

## Cambridge City Council

**Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee****Date:** Tuesday, 29 September 2020**Time:** 5.30 pm**Venue:** This is a virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams**Contact:** democratic.services@cambridge.gov.uk, tel:01223 457000**Agenda**

- 1 Apologies for Absence
- 2 Declarations of Interest
- 3 Minutes (Pages 5 - 20)
- 4 Public Questions

**Decisions for the Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Open Spaces**

- 5 Response to Government Consultations: Planning For the Future White Paper, and Changes to the Current Planning System (Pages 21 - 68)
- 6 Review of Pre-application Charging Schemes and Update on Pre-application Service (Pages 69 - 82)
- 7 S106 Funding Round 2019: Play Areas and Open Spaces (Pages 83 - 106)
- 8 To Note Record of Urgent Decision Taken by the Leader of the Council
- 8a ROD: CAM Sub Strategy Consultation Response (Pages 107 - 108)
- 9 To Note Record of Urgent Decision Taken by the Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Open Spaces
- 9a ROD: Draft NEC AAP Topic Papers (Pages 109 - 110)
- 9b ROD: Greater Cambridge Authority Monitoring (Pages 111 -

Report (AMR) 2018-2019.

112)

10 To Note Record of Urgent Decision Taken by the  
Executive Councillor for Transport and Community  
Safety

10a ROD: Highways England A428 Supplementary (Pages 113 -  
consultation response 114)

10b ROD: City Centre Parking Fees from August 2020 (Pages 115 -  
118)

**Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee Members:** Smart (Chair), Bird (Vice-Chair), Baigent, Bick, Chadwick, Collis, Green, Porrer and Hipkin

**Alternates:** Matthews and McQueen

**Executive Councillors:** Massey (Executive Councillor for Transport and Community Safety) and Thornburrow (Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Open Spaces)

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### PLANNING AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

28 May 2020  
1.15 - 1.20 pm

**Present:** Councillors Bird (Vice-Chair), Baigent, Bick, Chadwick, Collis, Green, Hipkin, Porrer, McQueen, Massey (Executive Councillor) and Thornburrow (Executive Councillor)

Apologies were received from Councillor Smart.

#### FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

#### 20/53PnT Appointment to Outside Bodies

The Executive Councillor for Transport and Community Safety agreed the appointments below.

	Number of allocation
<b>Members Cycling and Pedestrian Steering Group</b>	5 Labour 3 Liberal Democrat
Councillors – Massey, Sargeant, Baigent, Smart, Barnett, Dalzell, McGerty, Payne	

#### 20/54PnT Appointment to Working Party

The Scrutiny Committee is requested to agree the appointments below:

	Number of allocation
<b>Joint Local Planning Advisory Group</b>	2 Labour 1 Liberal Democrat
Councillors – Thornburrow, Sargeant Bick	

The meeting ended at 1.20 pm

**CHAIR**

**PLANNING AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

30 June 2020

5.30 - 9.30 pm

**Present:** Councillors Smart (Chair), Bird (Vice-Chair), Baigent, Bick, Chadwick, Collis, Green, Porrer and Hipkin

Executive Councillors: Massey (Executive Councillor for Transport and Community Safety) and Thornburrow (Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Open Spaces)

**Officers:**

Director of Planning and Economic Development: Stephen Kelly

Strategic Director: Fiona Bryant

Assistant Director Strategy and Economy: Paul Frainer

Planning Policy Manager: Caroline Hunt

Principal Planning Policy Officer (Transport): Jonathan Dixon

Special Projects Officer: Hana Loftus

Senior Planning Policy Officer: Terry DeSouza

Committee Manager: Sarah Steed

**FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**

**20/55PnT Apologies for Absence**

No apologies were received.

**20/56PnT Declarations of Interest**

Name	Item	Interest
Councillor Baigent	All	Personal: Member of CamCycle and Extinction Rebellion.

**20/57PnT Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**20/58PnT Public Questions**

There were no public questions.

**20/59PnT Temporary arrangements for car parking in response to the COVID-19 situation**

The decision was noted.

**20/60PnT ROD - City Centre Centre Parking Fees June - August 2020**

Councillor Bick made the following comments:

- i. Noted that this was a subsequent decision to 20/59PnT.
- ii. Noted that people who worked in public sector jobs and in essential food jobs had free parking.
- iii. From June onwards free parking arrangements ended, people who worked in retail (either essential or non-essential) would be charged £10.50 / day.
- iv. Questioned why different arrangements were proposed for those working in the public sector to those working in the private sector. Questioned why the Executive Councillor thought this was ok.
- v. Believed the decision would be difficult to defend.

The Strategic Director said the following:

- i. Public Sector workers and those working in the voluntary sector would be providing support to those who were vulnerable and could be shielding and may not be able to social distance because of the support being provided. Therefore some people needed to travel by car to avoid cross-contamination. For the next 3 months it was considered appropriate to offer these people access to free parking.
- ii. Wouldn't be able to offer free parking to all, it seemed fairer to group all businesses together.
- iii. Some businesses were offering employees discounted parking or parking permits.
- iv. Was aware of government's advice and would review the decision in July.
- v. Wanted to ensure that there was adequate space in the car parks.

The Executive Councillor for Transport and Community Safety commented:

- i. The number of people coming into work was increasing and there might not be capacity for these workers in the car parks.
- ii. If individual employers had any issues then they needed to discuss this with the council.
- iii. The decision would be reviewed in July.

The Strategic Director said the following:



- i. There was a tight application process in place for people who wanted to access the free parking. Free parking was not automatically given. Each applicant had to demonstrate a need to have the free parking and they needed to have the support of their employer as well before their application would be granted.

## **20/61PnT ROD - Greater Cambridge Housing Trajectory and Five Year Housing Land Supply**

Councillor Green made the following comments:

- i. Noted that this was a clear statistical document which suggested that 700 houses would be built per year.
- ii. Questioned how much affordable housing was being delivered and what proportion was being built by the private sector.

The Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development made the following comment:

- i. The Council published a separate monitoring report which detailed the number and type of houses that were built each year which recorded the performance against the housing trajectory. This was available on the council's website.
- ii. This was a heavily statistical report which had a forward looking calculation of completions.

The Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Open Spaces:

- i. Thanked officers for preparing the document.
- ii. The monitoring report showed that over the last 5 years in Cambridge City the average number of affordable houses delivered was 41%.
- iii. Would provide the Committee with the average number of social rented affordable houses which had been delivered.

Councillor Green commented:

- i. Wanted to know what the two authorities were doing to increase the supply of affordable housing; particularly by the private sector.
- ii. Referred to page 3 of the appendix of this agenda item. There had been an increase in affordable homes, 60 in 2011, 667 in 2017 and 345 in 2019.
- iii. Wanted reassurance that the private sector would deliver affordable housing.
- iv. Was worried the burden of providing affordable housing would fall on the council.
- v. Had concerns especially in light of the pandemic.

- vi. Needed more affordable housing on stream.

The Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development made the following comment:

- i. Was happy to bring a report back to Committee.
- ii. The affordable housing figures were likely to be private sector provision as the figures referred to completions and the City Council's affordable housing programme had not yet been completed.
- iii. Would provide a breakdown between the private and public sector of affordable housing provision.

**7a ROD - Greater Cambridge Planning Service and Building Control Shared Services Business Plans 2020/21**

The decision was noted.

**7b ROD - Addendum to Greater Cambridge Statement of Community Involvement in light of COVID-19 Restrictions**

The decision was noted.

**20/62PnT Annual Report of 3C Building Control Service & Planning Shared Service 2019/20**

**Matter for Decision**

The report summarised the performance of the 3Cs Building Control Shared Services and the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service during 2019/20.

**Decision of Executive Councillor for Planning Policy Open Spaces**

- i. Noted the contents of the 3Cs Building Control Shared Services report.
- ii. Noted the contents of the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service report.

**Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

**Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

**Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received reports from the Strategic Lead 3C Building Control and the Strategic Director, Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. In relation to Building Control, congratulated the service on their awards and noted the customer feedback was good and the service was exceeding targets. Noted in the past that a confidential appendix would be provided detailing fee generating income; exempt from publication as the service competed with the private sector. Asked how the council was doing in terms of the market share.
- ii. In relation to the Planning Service, thought the tide was turning. Noted complaints stemmed from a backlog of validating applications. Asked what the position was in relation to the backlog and how long it would be until it was resolved.
- iii. In relation to the Planning Service asked what could be done for more public engagement particularly for residents who were not part of a Residents Association. Noted that SCDC had Parish Forums, questioned if Area Committees could take on this role.

The Strategic Lead 3C Building Control and the Strategic Director, Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Was happy to provide the committee with a brief summary of how the Building Control Department was performing in terms of the market share but did not want to discuss this in a public meeting as this information would disclose commercially sensitive information.
- ii. The backlog of application validating and determination had been impacted by the effects of the service wide restructure and the introduction of the new joint software on which all future planning applications would be processed. The backlog of validating applications was reducing and, there were 21 householder applications, 21 outline applications and 6 listed building consent applications awaiting validation in the City as of 29 June.
- iii. The Technical Support Team were prioritising householder and business applications. An update would be provided on the backlog position to the Committee following the meeting.
- iv. The Planning Application Service had been restructured so that they were now organised into 3 x area planning teams with dedicated officers for each area. The service was exploring how these new teams could be 'introduced' to the public. Each Team had already run a virtual introductory meeting for Parish Councils and they were looking to see how else they could promote the service within the community.

The Committee **unanimously resolved** to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations and congratulated the teams on their achievements.

### **Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

### **20/63PnT North East Cambridge Area Action Plan - Draft Plan for Consultation**

#### **Matter for Decision**

The report introduces the draft Area Action Plan (AAP) being prepared jointly by Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council that presented the Councils' preferred approach for managing development, regeneration and investment in North East Cambridge (NEC) over the next fifteen years and beyond. It followed public consultation on Issues & Options in February 2019 that sought to elicit views on a wide range of options on how the area might change, the issues and challenges facing the area, and how these might be addressed.

#### **Decision of Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Open Spaces**

- i. Agreed the name of the AAP be formally changed to the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan (NECAAP);
- ii. Agreed the draft North East Cambridge Area Action Plan (Appendix A); the draft North East Cambridge Policies Map (including amended boundary) (Appendix B) and Topic Papers (Appendix C) for a ten-week period of public consultation under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and that this consultation also includes the evidence documents (listed in the draft AAP with relevant policy and published on the shared planning service website);
- iii. Agreed the Statement of Consultation (Appendix D) including responses to comments received to the Issues & Options (February 2019);
- iv. Noted the findings of the updated Joint Equalities Impact Assessment, Draft Sustainability Appraisal, Draft Habitats Regulation Assessment; and Duty to Cooperate Statement (Appendices E, F, G and H respectively);
- v. Delegated authority to the Cambridge Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Open Spaces (in consultation with the Chair and Spokes for the Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee) and the Deputy Leader of South Cambridgeshire District Council to agree the further Topic

Papers as set out at paragraph 4.17 of the officer's report ahead of public consultation.

- vi. Delegated authority to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development, in liaison with the Cambridge Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Open Spaces (in consultation with the Chair and Spokes for the Planning Policy and Transport Scrutiny Committee) and the Deputy Leader of South Cambridgeshire District Council, to make editorial changes to the Draft NEC AAP consultation report (including graphics) and supporting documents (prior to the commencement of the consultation period) to comprise minor amendments and factual updates and clarifications.
- vii. Noted the update on the Fen Road access issues at paragraphs 4.19 and 4.20 of the officer's report.

### **Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

### **Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

### **Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Senior Planning Policy Officer, Assistant Director, Special Projects Officer

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. Questioned if the pandemic would delay the work on the NECAAP.
- ii. Referred to policy 8 which dealt with open space; the member had expected 39 hectares of open space to be provided for a development of this size. Expressed disappointment that the topic paper stated it was unlikely that the full quantum of open space would be provided on site.
- iii. Questioned the impact of the development on water supply / provision in the city and the surrounding network.
- iv. Queried how limiting water consumption would be enforced.
- v. Questioned the response rate to the NECAAP and what arrangements were being put in place for access over the railway line at Fen Road.
- vi. Noted the AAP stated that 1 building would be built to BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) outstanding standard and asked whether this criterion could be increased.
- vii. Asked whether the paragraph regarding passive housing could be re-worded.

- viii. Queried if an area within the AAP could be reserved if land was required to resolve the Fen Road / railway access issue.
- ix. Referred to policy 13c and noted that housing for local workers was not included within the current City Local Plan and questioned how key workers could be helped.
- x. Noted some buildings were proposed to have 13 stories and questioned if the ceiling heights were reduced to achieve this building height whether that would provide enough room to accommodate passive housing.
- xi. Questioned whether people would be able to afford to move to bigger houses in view of the COVID-19 recession.

The Senior Planning Policy Officer, Assistant Director and the Special Projects Officer said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Officers had consulted with Community Forums to explore whether work on the NECAAP should be delayed; residents said that they would prefer for the work to continue. Officers adopted a 'digital first' approach which had been successfully used during the Local Plan consultations.
- ii. Exploration of the type of open space which should be provided as part of the development was inconclusive. Options had been considered like Parkers Piece style open space or more dispersed open space areas. Previous respondents to the consultation had said that they wanted a wide variety of open space provision. Multifunctional and multi-use open space was therefore being proposed.
- iii. Was aware of concerns regarding growth and the impact on water supply and water cycle. An independent Water Survey had been commissioned. Wanted to promote low water consumption on the site and was looking at limiting water usage to 80 litres per person per day. The issue of water consumption was a growth issue and not a geographic issue. The NECAAP set high standards across both residential and non-residential development. For non-residential developments, the plan sought to ensure that development would be built to BREAAAM 'good' standards.
- iv. Limiting water consumption would be enforced at source and through metering. Monitoring requirements on consumption would seek to ensure delivery of this objective.
- v. The consultation had received more responses than any other AAP the City had done before. People were able to dip in and out of the NECAAP. Officers wanted to capture as many consultation responses as possible.
- vi. Discussions were on-going regarding maintenance of the public realm.
- vii. The plan provides for a bridge over the railway line for pedestrian and cycle access.

- viii. Officers were looking at whether they could increase the number of buildings which would be built to BREEAM outstanding standard.
- ix. Officers confirmed that they would look at the wording of the passive housing paragraph.
- x. The Fen Road crossing was a complex but existing issue, which the AAP could not resolve directly. Officer were seeking to engage Network Rail in discussion on options, if Network Rail intended to close the crossing then they would have to fund an alternative route of access. The cost of resolving the access issue via the North East Cambridge site would be high, both land cost and the physical infrastructure crossing the railway and the rules about planning policy meant that only impacts arising as a result of the plan proposals could be mitigated directly by planning policy requirements. This means resolution of the Fen Road access issue would require a broader approach, working with Network Rail.
- xi. Would look at whether housing could be tethered to the new employment space for people on the science and business park. Could look to see whether employers could be encouraged to purchase land to accommodate their staff.
- xii. Building height assumptions presumed at standard 3m per storey allowance.
- xiii. Officers would keep under review the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on future development trends and values / requirements for sustainable and healthy living.

The Executive Councillor commented:

- i. If the water treatment centre was able to relocate then this site was the right place for development; more jobs and housing was required by the area to meet existing and future needs.
- ii. Prior to 2015, councils were able to set requirements for water usage as part of planning applications. The development should not rely on mains water and should look at ways to re-use water. She wanted to challenge the Government to permit councils to set water usage conditions as part of planning applications.

