



Rural Area Working Party 7 May 2013

Rural Vision 2031 – Submission Version Consultation

1. Summary and reasons for recommendations

- 1.1 This report presents the latest version of the Rural Vision 2031 submission document, and supporting documents, for approval for consultation prior to submission to the Secretary of State. Consultation took place commencing March 2012 on the 'Rural Vision preferred options' and this submission version seeks to comment upon, and respond to where appropriate, the representations received in response to the earlier consultation.
- 1.2 It is considered that the submission version is greatly improved as a result of both the earlier consultation, and as a result of an assessment against the content of the Government's, March 2012 published, National Planning Policy Framework. As a result it is recommended that the Rural Area Working Party recommend to Cabinet that this Rural Vision 2031 submission document be approved for consultation to commence in June 2013.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That:
 - (1) the Working Party **RECOMMENDS** to Cabinet that the Rural Vision 2031 submission document (Appendix 2), Policies Map Book (Appendix 5), Sustainability Appraisal (Appendix 8), and the Habitat Regulations (Screening) Assessment (Appendix 9) be approved for public consultation.
 - (2) the Working Party **notes** the rural site submissions (Appendix 7) and that site SS12.13 has been included in the revised Rural Vision 2031 document, but that SS12.12 and SS12.14 have not been included.
 - (3) delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport, to make any necessary minor typographical, grammatical or similar textual changes to the draft Rural Vision 2031 submission document prior to publication for consultation purposes.

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3. Corporate priorities

3.1 The recommendation(s) meet the following, as contained within the Corporate Plan:

- (a) Corporate Priority: *'Working together for strong, healthy and diverse communities'*; *'Working together for prosperous and environmentally-responsible communities'*; and by ensuring swift and consistent determination of planning applications *'Working together for an efficient Council'*.

4. Key issues

4.1 The Borough Council consulted on the Rural Vision preferred options document between March and May 2012. The representations received to this consultation are available at **Appendix 1**, which, in order to save on printing costs, are available to view online with the committee papers (link:

http://www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/your_council/documents/reports/Appendix%201%20Rural%20vision%202031%20assessment%20of%20responses.pdf

The number and type of representations received are set out in the table below:

Vision 2031 consultation responses March to April 2012			
	Post and email	Electronic form	Total responses
Rural Vision	118	55	173

4.2 Also shown at **Appendix 1** are the Officers' responses to those representations. In order to save on printing costs these responses are available to view online:

http://www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/your_council/documents/reports/Appendix%201%20Rural%20vision%202031%20assessment%20of%20responses.pdf

Where these have led to changes being proposed to the main document then these amendments have also been incorporated into the submission version of the Rural Vision 2031 document which is attached at **Appendix 2**.

4.3 In addition to the changes made as a result of consultation representations, a number of further changes have been made as a result of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was introduced after consultation had already commenced on the preferred options draft. Members may recall that, at the time of the preferred options consultation, the NPPF had been consulted on by the Government. It was considered justified, at that stage therefore, to incorporate the policy requirements of the draft into the preferred options. However, the final version of the NPPF is different in many respects to the draft and a number of further changes have therefore been made to some policies to reflect this. A number of changes have also been made by as a result of additional evidence based work, which includes the release of the 2011 Census data.

4.4 Changes to the Rural Vision 2031 document have been captured in a separate document at **Appendix 3**, which in order to save on printing costs, is available to view online:

http://www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/your_council/documents/reports/Appendix%203%20Tracked%20changes%20%20Rural%20vision%202031%20Submission%20document.pdf

Text that has been removed from the previous version has been struck through ~~like this~~. Text that has been added into the document has been, underlined like this. In addition, a reasonable number of very incidental typographical and grammatical errors have been corrected without being highlighted, in the interests of ensuring a readable final document.

- 4.5 These changes have been highlighted to demonstrate the changes that have been made in the clearest way possible. The consultation itself however will proceed with a fully worked up final document, without any highlighted or struck through text. Where there are any discrepancies between the non-tracked changes version (Appendix 2) and tracked changes version of the documents (Appendix 3) it is the non-tracked changes version which will take precedence.

Significant changes

- 4.6 There are a number of significant changes to the Rural Vision policies that have been undertaken. Whilst these are not exhaustively set out in this covering report they are nonetheless highlighted in **Appendix 4**, to enable Members to focus their reading on those areas where material changes have taken place to the document.
- 4.7 Members will note that Policy RV1 is an entirely new policy, and sets the context for the use of the remainder of the document and policies. It seeks to enshrine at a local level the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development. The wording is a model wording provided by the Planning Inspectorate, and is a policy which has been imposed by PINS within a number of similar policy documents that have recently been considered by them elsewhere. As a simple local articulation of the 'golden thread' of sustainable development, as introduced by the NPPF, it is not considered to be a controversial amendment. The introduction of this policy has had consequential impacts upon the numbering of all successive policies and upon a number of policy cross-references.
- 4.8 Additional text has been inserted in Section 39 of the Rural Vision document to set out the new approach, in Policy DM28 of the Joint Development Management Policies document, of allowing limited infill development in villages within the countryside which have a closely knit cluster of 10 or more existing dwellings. This Policy will help to meet objections received, during the last consultation, around the lack of opportunity for small scale growth in small villages in the countryside.
- 4.9 A number of significant changes have also been made to the theme based aspirations and actions as a result of consultation comments received and additional work on aligning the aspirations and actions across all three of the Vision documents.
- 4.10 The changes made to the policies have resulted in changes to the Policies Map Book **Appendix 5** – available online:
http://www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/your_council/documents/reports/Appendix%205%20Rural%20Vision%202031%20Policies%20Map%20Book.pdf
which accompanies the Rural Vision 2031 document.
- 4.11 It is acknowledged that there may be typographic, grammatical and factual errors in the draft document being considered by the Working Party. It is intended that these will be rectified in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport before the consultation document is published.

