



**Draft New Museums Site Development Framework
Supplementary Planning Document**

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL SCREENING REPORT

MAY 2015

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Cambridge City Council and the University of Cambridge have worked in partnership to produce a draft New Museums Site Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The purpose of this document is to help coordinate and guide future redevelopment of the site in line with the Council's local plan policies. The SPD seeks to ensure that any future development safeguards the architectural, urban, historic, cultural and archaeological importance of the site while providing an opportunity for positive change.
- 1.2 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely effects of a plan, and alternatives, in terms of sustainability issues, with a view to avoiding and mitigating adverse effects and maximising the positives. The purpose of SA is to ensure that the potential sustainability effects of a plan are addressed through an assessment of the sustainability impacts of objectives, actions, policies, allocations and their alternatives at an early stage in plan preparation. It is a requirement that SA is undertaken in line with the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, which were prepared in order to transpose into national law the requirements of the EU Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) Directive¹.
- 1.3 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 required that all Local Development Documents, including development plan documents (now local plans) and SPDs be subject to SA prior to publication. Alterations to Section 19(5) of the 2004 Act under the Planning Act 2008 removed the requirements for local planning authorities to produce an SA for SPDs. The rationale behind this is that SPDs do not provide any new policies or site allocations, but provide supplementary guidance relating to policies set out in overarching local plans that will have been subject to an SA incorporating the requirements of the SEA Directive. See section 2 below for the policy context for the draft New Museums Site SPD.
- 1.4 However, an SPD may occasionally be found likely to give rise to significant effects which have not been formally assessed in the context of a higher-level planning document. Therefore, local planning authorities need to screen their SPDs to ensure that the legal requirements for SA are met where there are impacts that have not been covered in the appraisal of the parent plan or where an assessment is required by the SEA Directive.
- 1.4 Cambridge City Council does not consider that an SA/SEA is likely to be required for the purpose of the draft New Museums Site SPD as outlined in this report, which sets out the assessment on which the Council's screening opinion is based.

¹ Directive 2001/42/EC

2. DRAFT NEW MUSEUMS SITE SPD

- 2.1 The New Museums site occupies a prominent location in Cambridge, being the historic centre of science within the University of Cambridge. However, piecemeal development of the site over the years has led to problems within the site, both in terms of the scale of some buildings and the quality of the public realm within the site. Future development on the site offers the opportunity to create an improved, more coherent site and improvements to the public realm. The key issues and opportunities for the site have been identified as follows:
- Enhancement of the Historic Core Conservation Area and the careful management of existing built heritage assets on and around the site;
 - Integration of the site into the wider city centre;
 - Improvement of external spaces within the site and creation of an appropriate public realm with improved permeability and public access, especially to University museums and the heritage of the site;
 - Improvement of University facilities in support of its continuing academic success and its importance to the life of the city;
 - Increased environmental sustainability including better energy use, increased ecology and biodiversity and settings supporting the health and wellbeing of those using and visiting the site; and
 - Reduced car parking and improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 2.2 Cambridge City Council and the University of Cambridge have worked in partnership on the preparation of the draft SPD. The purpose of the draft SPD is to help coordinate and guide future redevelopment of the site in line with the Council's local plan policies. The draft SPD seeks to ensure that any future development safeguards the architectural, urban, historic, cultural and archaeological importance of the site while providing an opportunity for positive change.
- 2.3 The draft SPD provides guidance in relation to the following policy and site allocation contained within the Cambridge Local Plan 2014:
- Policy 43: University faculty development;
 - Site allocation U2, Appendix B: Proposals Schedule which allocates the site for mixed-use redevelopment.

3. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 Firstly, the screening process must ascertain whether the draft New Museums Site SPD gives rise to significant environmental effects, using the criteria set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive and Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.
- 3.2 Paragraph 10 of the SEA Directive only requires SEA for plans which 'determine the use of small areas at a local level' or which are 'minor modifications' to plans, when these are determined to be likely to cause significant environmental effects. Therefore, the criteria for determining the likely significance of effects as listed in

Annex II of the SEA Directive and Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 have been reviewed to determine whether the exception applies to the draft New Museums Site SPD.

- 3.3 Appendix 1 sets out the findings of this assessment, which clearly demonstrate that the draft SPD does not require an SEA, beyond that already undertaken for the draft SPD's parent policy and site allocation contained within the appraisal of the Cambridge Local Plan 2014.

4. SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

- 4.1 Government guidance² suggests that where an authority has made a determination that a plan is unlikely to have any significant environmental effect, and is therefore exempt from the SEA Directive, it must consider whether there are likely to be any significant economic or social effects. As such, the second stage in the screening process considers whether the draft New Museums Site SPD gives rise to significant economic or social effects. If these have been formally assessed in the context of higher level policies or allocations in local plans, then it is unlikely that significant social and economic effects will arise as a result of the draft New Museums Site SPD.
- 4.2 The parent policy (Policy 43) and site allocation (Site U2) of relevance to this SPD are contained in the Cambridge Local Plan 2014, which was appraised during its preparation and the appraisal results reported on³. The SA assessed the parent policy and site allocation against a range of social, economic and environmental 'sustainability objectives' using a range of indicators to consider the contribution they made towards the achievement of various sustainability objectives.
- 4.3 In terms of the assessment of Policy 43, the main findings of the appraisal were as follows:
- In seeking to support University faculty development, policy 43 alongside other policies in the plan should lead to significant positive effects in terms of economic growth at the University, which is recognised along with Anglia Ruskin University as being a key driver of economic growth in the sub region.
 - In calling for development to take advantage of opportunities to improve circulation for pedestrians and cyclists, together with public realm improvements, the policy will lead to benefits in terms of protecting and enhancing this part of the city in addition to supporting the economy of the area.
- 4.4 In terms of the site allocation, the appraisal of site U2 is set out in table 1 below. For the majority of sustainability objectives the allocation was considered to have positive effects, and any negative effects related to issues such as air quality could be mitigated by other policies contained within the plan.

² ODPM, Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents, 2005.

³ Sustainability Appraisal of the Cambridge Local Plan 2014. Volume 1: Final Appraisal for Submission to the Secretary of State. March 2014

Cumulative effects and possible mitigation measures

The proposed allocations for the City area include one site for solely residential use, one employment site, two mixed-use sites and two sites for university-uses. If all are built out, this combination of different uses could have positive benefits in terms of helping the city centre maintain a mix of uses.

The allocations proposed for the City area could bring about some benefits in terms of capitalising on the opportunities that growing business sectors present. For instance, there is some potential for growth to be encouraged through the allocation of two mixed use sites and one fully employment related site. It should be noted however, that both mixed use sites and the proposed fully residential site will result in the loss of some existing employment space, although it is believed that this can be mitigated through allocations elsewhere. The allocation of two sites for university uses may help to create and maintain profitable relationships between businesses and academic researchers.

The proximity of all sites to employment centres, combined with their relatively good access to public transport, may help residents to gain easy access to their work places. In addition, those sites including employment space may benefit from this proximity through the clustering of industries, so creating opportunities to harness the synergistic benefits, such as cooperation and shared services, which such clusters can bring.

The effect of these allocations on the quality of life in the City Area will on the most part be positive. All of the sites under consideration are close to health facilities and will result in no loss of community facilities, whilst most sites are also close to outdoor sports facilities and the leisure opportunities they can offer. The majority of the allocations are close to primary and secondary schools and near to play spaces and natural green space. There are also no obvious constraints preventing any of the sites providing minimum on-site provision of public open space.

The effect of the allocations on air quality is a matter of some concern. All of the sites are within or adjacent to an AQMA. Of these sites, all could have an adverse effect of air quality, with one of these sites potentially resulting in a significant adverse effect. The effect of these allocations on the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors to the City Area could be significant.

One manner in which air quality issues and other environmental and health concerns can be tackled is through the uptake of low carbon technologies for travel. Most of the sites perform well to moderately well in terms of access to good quality cycle routes. The majority of the sites also have good to moderate access to public transport. Distance from a train station tends to be high, apart from the sites on Hills Road, as the train station is at the edge of the city centre area. Proximity to local centres, services and employment and open spaces, plus the allocation of mixed use sites should help to reduce the need to travel and encourage the use of walking and cycling.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The allocation of land at the New Museums Site took place as part of the process of developing the Cambridge Local Plan 2014, and as such has been subject to SA as part of the Local Plan process. The conclusion of this screening process is that as the draft New Museums Site SPD does not make any changes to this allocation, or the policy guidance contained within Policy 43 of the Plan, it will not give rise to significant environmental effects.

- 5.2 The draft New Museums Site SPD does not give rise to significant social and economic effects beyond those already identified as part of the appraisal of the parent policy and site allocation contained within the Cambridge Local Plan 2014. As such it is not considered necessary to undertake a separate SA for this SPD.