The Committee resolved by 5 votes to 0 with 4 abstentions to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

**Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

## **20/64PnT Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Issues & Options Feedback and Next Steps**

### **Matter for Decision**

The report sought to feedback on the Greater Cambridge Local Plan Issues and Options consultation – ‘The First Conversation’. This formed part of the early stages in preparing the next Local Plan for the area, being prepared jointly by Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council.

### **Decision of Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Open Spaces**

- i. Noted the report on Initial Feedback from the First Conversation consultation included at Appendix 1
- ii. Agreed additional informal member and stakeholder engagement and Preferred Options stages be added to the Local Plan making process
- iii. Agreed the approach to addressing the Duty to Cooperate included as Appendix 3 to the report, subject to any material changes necessary as a result of consultation with Duty to Cooperate bodies.

### **Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer’s report.

### **Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

### **Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Strategy and Economy Manager and Planning Policy Manager.

The Committee resolved by 8 votes to 0 to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

### **Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

## **20/65PnT Update of Greater Cambridge Local Development Scheme**

### **Matter for Decision**

To agree an update to the Greater Cambridge Local Development Scheme (LDS).



**Decision of Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Open Spaces**

- i. Adopted the updated Local Development Scheme for Greater Cambridge included at Appendix 1 of this report, to take effect from 13 July 2020.
- ii. Delegated authority to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development, in liaison with the South Cambridgeshire Lead Cabinet member for Planning and the Cambridge City Council Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Open Spaces (and also the Chair and Spokes for the Planning Policy and Transport Scrutiny Committee), to make any minor editing changes and corrections identified prior to publication.

**Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

**Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

**Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Strategy and Economy Manager and Planning Policy Manager

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. Thought more debate was required on how growth related to climate change and exploring sustainability means both in social and environmental aspects. Welcomed what was being proposed as this would give more time for debate. The change in the schedule made sense and wanted to harness the contribution of housing from the AAP into the Local Plan. The timeline seemed to be set by the DCO (Development Consent Order) process.
- ii. Asked that because of the length of time involved in the development scheme process that an interim report should be brought back to Committee in 2021.

The Strategy and Economy Manager and Planning Policy Manager said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. It was good practice at each stage in the local plan process to reflect and check on the local development scheme.
- ii. When the preferred option report was brought back to committee a report would be provided to confirm how the programme related to the local development scheme at that time and whether any further updates were necessary.

The Committee resolved by 8 votes to 0 to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

**Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

**20/66PnT Joint Development Control Committee-terms of reference**

**Matter for Decision**

The County Council resolved in May 2020 to withdraw from the Joint Development Control Committee (JDCC) after July 2020. The effect of their resolution will be for the current JDCC to no longer be quorate.

The report sought agreement to the establishment of a new Committee (the Greater Cambridge Joint Planning Committee GCJPC) and set out the proposed terms for the new Joint Committee to come into effect from 1 August 2020.

**Decision of Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Open Spaces to recommend to the Civic Affairs Committee to:**

- i. Dissolve the JDCC between Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council as surviving members, pursuant to section 101 (5) Local Government Act 1972 and cease all delegations to the same with effect from 31 July 2020;
- ii. Establish a new joint planning committee between Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council (to be called the Joint Development Control Committee) with the Terms of Reference detailed in Appendix A as amended to increase the membership from 3 to 6 members for both Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council and that the Chair and Vice-Chair positions rotate between the councils each municipal year and to delegate functions to the joint committee and officers as set out therein, pursuant to section 101 (5) and section 102 Local Government Act 1972 with effect from 1 August 2020
- iii. Agree that any ongoing planning matters or any other continuing action which would otherwise fall to be determined by the JDCC will, after 31 July 2020, transfer to the Greater Cambridge Joint Planning Committee for determination
- iv. Authorise the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development to decide whether to refer any development control matters for

determination by the Greater Cambridge Joint Planning Committee where the boundary of the site concerned overlaps or is adjacent to the boundary between Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council

- v. Authorise the Monitoring Officer to make any consequential amendments to the Council's constitution arising from the above decisions
- vi. Comment upon the proposed draft standing orders for the Committee as appropriate.

### **Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

### **Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

### **Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development. He updated his report to state that:

- i. Members had queried the proposed name of the Committee.
- ii. Members may wish to consider the number of members who sat on the committee.
- iii. Clarified the geographical areas which would be covered by the new Committee.
- iv. The terms of reference should be amended to include the ability for County Members to exercise speaking rights at the Committee.
- v. Members had requested that the chair position rotated between SCDC and the City Council.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. Agreed that the new Committee should consider major planning applications rather than householder applications.
- ii. Thought that the number of members sitting on the committee should be increased.
- iii. Suggested the number of members sitting on the committee should comprise 6 members for both SCDC and the City Council.

The Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development and Democratic Services Manager said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Thought the matter of the size of the committee would be commented upon by SCDC councillors as well.

- ii. The Committee could suggest how many councillors they thought the committee should comprise but noted this would still be a matter for negotiation between the two councils.

Councillor Baigent proposed and seconded by Councillor Porrer the following amendment:

- i. Amend the membership of the committee so there would be 6 Cambridge City Council members and 6 South Cambridgeshire District Council members rather than 3 members each.

Councillor Smart proposed and Councillor Baigent seconded the following amendment:

- ii. Retain the name of the Committee as the Joint Development Control Committee rather than the Greater Cambridge Joint Planning Committee and reflect this throughout the terms of reference document.

Councillor Baigent proposed and Councillor Smart seconded the following amendment:

- iii. Confirm that the Chair and Vice-Chair positions rotate between Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council each municipal year.

The Committee approved the amendments unanimously.

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the amended recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the amended recommendations.

**Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

The meeting ended at 9.30 pm

**CHAIR**



## Item

### **GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER & CHANGES TO THE CURRENT PLANNING SYSTEM CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

**To:**

Councillor Katie Thornburrow, Executive Councillor, Planning Policy and Open Spaces

Planning & Transport Scrutiny Committee [29/09/2020]

**Report by:**

Stephen Kelly, Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development for  
Tel: 01223 - 457103 Email: Stephen.Kelly@cambridge.gov.uk

**Wards affected:**

All

Not a Key Decision

#### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Cambridge City Council's response to the Government's White Paper - Planning for the future consultation, the deadline for responses is 29 October and the Changes to the Current Planning System consultation, the deadline for responses is 1 October.
- 1.2 This report sets out, for both consultation responses the key response points and the direction of the response for discussion, to be refined following the meeting. The full responses are being developed with a range of officers and departments. Discussion with South Cambridgeshire District Council suggests that there is potential to prepare a joint response on some or all issues for both consultations. The final response to the White Paper will be agreed

by the Executive Councillor in an out of cycle decision in consultation with Chair and Spokes and submitted ahead of the consultation deadline.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Executive Councillor is recommended to:
- a) To note the initial response to the Government's White Paper (Planning for the future) consultation as set out in appendix 1.
  - b) To note the initial response to the Government's Changes to the Current Planning System consultation as set out in appendix 2.
  - c) Agree, for each consultation the wording of a final joint response and/or any individual response through an out of cycle decision, in consultation with Chair and Spokes.

## **3. Background**

### **White Paper – Planning for the Future consultation**

- 3.1 The Government is consulting on a draft White Paper ([Planning for the future](#)) between 6 August and 29 October 2020. The five main proposals are described as:
- A streamlined planning process with more democracy taking place more effectively at the plan-making stage replacing the entire corpus of plan-making law in England
  - A radical, digital-first approach to modernise the planning process moving from a process based on documents to a process driven by data.
  - To bring a new focus on design and sustainability:
  - To improve infrastructure delivery through reform of developer contributions.
  - To ensure more land is available for the homes and development people and communities need, and to support renewal of our town and city centers.
- 3.2 The issues are grouped under three themes (or pillars), listed as follows:
- Planning for Development
  - Planning for beautiful and sustainable places; and
  - Planning for infrastructure and connected places.

