

Committee: Planning Policy Working Group

Agenda Item

Date: 9th June 2016

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Title: Countryside Protection Zone review

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Summary

1. The Council has commissioned a review of the Countryside Protection Zone (CPZ) as part of the evidence base for the new Local Plan. The review has been carried out by Land Use Consultants (LUC).
2. Stage 1 set out the methodology and assessment framework that the consultants used to carry out the CPZ review. Stage 1 was presented to the Working Group on 26th April 2016 when both the methodology and assessment framework were agreed.
3. The final (Stage 2) report has now been completed and submitted to the Council by LUC.

Recommendations

4. That the Working Group notes the published report, Uttlesford Countryside Protection Zone Study May 2016, and its adoption into the Local Plan evidence base.

Financial Implications

5. Costs of the review were met from existing budgets.

Background Papers

6. None

Impact

- 7.

Communication/Consultation	The document will be published on the website.
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	The policy documents which will be prepared are subject to separate equalities impact assessments.

Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal Implications	N/A
Sustainability	The policy documents which will be prepared are subject to separate sustainability assessments.
Ward-specific impacts	All
Workforce/Workplace	Existing staff resources.

Situation

8. The CPZ review has provided an independent and objective appraisal of all the CPZ land within the district.
9. The CPZ is located to the north, east and south of the boundary of Stansted Airport, and is contiguous with a part of the Metropolitan Green Belt (MGB) which lies to the west of the M11. A separate review of the MGB has been carried out, the findings of which were reported to the Working Group in March. The CPZ review complements the MGB review to produce an up to date evidence base for this type of spatial policy.
10. The CPZ was first included in the 1995 adopted Uttlesford District Plan, and was carried forward without major review into the 2005 adopted Uttlesford Local Plan. The relevant plan policy is Policy S8 (The Countryside Protection Zone) which states:

“The area and boundaries of the Countryside Protection Zone around Stansted Airport are defined on the Proposals Map. In the Countryside Protection Zone planning permission will only be granted for development that is required to be there, or is appropriate to a rural area. There will be strict control on new development. In particular development will not be permitted if either of the following apply:

 - a) New buildings or uses would promote coalescence between the airport and existing development in the surrounding countryside;*
 - b) It would adversely affect the open characteristics of the zone.*
11. The NPPF requires that local plans are based on an up to date and robust evidence base. National planning policy does not include any specific tests for assessing CPZs. However, LUC have identified similarities between the purposes of the CPZ and those of Green Belts. In particular, paragraph 79 of the NPPF states that *“the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open”*.
12. The review has divided the CPZ into ten smaller parcels and has assessed each parcel on how well it performs against four purposes that LUC have identified for the CPZ. These are based on the five purposes of Green Belts.

The four CPZ purposes used by LUC are:

- i) To protect the open characteristics of the CPZ,
- ii) To restrict the spread of development from the airport,
- iii) To protect the rural character of the countryside (including settlements) around the airport, and
- iv) To prevent changes to the rural settlement pattern of the area by restricting coalescence.

13. The Part 2 study is split into a main report and an appendix, the latter containing the individual assessments of the ten parcels. Both the study and the appendix are attached at the end of this report.

14. The main conclusion is as follows:

“As set out in Chapter 4, there are variations in the contribution that different parcels in the study make to CPZ purposes. However, this study has demonstrated that the majority of the CPZ is performing well against the purposes defined for it. The CPZ helps to maintain the openness of the countryside and protects its rural character and restrict the spread of development from the airport. For some parcels, particularly to the south of the airport, the CPZ plays an essential role in protecting the separate identity of individual settlements.

In summary, therefore, the CPZ is helping to maintain the vision of the “airport in the countryside”. Unless other planning policy considerations suggest otherwise, we recommend that the CPZ is carried forward into the new local Plan”.

15. LUC do make some recommendations about revising the boundaries of the CPZ in order to strengthen it in relation to features on the ground. Officers will consider these recommendations as the new Local Plan is moved forward. No decision is needed on them now.

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
The new Local Plan may be found unsound if it has not been prepared in accordance with up to date and robust evidence.	1. The production of robust evidence using experienced consultants reduces the risk.	3. If the Plan is found unsound, there will be delay and uncertainty.	Ensure that the evidence base is kept up to date and refreshed as necessary.

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.