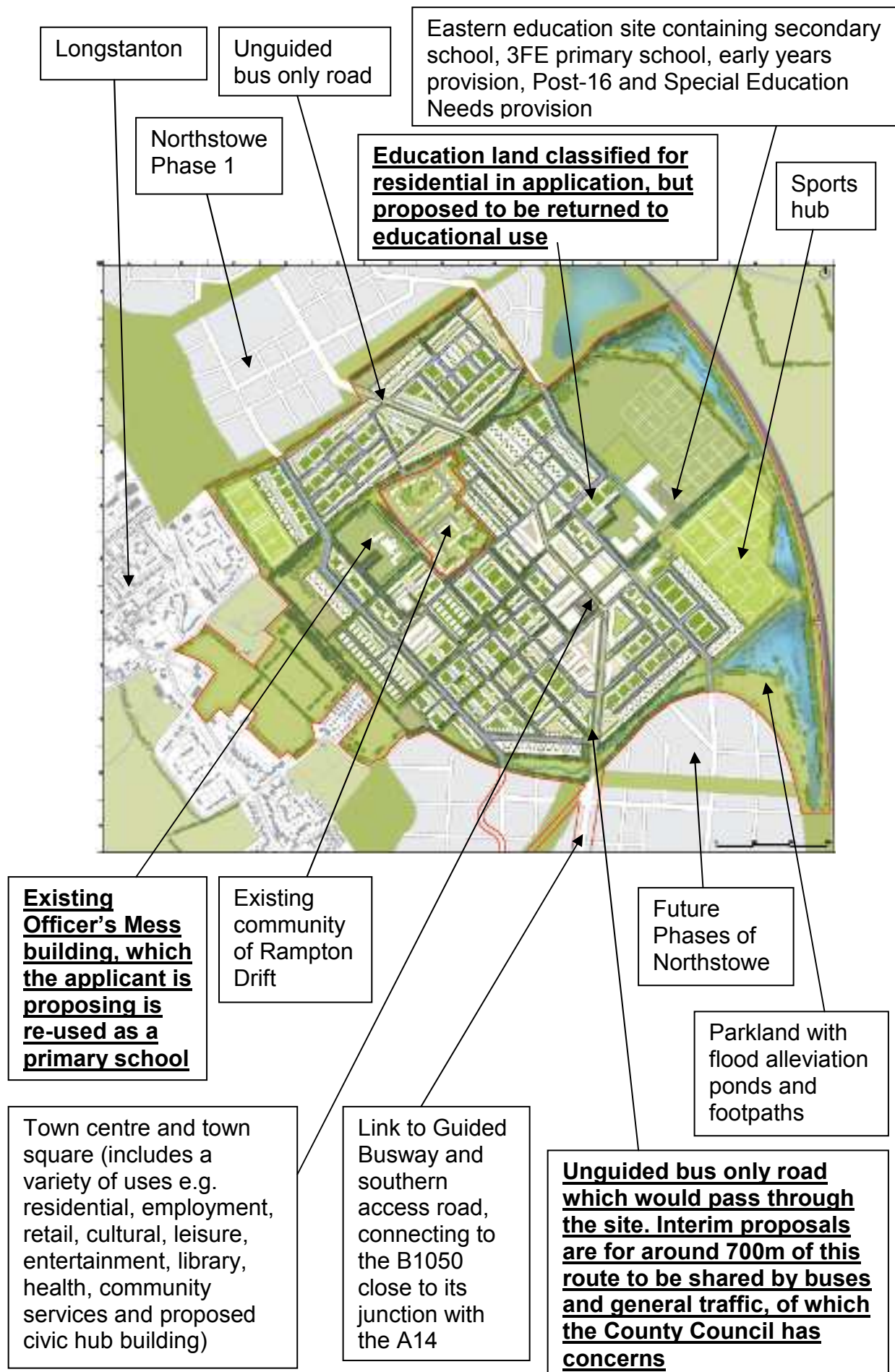
SOURCE DOCUMENTS GUIDANCE

Source Documents	Location
Northstowe Phase 2 Outline Planning Application (S/2011/14/OL)	Room 304, Shire Hall, Cambridge
Cambridgeshire County Council formal response on the Northstowe Phase 2 Outline Planning Application	and https://www.scambs.gov.uk/content/northstowe-planning-documents-phase-two

APPENDIX 1: Site of Northstowe Phase 2 Outline Planning Application (taken from the submitted Outline Planning Application – S/2011/14/OL)



APPENDIX 2: Illustrative Master Plan of the Phase 2 Proposals (taken from the submitted Outline Planning Application – S/2011/14/OL). Key issues raised in the report have been highlighted below (bold and underlined**)**



APPENDIX 3: Land Use Parameter Plans

- a) Original Submission – Hatched land represents potential for residential use on secondary school site



- b) Revised Plan – Hatched residential land has now been removed