## **Changes to the Current Planning System consultation**

- 3.3 The Government is also consulting on [changes to the current planning system](#) between 6 August and 1 October 2020. The four main proposals are:
- Changes to the standard method for assessing local housing need, which as well as being a proposal to change guidance in the short term has relevance to proposals for land supply reforms set out in 'Planning for the Future' consultation paper;
  - Securing of First Homes, sold at a discount to market price for first time buyers, including key workers, through developer contributions in the short term until the transition to a new system;
  - Temporarily lifting the small sites threshold below which developers do not need to contribute to affordable housing, to up to 40 or 50 units to support SME builders as the economy recovers from the impact of Covid-19;
  - Extending the current Permission in Principle to major development so landowners and developers now have a fast route to secure the principle of development for housing on sites without having to work up detailed plans first.

## **4. Proposed Response to the White Paper– Planning for the Future consultation**

- 4.1 An initial draft response to each question in the White Paper is included in appendix 1 to this report.
- 4.2 Due to the timing of this meeting, and the significant level and range of input required for the responses, and the opportunity to develop a joint response with South Cambridgeshire District Council, the draft responses provide a 'direction of travel' to capture the key response points, and allow debate on these prior to finalising a comprehensive response for sign off via an out of cycle decision by the Executive Member nearer the deadline.

## **General Comments**

- 4.3 Overall, officers' emerging views are there are opportunities to improve the planning system that should be welcomed, such as simplifying processes and taking advantage of more digital approaches. There may

be opportunities for the Councils to work with government as a pathfinder on these, as they reflect many of the goals we have for the Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

- 4.4 However, the consultation also raises many uncertainties and concerns, about how the system would enable consideration of the particular characteristics, issues, and opportunities facing the Greater Cambridge area. There appear to be many unanswered questions, and limited details on many aspects of the proposed changes to the planning system.

## **Theme 1: Planning for Development**

- 4.5 **Consultation Proposals:** Under this theme a new approach to local plans is proposed. They would become more map based documents which would identify land in three classification – growth, renewal, and protected. Development management policies would be created at the national level. Plans would be tested using a consolidated ‘sustainable development test’, replacing existing mechanisms like sustainability appraisal and duty to cooperate. Housing requirements would be set nationally. Growth areas (suitable for substantial development) would automatically be granted outline planning permission for the principle of development through the local plan. The reserved matters process is envisaged to be a quick and streamlined process analysing compliance with agreed design codes and central national development management policies. The plan making timeline would be streamlined, with a 30 month period for the creation of new local plans.
- 4.6 **Summary of Proposed Response:** There are opportunities to speed up plan making. The Councils have already embracing digital opportunities through its plan making process, and would be keen to work with government towards achieving best practice. However, there are significant concerns with the proposals.
- 4.7 A local plan where development levels and planning policy were set nationally, with three area classifications available to determine locally, would reduce the ability to develop a vision and shape the development of an area based on the local communities' aspirations, or to fully reflect local concerns.
- 4.8 The new style local plans would be challenging to create in the 30 month time period proposed. This is particularly concerning given the added significance of them, in effect granting outline level permission



for the principle of development in identified 'growth areas' on the adoption of the local plan. It also has significant resource implications for Councils, with the front loading of tasks previously done through the development management process into the plan making process. It is not clear how this is reconciled with the reduced income such a system could bring. Many significant developments are also already underway and will continue to go through the current development management process while the new style planning making would be taking place.

- 4.9 Appropriate transitional arrangements need to be in place if plan making is not to be delayed with the uncertainty the proposals would create.

## **Theme 2: Planning for beautiful and sustainable places**

- 4.10 **Consultation Proposals:** Climate change would be addressed at the national level though ambitious improvements to energy efficiency standards. It proposes to strengthen the use of design guidelines and design codes, with an expectation that they would be prepared locally, and be given greater weight.
- 4.11 **Summary of Proposed Response:** Changes to the process would reduce the ability of Local Planning Authorities to respond to climate change through their local plans, so national policy changes would be crucial. Design Codes can help the quality of development and they provide certainty for developers. However, there is a significant financial cost in producing these guides for different areas of the districts, and with the changes to the planning process proposed this cost could lie with the Councils.

## **Theme 3: Planning for infrastructure and connected places**

- 4.12 **Consultation Proposals:** that the Community Infrastructure Levy and the current system of planning obligations will be reformed as a nationally set, value-based flat rate charge (the 'Infrastructure Levy'). It proposes to give local authorities greater powers to determine how developer contributions are used.
- 4.13 **Summary of Proposed Response:** There is agreement, in principle, that the current use of Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 planning obligations are not fit for purpose and should be replaced with a new system where the contribution is charged as a fixed proportion of

development value that is invested in new infrastructure and public services. The scope of the reformed Infrastructure Levy should capture changes of use through permitted development rights, to finance direct mitigation the cost of which is currently borne by the taxpayer. There should be flexibility regarding how funding is spent. Local authorities should be permitted to borrow against the Infrastructure Levy, to support infrastructure delivery in their area ahead of Infrastructure Levy receipts from being received.

## **5. Proposed Reponse to the Changes to the Current Planning System consultation**

- 5.1 A draft response to each question is included in appendix 2 to this report.
- 5.2 As the response is required shortly after this meeting, the response is in a more complete form. Again the aim is to develop a joint response with South Cambridgeshire District Council.

### **Proposed changes to the methodology for calculating the standard method housing requirement**

- 5.3 **Consultation Proposals:** sets out a revised methodology for calculating the standard method minimum housing requirement which it intends will be used as the basis for plans created prior to any wider reforms being introduced. It proposes changes to the baseline data used, and the approach to how market signals are used to adjust for affordability.
- 5.4 Changes to the standard method would slightly reduce the minimum housing need for the Greater Cambridge area to 1,518 dwellings per annum, compared with 1,748 under the current standard method (and 1,675 in the 2018 Local Plans). It is slightly higher for Cambridge and lower for South Cambridgeshire. The consultation is clear this remains a minimum and that other factors may need to be taken into account as is currently the case.
- 5.5 **Summary of Proposed Response:** Support the principles on which the proposed changes to the Standard Method are aimed, but the volatility in the figures is likely to remain. It is noted that the standard method provides the starting point and not the final housing

requirement. Implications would be more significant if the proposals in the white paper are implemented.

### **Setting developer contributions for 'First Homes'**

- 5.6 **Consultation Proposals:** 'First Homes' are flats and houses built on new developments, sold with a discount of at least 30 percent. Through the current consultation, the government proposes a national threshold requiring a minimum of 25 per cent of all affordable housing units secured through developer contributions to be First Homes. First Homes will take precedence over other affordable housing tenures.
- 5.7 **Summary of Proposed Response:** Replacing shared ownership with First Homes would also impact on providers' ability to deliver social/affordable rent, as shared ownership is often used as cross-subsidy. Also, as it is likely to be the Councils who will oversee the allocations of First Homes, this process will create a huge burden.

### **Supporting small and medium-sized developers – raising the affordable housing threshold**

- 5.8 **Consultation Proposals:** Current national policy is that affordable housing contributions should not be sought for developments of fewer than 10 units. The consultation proposes to raise the threshold to either 40 or 50 dwellings, to 'stimulate economic recovery with a particular focus on SMEs'. This would be for an initial period of 18 months.
- 5.9 **Summary of Proposed Response:** Increasing the threshold, even for a temporary period, is not supported. Again, it will reduce the Councils ability to deliver affordable housing in an area where there is a high level of need. It is particularly concerning for rural areas, where in many villages few schemes reach this scale. There is no evidence locally that schemes below 40 or 50 homes are not viable, or that developers are being put off by the affordable housing requirement. There is a risk of schemes being resubmitted in the period this applies, to avoid the affordable housing requirements.

### **Extension of the Permission in Principle consent regime**

- 5.10 **Consultation Proposals:** 'Permission in Principle' (PiP) is comparable to outline planning permission, in so far that PiP establishes that development of the site is appropriate, with technical details reserved

for a future application. At present, PiP applies only to sites for minor development of less than 10 dwellings. Through the consultation, the government proposes extending this to include major developments (up to 150 dwellings).