Call for suitable Gypsy and Traveller sites

- 4.12 The Borough Council issued a call for any suitable, available and deliverable gypsy and traveller sites during the 2010 Rural Site Allocations document consultation. No suitable sites were identified through this process and hence

no sites have been allocated in earlier drafts of the Rural Vision, Bury St Edmunds Vision, or Haverhill Vision 2031 documents due to the difficulties this would present in demonstrating the potential deliverability of sites.

- 4.13 A further call for suitable, available and deliverable sites will be issued during this final period of consultation on the Vision 2031 documents, to assess whether the situation has changed in the last two years.

Rural Vision Infrastructure Delivery Plan

- 4.14 An Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) accompanies the Rural Vision 2031 document which sets out the infrastructure requirements for the rural areas and how these will be funded, to ensure that the vision and allocations in this document can be delivered. The IDP particularly focuses on the delivery of infrastructure in the first five years of the plan period. This document is subject to a separate consultation which is taking place at the same time as the final period of consultation on the Vision 2031 document. Following the consultation on the IDP the document will be revised and a final version presented to Members for approval, prior to the submission of the Rural Vision to the Secretary of State for Examination. The IDP is included as **Appendix 6** for information.

Rural Site Submissions

- 4.15 Three additional site submissions were made via submitted comments to the Rural Vision 2031 document during the last round of public consultation. These are attached at **Appendix 7** for information. One of the sites proposed, SS12.13, has been included in the Rural Vision 2031 submission document as an allocated site under Policy RV18, Great Barton, for residential and community uses.

Next Steps

- 4.16 Subject to recommendation and approval, the Rural Vision 2031 document, and supporting documents, will be subject to a minimum 6 week period of public consultation commencing in June 2013.
- 4.17 Following this consultation the comments received and documents will be prepared for submission to the Secretary of State. Subject to approval, the Rural Vision 2031 document will be submitted to Secretary of State before the end of December 2013, to be examined by a Planning Inspector in early 2014.

5. Other options considered

- 5.1 Members will recall the Rural Vision preferred options previously consulted upon. Whilst not alternative options per sé they do highlight the iterative process to the formulation of the Rural Vision 2031 policies.

6. Community impact

- 6.1 **Crime and disorder impact** (*including Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998*)

- 6.1.1 It is considered that the Rural Vision 2031 document could have a positive impact on crime and disorder issues in St Edmundsbury. Section 13 of the document sets out aspirations and actions for how the rural parts of the

Borough will look and feel in 2031 in terms of crime and community safety. The actions listed will help to ensure crime and community safety issues are dealt with appropriately.

6.2 Diversity and equality impact *(including the findings of the Equality Impact Assessment)*

6.2.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has not been undertaken by officers in preparing this report but there are not considered to be any potential significant adverse impacts on the Borough resulting from the content of the Rural Vision 2031 document.

6.3 Sustainability impact *(including completing a Sustainability Impact Assessment)*

6.3.1 The document has been the subject of a Sustainability Appraisal (**Appendix 8**) and a Habitat Regulations (Screening) Assessment (**Appendix 9**) These appendices are available to view online from Monday 29 April 2013 in order to save on printing costs.

6.4 Other impact *(any other impacts affecting this report)*

6.4.1 None associated with this report.

7. Consultation *(what consultation has been undertaken, and what were the outcomes?)*

7.1 Consultation took place on the Rural Vision 2031 preferred options document between March and May 2012. The responses to these are set out in Appendix 1.

7.2 Changes made to the Policies as a result of the representations received are shown within the main document at Appendix 3 and Appendix 4.

8. Financial and resource implications *(including asset management implications)*

8.1 There are no potential adverse financial or resource impacts on the Borough Council resulting from the consultation on the Rural Vision 2031 Submission document.

9. Risk/opportunity assessment *(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)*

9.1 The preparation of an up-to-date planning policy framework is a statutory requirement and the lack of such a framework militates against the proper planning of the borough and, particularly in light of the National Planning Policy Framework, could place the Council at risk of planning appeals being upheld with the possible award of costs against it.

10. Legal and policy implications

10.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the Council to prepare and keep an up to date Local Plan. A Local Plan is essential for the continuation of an effective planning service and key to other Council services areas.

11. Ward(s) affected

11.1 The Rural Vision has the potential to impact on all of the rural wards in the borough.

12. Background papers

12.1 None

13. Documents attached

13.1 Appendix 1 Representations received to Rural Vision Preferred Options consultation and officer responses (available online)

Appendix 2 Submission version of the Rural Vision 2031 document

Appendix 3 Tracked changes version of the Rural Vision 2031 submission document (available online)

Appendix 4 Rural Vision 2031 – Significant changes

Appendix 5 Policies Map Book (available online)

Appendix 6 Infrastructure Delivery Plan (TO FOLLOW)

Appendix 7 Rural Site Submissions

Appendix 8 Sustainability Appraisal (available online from Monday 29 April 2013)

Appendix 9 Habitat Regulations (Screening) Assessment (available online from Monday 29 April 2013)

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