Appendix 1: Screening in relation to Schedule 1 Criteria of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive

The characteristics of the Draft New Museums Site SPD having regard to	
(1a) The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.	Allocation of the New Museums Site forms part of the Local Plan process, which has been subject to SA incorporating the requirements of the SEA Directive. The draft New Museums Site SPD provides a Vision and Objectives for future redevelopment of the site, identifying the constraints and opportunities that will shape this development. The draft SPD does not set specific requirements in relation to the nature and scale of this development.
(1b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.	The draft New Museums Site SPD sits at the bottom of the plan hierarchy and as such is influenced by plans higher up the hierarchy (i.e. the Cambridge Local Plan 2014), for which it provides additional guidance. While it will influence the development of planning applications, policies higher up in the plan hierarchy are the key determining factor for the development of the site.
(1c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	The draft SPD has relevance to the promotion of sustainable development as part of the development of the New Museums Site. Sitting alongside policies contained in the Cambridge Local Plan 2014, the SPD, once adopted, will help to ensure that any future development safeguards the architectural, urban, historic, cultural and archaeological importance of the site while providing an opportunity for positive change. Development of the site presents the opportunity to enhance environmental sustainability including energy efficiency, increased ecology and biodiversity and enhanced health and wellbeing for those using and visiting the site. Overall, the draft SPD therefore contributes positively to the integration of environmental considerations.
(1d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and	There are no specific environmental problems that are of relevance to the draft SPD, although the objectives of the draft SPD promote environmental sustainability through seeking to secure environmental

	enhancements to meet the Vision for the site and those enhancements necessary to make future development proposals acceptable in planning terms.
(1e) The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	The draft SPD is not relevant to the implementation of Community legislation on the environment. Policies contained within the Cambridge Local Plan 2014 have more relevance in relation to issues such as air quality, and these policies will be taken into consideration as part of any future development proposals for the site.
Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regards, in particular to	
(2a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.	The appraisal of the parent policy and site allocation for which the draft New Museums Site SPD provides guidance, considered that any adverse effects could be appropriately mitigated. For example, while it was noted that the site lies within an AQMA, the promotion of sustainable modes of transport, and the proximity of the site to local services and facilities could help to tackle issues related to air quality and other environmental considerations.
(2b) The cumulative nature of the effects.	The appraisal of the parent policy and site allocations for which the draft New Museums Site SPD provides guidance, did not consider that there would be any significant cumulative effects as a result of the proposed development.
(2c) The trans-boundary nature of the effects.	The draft New Museums Site SPD is focussed on a discrete site, located entirely within the administrative boundary of Cambridge. As such there will be no trans-boundary effects as a result of the draft SPD.
(2d) The risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	The appraisal of the parent policy and site allocation for which the draft New Museums Site SPD provides guidance did raise concerns surrounding the location of the site within an AQMA, and the impact that this could have on human health. The appraisal did, however note that development of the site could present opportunities to reduce air pollution, for example through the promotion of sustainable modes of transport. Development of the site also

	presents the opportunity to enhance environmental sustainability including energy efficiency, increased ecology and biodiversity and enhanced health and wellbeing for those using and visiting the site.
(2e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of population likely to be affected);	The draft SPD is applicable to a small site within Cambridge City Centre, the area of the site being 1.97 hectares. The site is located within the wider context of Cambridge, which has a population of 128,000 within an area of approximately 4,070 hectares.
<p>(2f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage (ii) Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or (iii) Intensive land-use 	<p>The area covered by the draft New Museums Site SPD is located within the Cambridge Historic Core Conservation Area and is in an area of varying archaeological potential, with high potential for medieval remains. The site contains a number of designated and undesignated heritage assets, as identified within the draft SPD. The SPD, once adopted, alongside policies in the Local Plan will help to ensure that any future development safeguards the architectural, urban, historic, cultural and archaeological importance of the site while providing an opportunity for positive change.</p> <p>The appraisal of the parent policy and site allocation for which the draft New Museums Site SPD provides guidance did raise concerns surrounding the location of the site within an AQMA, and the impact that this could have on human health. The appraisal did, however note that development of the site could present opportunities to reduce air pollution, for example through the promotion of sustainable modes of transport. Other policies in the plan, which have also been subject to SA, give consideration to Air Quality and the need to ensure that developments do not lead to significant adverse effects on health, the environment or amenity from polluting or malodorous emissions, and that there will not be any significant adverse effects from existing sources of poor air quality.</p>

(2g) The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or protection status.

There are no areas or landscapes within the boundaries of the New Museums Site that have such status. The Cambridge Local Plan 2014, which contains the parent policy and site allocation of relevance to the draft SPD, has been subject to a Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment, which concludes that there are not likely to be any significant effects on Natura 2000 or Ramsar sites as a result of the policies and proposals contained within the plan.