- 5.11 **Summary of Proposed Response:** The changes are not supported. They would mean a significant scale of site to go through this process, where many issues of technical detail would not be explored until after the principle has been established.

## **6. Implications**

### **a) Financial Implications**

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications. However, the outcome of the consultation and changes to the planning system could have financial staffing and other implications.

### **b) Staffing Implications**

- 6.2 There are no direct staffing implications. However, the outcome of the consultation and changes to the planning system could have staffing and other implications.

### **c) Equality and Poverty Implications**

- 6.3 There are no direct equality and poverty implications.

### **d) Environmental Implications**

- 6.4 There are no direct environmental implications. However, the outcome of the consultation and changes to the planning system could have environmental and other implications.

### **e) Procurement Implications**

- 6.5 There are no direct procurement implications.

### **f) Community Safety Implications**

- 6.6 There are no direct community safety implications.

## **7. Consultation and communication considerations**

- 7.1 Government White Paper - Planning for the future: Public consultation on the draft Government White Paper: 'Planning for the future' takes place from 6 August running for 12 weeks until October 29 2020.
- 7.2 Changes to the current planning system: Public consultation on Changes to the current planning system takes place from 6 August running for 8 weeks until October 1 2020.

## **8. Background papers**

Background papers used in the preparation of this report:

The following documents are available to view on the Government's Website:

Government White Paper: Planning for the future

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/changes-to-the-current-planning-system>

Changes to the current planning system consultation

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/changes-to-the-current-planning-system>

## **9. Appendices**

Appendix 1 Outline Proposed Response to the White Paper– Planning for the Future consultation

Appendix 2 Changes to the Current Planning System - Council's Initial Draft Response.

## **10. Inspection of papers**

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Jonathan Dixon, Planning Policy Manager, tel: 07514 925952, email: [jonathan.dixon@greatercambridgeplanning.org](mailto:jonathan.dixon@greatercambridgeplanning.org)

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## Appendix 1

### Planning for the Future: White Paper - Consultation Questions and Emerging Response

#### Pillar One – Planning for Development

**Question 1:**

What three words do you associate most with the planning system in England?

**Question 2:**

Do you get involved with planning decisions in your local area? [Yes / No] If no, why not? [Don't know how to / It takes too long / It's too complicated / I don't care / Other – please specify]

**Question 3:**

Our proposals will make it much easier to access plans and contribute your views to planning decisions. How would you like to find out about plans and planning proposals in the future? [Social media / Online news / Newspaper / By post / Other – please specify]

**Question 4:**

What are your top three priorities for planning in your local area? [Building homes for young people / building homes for the homeless / Protection of green spaces / The environment, biodiversity and action on climate change / Increasing the affordability of housing / The design of new homes and places / Supporting the high street / Supporting the local economy / More or better local infrastructure / Protection of existing heritage buildings or areas / Other – please specify]

**Response to Questions 1-4:**

No response proposed.

**Question 5:**

Do you agree that Local Plans should be simplified in line with our proposals? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

### Response to Question 5:

- No.
- Agree there is potential to simplify Local Plans, but significant concerns regarding a number of proposals in the consultation.
- There is potential to streamline plans and the plan making process.
- Support the use of interactive plans, and improved maps. Greater Cambridge Planning Service is already exploring ways to improve the accessibility of plans, to enable a digital first approach. There is potential for Greater Cambridge work with the government to be a pathfinder towards these improvements.
- However, there are significant complexities that would need to be addressed in plan system based on a land classification system in order to enable effective land use planning. Those complexities are not addressed in the White Paper.
- Much of the proposals are part of a quest to speed up delivery, but this does not account for the significant number of dwellings with planning permission that remain unbuilt due to a wide range of factors which are nothing to do with the planning system. Instead the government should explore ways to speed up delivery on large sites, by working with developers and landowners as well as local authorities.
- This also links to concerns regarding the expansion of Permitted Development, whether the planning system is seen as the restrictor of growth, rather than a necessary factor to ensure high quality development, or again to allow local communities to shape their environment.
- A plan making simply based on three area classifications would lose the ability to develop a vision and shape the development of an area based on the local communities' aspirations.
- If this type of planning system is being pursued, more should be done to draw on and learn from planning models used successfully in other European countries, and take the best of their approaches.
- Unclear if the whole area of the LPA will need to be assigned a classification. If the answer is yes, this could be very complex, and particularly time hungry and resource intensive the first time a new style plan is produced. This is not reflected in the timetables proposed in the consultation for plan making.
- There is no reference provided about how planning for Mineral & Waste will be treated.
- Training and support should be provided by the Government, e.g. clear good practice guidance published in good time ahead of legislation coming into force.



**Question 6:**

Do you agree with our proposals for streamlining the development management content of Local Plans, and setting out general development management policies nationally? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Response to Question 6:**

- No.
- There is potential for some policy areas to be addressed nationally. Some policy areas do have relatively standard approaches across the UK, and clear national policies could reduce the need for repetition.
- Without sight of the draft national Development Management Policies, it is very difficult to determine how effective these national policies would be.
- However, there is significant concern whether national policies will adequately reflect local differences and circumstances, or allow area specific issues to be considered by Local Planning Authorities.
- Many local authorities develop local policies because of their desire to enhance their areas or respond to local concerns, such as climate change or responding to particular local needs. Local communities through consultations also have a significant influence on how these policies are developed. This would reduce or even remove the ability to respond to local issues, or the desires of local communities regarding how they will shape their areas.
- Detailed Local Plan policies are also often a response to local concerns about the impact future development may have. It is not just about the quality of their appearance and design but also retention of local access to local facilities and services. It is not clear about how these policies could be applied in the area classifications of a plan. In light of Covid-19, the need to promote sustainable centres, and protect certain uses, is paramount.

**Question 7a:**

Do you agree with our proposals to replace existing legal and policy tests for Local Plans with a consolidated test of “sustainable development”, which would include consideration of environmental impact? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Response to Question 7a:**

- No, in the absence of further clarity.
- Single statutory “sustainable development” test – further detail are needed on what this would entail to understand whether it will adequately consider all the issues that can influence the sustainability of development.
- The current Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental process is complex process, and its complexity leads to risk of legal challenge in plan

making. However, it does enable a robust scrutiny of sustainability and consideration of alternative approaches to ensure the plan delivers a sustainable approach. If it is watered down too much that level of scrutiny will be lost.

- Unclear how the sustainable development test would enable effective consideration of climate change, and contribute to the journey towards net zero carbon.
- Needs to be clear how the test would relate to other mechanisms, such as Habitats Directive Assessment.
- ‘a slimmed down assessment of deliverability for the plan’ – again, no detail of how this would be done, or what it would address, how it would consider major infrastructure requirements (e.g. transport improvements)
- On the alternative approach - ‘Rather than demonstrating deliverability, local authorities could be required to identify a stock of reserve sites which could come forward for development if needed’ – further detail would be needed on the level of this stock, and it what circumstances and via what mechanism it would be brought forward.

**Question 7b:**

How could strategic, cross-boundary issues be best planned for in the absence of a formal Duty to Cooperate?

**Response to Question 7b:**

- The duty cooperate is another legal pitfall of plan making, but it does ensure authorities address strategic cross boundary issues in the absence of regional planning.
- It is not clear in the white paper how this joined up planning would be achieved. An approach to strategic planning needs to be identified if the duty to cooperate is to be replaced.

**Question 8a:**

Do you agree that a standard method for establishing housing requirements (that takes into account constraints) should be introduced? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Response to Question 8a:**

- No in the absence of further clarity.

- Imposition of a housing requirement on each LPA could have some merit in reducing a contentious and onerous aspect of plan making right through the process and at examination, particularly in areas experiencing strong development pressures.
- However, it would depend on the ability of the housing requirement to reflect local circumstances, and there is a risk it would not fully reflect local housing need, or constraints and opportunities in the area – it is not clear whether or how such factors would be taken into account in deciding the fixed housing figure.
- It also would not allow local consideration or input into the level of housing that should be planned. Imposing a minimum has the merit of allowing local consideration if a higher level would be appropriate. It would take an important decision that impacts greatly on local communities away from them.
- The factors listed for distributing homes does not reflect the full range of issues that could be considerations.
- Standard method does not reflect opportunities such as success of the local economy, or reflect opportunities provided by infrastructure. It does not consider constraints to development. The consultation states that adjustments will be made for constraints, but with out any detail it is difficult to under stand how this would be applied or its impact locally.
- Solution offered appears to be for 'Mayors of Combined Authorities' to redistribute growth, but this would only be within administrative area rather than considering a housing market area for example. Also goes beyond current role of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Mayor, who does not have statutory planning powers.
- Standard method numbers are updated regularly. Need to be clear how often figures would be updated, and the impact on adopted plans if national figures changed.

**Question 8b:**

Do you agree that affordability and the extent of existing urban areas are appropriate indicators of the quantity of development to be accommodated? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Response to Question 8b:**

- No.
- A list of factors are provided as to how the amount of housing will be determined, but it is difficult to determine what this might result in locally.
- Affordability is an important factor and is already addressed in the current process of identifying local housing need.

- Existing urban areas could be a factor, but there are circumstances where urban areas are constrained (e.g. historic environment)
- There is no mention of some factors that could constrain ability to deliver growth, such as infrastructure availability, resources availability e.g. water.

**Question 9a:**

Do you agree that there should be automatic permission for areas for substantial development (Growth areas) with faster routes for detailed consent? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Response to Question 9a:**

- No.
- The proposals would push work normally done during pre-app and PPAs into plan making process. In effect high level master planning would take place through the Local Plan evidence making process.
- This would have significant resource and cost implications for local authorities as some of the work that is currently done by developers would fall to local authorities. It would mean additional work to that currently done at the strategic plan making level, and yet the proposal is to speed up the plan making process.
- There could be higher risks, as it could mean there wasn't the ability to look at everything that you might through a planning application -for example information provided by developers through detailed site appraisals and technical assessments such as contaminated land. Potentially provides less flexibility for the development industry if bound by design codes, pattern books and masterplans through the plan making stage.
- Preparing multiple design codes would place a significant burden on LPA Planning resources to ensure they have the skill set and experience to produce design codes. Site specific design codes may require private sector funding (similar to a Planning Performance Agreement). Doing all this work at the plan making stage could actually slow down the development process.
- For large sites, much greater detail will first need to be agreed through the plan making process to ensure important environmental and infrastructure considerations are first considered and linked to the 'Permission in Principle' allocation. This process would complicate rather than streamline the allocation process.

**Question 9b:**

Do you agree with our proposals above for the consent arrangements for Renewal and Protected areas? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Response to Question 9b:**

- No, in the absence of further clarity.
- There is limited detail about how new systems would operate in rural areas. For example, the reference to 'small sites within or on the edge of villages' being identified as renewal areas (p29 of the White Paper) could make it difficult to plan for sustainable development of rural settlements. Also, difficult to see how rural exception sites would operate. Further consideration required on this point.
- Clarification also needed about what development could be permitted in protected areas such as conservation areas. This should some development appropriate in size/scale/form etc. Similar considerations would need to be provided in Green Belt areas.

**Question 9c:**

Do you think there is a case for allowing new settlements to be brought forward under the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Response to Question 9c:**

- No.
- It is important to maintain local engagement and decision-making on proposals which will create new communities, and the DCO process will not provide this.
- Such a change would appear to be at odds with proposals elsewhere in the paper on placemaking and to support engagement and participation.
- It is likely to take longer unless the DCO process is simplified.
- Development corporations could be a method of providing new settlements but it would need to ensure local democratic involvement with the process.
- Whichever mechanism is used, there is need to ensure local decision making and community engagement - both from existing communities and from within the new communities as they emerge and develop.

**Question 10:**

Do you agree with our proposals to make decision-making faster and more certain? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

### **Response to Question 10:**

- Agree with the principle of a simpler, streamlined process for development applications which will help provide a level of certainty for Applicants, Architects, Developers and the Local Authority.
- Significant time and financial investment in aligning systems and processes between the Local Authority and the Planning Portal will be required. Central government financial support likely to be required to cover this investment.
- Agree applications and submitted documentation should be fully accessible and machine readable. This information should be shared as open data.
- For major applications consideration should be given to submitted machine readable Building Information Models (BIM) to the Local Authority. This would not be realistic, nor sensible for smaller applications.
- Agree with use of open public planning data at a national scale to iteratively improve the planning process moving forwards.
- Agree on a digital template for planning notices, consideration should be given to those who do not have access to the internet to prevent exclusion from the application and comments system.
- Agree on the development of national data standards and templates for evidence.
- Agree on standard national planning conditions, however the Local Authority should have the right to alter these on a case by case basis if required, to reflect local circumstances.
- Enforcing statutory application time limits should not be introduced until after the proposed digital system has been in place and suitably tested.
- Disagree with the principle of an automatic rebate of the planning application fee if an Applicant is successful at appeal. They are paying to engage in a democratic process regardless of the outcome. Planning is also a subjective process and the LPA will normally act in a completely reasonable way in making a planning judgement/decision.
- Members of the public should retain the opportunity to comment on proposals – digital tools should provide opportunities for additional public engagement not less.
- Delegation of decision to officers where the principle has been established is likely to be a controversial element of the proposals
- Support will be needed for local communities to ensure they are able to take part in such a streamlined and digital process. It will also create challenges, for example related to their monthly meeting process.

### **Question 11:**

Do you agree with our proposals for digitised, web-based Local Plans? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Response to Question 11:**

- Yes, in principle but there are several issues to be considered further..
- There is great potential for a digital first approach, subject to detail.
- A web-based approach has the potential to manage the large amounts of data and present it to the user in a manner consistent with their level of expertise, allowing them to drill down into the detail as required.
- It is still important to remember that information needs to be accessible to all.
- Standardisation of the plan process is to be supported, provided it accounts of a variety of scenarios, for example a joint Local Plan between Authorities. A one size fits all approach is unlikely to allow for innovation and regional interdependencies.
- The principle of publicly accessible and open data is supported. Local Plan data should only be made available for third party commercial uses where the proposed software application is also made open source on a matching license – thereby allowing for greater change and innovation with the use of public data.
- Significant training and clear data standards will be required to align data output at a national scale.
- Significant financial investment will be required to move towards a digital first plan making process.
- To assist in achieving the proposed 30-month plan making timescale, consideration should also be given to the automation and digitisation of the collection of Local Plan evidence base information. This will ensure the evidence is always up to date.

**Question 12:**

Do you agree with our proposals for a 30 month statutory timescale for the production of Local Plans? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Response to Question 12:**

- No.
- Difficult to comment when the information, consultation and other requirements are not fully known at this stage.
- Could be very challenging for the first new style plan, as so many new principles will need to be established.
- Given specific time period are set out for elements of the process, the time remaining for actual plan making would appear very small compared to the scale of issues that would need to be addressed.

- Greater Cambridge has taken a strong approach to community engagement in preparation of the new Greater Cambridge Local Plan. There would appear to be less engagement opportunities through the proposed new system. There be less opportunity to work with the community to develop a spatial vision for the area.
- Time must be allowed for the implementation of the digital web-based solutions before the 30-month time limit is imposed.

**Question 13a:**

Do you agree that Neighbourhood Plans should be retained in the reformed planning system? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Response to Question 13a:**

- Yes.
- Neighbourhood planning allows local areas to respond to local issues. The new system should retain this approach, but it is not clear how this would operate within the new system proposed. It would seem the only local issue to consider is local design codes. If the Local Plan process/legislation is to be streamlined, then presumably the legislation and regulations for Neighbourhood Plans will also need to be streamlined and amended accordingly. Otherwise, this anomaly will create complexity rather than streamline the Local Plan making system.
- Many communities having put significant time in creating neighbourhood plans will be very disappointed if their role is significantly diminished.

**Question 13b:**

How can the neighbourhood planning process be developed to meet our objectives, such as in the use of digital tools and reflecting community preferences about design?

**Response to Question 13b:**

- Without support many communities unlikely to have the skills in the community to create digital plans and design codes, therefore neighbourhood plans will need more support from the LPA (or work in partnership, or will have to employ specialists to help). Funding will need to be provided to enable this support.



**Question 14:**

Do you agree there should be a stronger emphasis on the build out of developments? And if so, what further measures would you support? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Response to Question 14:**

- Yes.
- Greater Cambridge has a significant stock of sites with planning permission. It is incorrect to see the planning system as the primary constraint to delivery. There should be much greater focus in these proposals on ensuring delivery or assisting sites to be delivered, working with developers as well as local authorities. Also alternative delivery methods should be explored.
- Support this idea in principle, perhaps with a Clerk of Works type role for active monitoring of development (but this would need to be funded) – overall delivery but also quality too.
- More detail is required on the tools that will actually force developers to deliver.
- What about considering time limits for completion of development rather than just to start the development.
- Not clear how the standard method requirement would take account of issues in the local housing market, e.g. the number of homes that could actually be absorbed. Developers will not build faster than that rate.
- The White Paper suggests that it is the plan making process that is stifling delivery, even though there is evidence to demonstrate that developers are not delivering on planning permissions. Developers should play their part in delivery. Should there also be penalties in place for developers not delivering on sites?

**Pillar Two – Planning for beautiful and sustainable places****Question 15:**

What do you think about the design of new development that has happened recently in your area? [Not sure or indifferent / Beautiful and/or well-designed / Ugly and/or poorly-designed / There hasn't been any / Other – please specify]

**Response to Question 15:**

- A mixture of outcomes.
- In Greater Cambridge there are some well-designed places which are valued by local communities and/or recognised good practice on a national scale such as Accordia (RIBA Stirling Prize Winner), Clay Farm, Eddington, and Marmalade Lane at Orchard Park ( Cambridge's first co-housing scheme and

RTPI Jubilee cup winner 2020) that were led by communities right from the start.

- There is also emerging good practice in Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) on Phase 2 Northstowe where flexible housing modules that can be adapted to customer requirements, a form of large-scale custom build.
- But there are also many schemes which are not well thought out, do not address the Climate Emergency, and do little to advance design standards for mass development models.
- The White paper refers to popular design which is of concern. Greater Cambridge area has a hugely variable catalogue of new development design and it doesn't appeal to everyone on all levels. Contemporary, high-quality, sustainable design can be interpreted as 'boxy' 'boring' and 'not traditional' by some residents with different ideas of traditional, modern or vernacular aesthetics. Equally traditional designs are generally pastiche rather than authentic in their function use or detail.
- Landscape and sustainability have sometimes been a 'bolt on' rather than integrated.
- There is currently a disparity between the large strategic sites and smaller major and minor sites on how biodiversity net gain is designed into the layout. Large strategic sites have the benefit of size and available open space to create large biodiverse areas that not only provide a net gain in biodiversity but are also deeply embedded into the overall design and layout of the site adding to sense of place and design. However smaller sites (both major and minor) do not always have this benefit and therefore struggle to provide such features. Also the focus on short-term developer profit can be an issue. Without a clear steer from Government or royal assent of the Environment Bill currently sitting in-front of the house this will continue. The mandatory adoption of biodiversity net gain will ensure that all development (large and small) will incorporate such designs into their layout, thus enhancing landscaping and the sense of place within.

**Question 16:**

Sustainability is at the heart of our proposals. What is your priority for sustainability in your area? [Less reliance on cars / More green and open spaces / Energy efficiency of new buildings / More trees / Other – please specify]

**Response to Question 16:**

- Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council are jointly producing a Local Plan for Greater Cambridge. At the early stage of the plan making process four big themes have been identified:
  - Climate change – the plan will contribute to achieving net zero carbon, and the mitigation and adaptation measures that should be required through developments.

- Biodiversity and green spaces –the plan will contribute to our ‘doubling nature’ vision, the improvement of existing green spaces and the creation of more.
- Wellbeing and social inclusion – the plan will help spread the benefits of growth, helping to create healthy and inclusive communities.
- Great places –the plan will protect what is already great about the area, and design new developments to create special places and spaces
- It is key that these four big themes are also addressed comprehensively at the national level.
- Ensuring that planning maximises its role in responding to the climate and biodiversity emergency and supports net zero carbon is a key priority for the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service. At the heart of planning is its role in placemaking and shaping places so that people can more easily make the transition to a zero carbon society.
- Planning has a critical role to play in influencing the efficiency of buildings – it is only planning that can take account of local viability and promote a design led approach to reducing the energy demands of buildings and climate resilience such as mitigating the risk of overheating. Delivering net zero carbon needs to be a fundamental aspect of planning for beautiful and sustainable places that all disciplines within the built environment can play a role in delivering.
- It is also important that places are designed for walking, cycling and public transport in order to make active travel the natural and obvious choice, and there should be an emphasis the delivery of inclusive, mixed use development not simply a the focus on housing.
- Investment in green infrastructure is critical with useable open space, sufficient land for biodiversity net gain and green streets with trees to provide shade and temperature mitigation.
- The Councils urge the strengthening of standards via Building Regulations, as set out in their responses earlier this year to the Future Homes Standard consultation.
- The Councils are working with consultants (Bioregional) to develop Greater Cambridge's approach to delivering net zero carbon in the built environment and would welcome the opportunity to share the findings of this work with Government to help inform future national policy and possible pilot projects.

**Question 17:**

Do you agree with our proposals for improving the production and use of design guides and codes? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Response to Question 17:**

- Support, if the in-principle approach to allocating development sites is brought forward.

- Codes can help the quality of development and they provide certainty for developers.
- Design Codes, that seeks to illustrate visual rules on what is and isn't acceptable is a good tool to guide development. However, they need to be seen as part of a process of development management.
- They still require design skills in both the development team and the planning authority.
- Codes need to be at a local enough level. e.g. a single code for all of South Cambridgeshire or Cambridge City would not be sufficient to address local character and could end up being so high level that it is of little value.
- Conservation area appraisals and/or village design statements may be a useful springboard for local design guides and codes.
- Putting them in place is resource intensive and requires strong enforcement.
- Potentially a significant financial cost in producing these guides for different areas of the districts. If this is part of the plan making system this would create significant additional costs for Local Planning Authorities. It is not clear how this is reconciled with the reduced income such a system could bring.
- How do you create a design code that is machine readable?
- The white paper suggests bringing forward codes that consider empirical evidence of what is popular and characteristic in the local area. The term 'popular' is highly subjective, designed by democratic vote and does not always provide the right results. Leadership and developing consensus is key in providing a design response that responds to the existing character/context.

#### **Question 18:**

Do you agree that we should establish a new body to support design coding and building better places, and that each authority should have a chief officer for design and place-making? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

#### **Response to Question 18:**

- Yes.
- It is useful to have a voice for design which is co-ordinated centrally but is locally driven where skills/talent and expertise is developed is good for the regions/nation.
- Need to ensure it adds value and is grounded in the reality of the planning system.
- The principle for provision of support for design coding/masterplanning and delivery is a good one. However, these need to be used efficiently and effectively to areas with the most need/lack of skills and which face growth pressures.

- Some authorities are also well skilled to offer these resources/services to others in a similar position and a network of options should be considered.
- Some mechanism for policing standards is introduced and has the teeth to rapidly impose hefty fines or some other sanctions to dissuade those developers that would cut corners in the name of profit.

**Question 19:**

Do you agree with our proposal to consider how design might be given greater emphasis in the strategic objectives for Homes England? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Response to Question 19:**

- Yes.
- As the Government's delivery vehicle for housing and infrastructure, Homes England should be at the forefront of high quality design. It has the power to do this because it is such a significant landowner that it can compel volume housebuilders to up their game in this respect.
- It would be helpful to see how through its procurement it could allow for more diverse and smaller design teams/ builders to enter into market to bid for some of their sites/frameworks?
- Design should not simply equate to aesthetics or function, but also whether a build is fit for purpose in helping to address the Climate Emergency through the use of new methods, and materials for homebuilding.
- Homes England's strategic objectives must also include responding to the climate emergency and delivering net zero carbon by 2030 as an integral part of delivering high quality design.
- Home England's strategic objectives should include a commitment to biodiversity net gain and provision of ecological enhancements such as nesting and roosting boxes within every dwelling/structure built
- Long term value should be accounted for in the procurement process rather than short term profit. It should emphasise stewardship, management and maintenance as well as design.

**Question 20:**

Do you agree with our proposals for implementing a fast-track for beauty? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

### Response to Question 20:

- No, this requires more careful consideration in our view. This section of the consultation raises lots of uncertainties. For example:
  - Who decides if the scheme is compliant with these things and therefore goes along the fast track?
  - What if views diverge between the Council and the community?
  - How do you define “proven popular designs”?
- There is already a precedent for this in principle working with developers which have good pre-app engagement with the local community, local authority, have good skills are responsive to comments. They go faster through the planning system.
- However there needs to be checks and balances in any deregulation proposed in this process. How do you control the quality of build product? ‘Assemble the component of parts’; especially effects the volume housebuilding industry: evolved and agreed new pattern book developed in accordance with a prescribed code, perhaps? Needs skills/expertise and checks. Who decides on the quality is acceptable? The authority has quite advanced sites and design codes in place and could be a test bed to pilot some of these ideas on its strategic sites? Perhaps need to look at what a detail does a design code need to add to make it more robust for an automatic approval, if it is complied to, based on European Dutch housing models Almere, Amsterdam etc?
- The use of a ‘pattern book’ for permitted development should not lessen any form of diversity of design or innovations in sustainability. It could result in standardisation rather than providing the innovation which is desperately needed to tackle the climate change and biodiversity decline.
- If a housing developer sells a lot of their standard house types, you could argue that this is a proven popular design, but that doesn’t necessarily mean it’s good design. The definition is for high-quality, beautiful design could be misinterpreted and abused. Using ‘replicable and popular’ development types does not always mean high-quality design for example some post war council housing. It needs to be sensitive to the context, constraints and needs of modern lifestyles.

### Pillar Three – Planning for infrastructure and connected places

#### Question 21:

When new development happens in your area, what is your priority for what comes with it? [More affordable housing / More or better infrastructure (such as transport, schools, health provision) / Design of new buildings / More shops and/or employment space / Green space / Don’t know / Other – please specify]

**Response to Question 21:**

- Clearly the response to this question will depend on local issues. There are many important issues in Greater Cambridge.
- Delivery of affordable housing is a key issue in Greater Cambridge.
- Environmentally sensitive development supporting climate change mitigation measures and providing high-quality places where people want to live.
- Infrastructure needs to be delivered in a timely manner to support growth, especially transport improvements to reduce traffic congestion and support more sustainable means of transport.
- Supporting the local economy.
- It is notable that digital infrastructure is not referenced, given its importance in reducing the need to travel.

**Question 22a:**

Should the Government replace the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 planning obligations with a new consolidated Infrastructure Levy, which is charged as a fixed proportion of development value above a set threshold? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Response to Question 22a:**

- Yes in principle. However, the complexity of this should not be underestimated.
- It is agreed that the current use of Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 planning obligations are not fit for purpose and that, in principle, they should be replaced with a new system where the contribution is charged as a fixed proportion of development value that is invested in new infrastructure and public services.
- It is understood that the proposal is for the introduction of an Infrastructure Levy that will be based on an assessment on the final uplift value achieved for each scheme thereby ensuring fairness within and across the market. Whilst the principle of this approach is supported there are fundamental questions relating to its practical operation including:
  - What percentage of development value uplift is proposed being secured as an Infrastructure Levy contribution?
  - At what point would the assessment to calculate the quantum of Infrastructure Levy take place?
  - Who would fund the assessment?
  - What information would inform the assessment?
  - Would there be dispute mechanism for parties to challenge the outcome of the assessment?

- How would the Infrastructure Levy remain reflective of changes in market conditions?
- What are the intended triggers for the Infrastructure Levy payment?
- Who is liable for the individual Infrastructure Levy payment?
- How would on or offsite infrastructure that is required be reflected in the Infrastructure Levy charge?
- If section 106 agreements are withdrawn entirely what mechanism will exist to (a) restricting the development or use of the land in any specified way; (b) requiring specified operations or activities to be carried out in, on, under or over the land; (c) requiring the land to be used in any specified way, i.e. the other basic functions of planning obligations?
- How would you ensure delivery of infrastructure was phased in conjunction with build out of the development which S106 agreements currently secure and are enforceable

**Question 22b:**

Should the Infrastructure Levy rates be set nationally at a single rate, set nationally at an area-specific rate or set locally? [Nationally at a single rate / Nationally at an area-specific rate / Locally]

**Response to Question 22b:**

- Yes, there is a strong case that a national rate should be set in relation to the Infrastructure Levy.
- The Infrastructure Levy is described as a value-based charge across all use classes, incorporating a value-based minimum threshold below which the levy is not charged
- The Infrastructure Levy should be constructed as a simple percentage of the land value increase that is derived from the grant of planning permission irrespective of geographical area. Such an approach would ensure that the development proposals that achieve the greatest uplift in value will make the greatest contribution. This would bring the Infrastructure Levy in-line with other forms of national tax and similar to the Stamp Duty Land Tax. Furthermore, as with the SDLT, the Government could consider having 2 or more thresholds where the Infrastructure Levy payable increases depending on the uplift value that is derived (i.e. 35% of uplift for the first £1m uplift value achieved and 50% of the uplift where the uplift exceeds £1m). Such rates would be capable of being kept under review and subject to changes or (again in the case of SDLT) a short-term holiday to incentivise development in response to market conditions.



- As a replacement for all other forms of planning gain the Infrastructure Levy should be mandatory rather than at the discretion of Local Planning Authorities.

**Question 22c:**

Should the Infrastructure Levy aim to capture the same amount of value overall, or more value, to support greater investment in infrastructure, affordable housing and local communities? [Same amount overall / More value / Less value / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Response to Question 22c:**

- More value.
- The Infrastructure Levy should aim to capture more value overall to support greater investment in infrastructure, affordable housing and local communities.
- A revolutionary approach to land value capture through an Infrastructure Levy provides the nation with an opportunity to consider the impact of all new development on a regional or even national level. Whereas section 106 planning obligations and to a certain extent CIL are only ever capable of addressing the more immediate and direct consequence of development, an Infrastructure Levy could be used to lever in more funding to help fund the delivery of strategic regional infrastructure including East West rail, the new Cambourne to St Neots A428 or the new train station at Waterbeach. Importantly all new developments would be liable to pay the Infrastructure Levy (if the land value increases sufficiently above the first threshold). It is not the case that more value captured nationally would render any particular form of development unviable, it is simply that the pool of those contributing would increase.
- Government should look to maximise this potential revenue source and in doing so consider whether an element of local receipts should be pooled nationally.

**Question 22d:**

Should we allow local authorities to borrow against the Infrastructure Levy, to support infrastructure delivery in their area? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Response to Question 22d:**

- Yes.
- If the system is implemented Local authorities should be permitted to borrow against the Infrastructure Levy, to support infrastructure delivery in their area ahead of Infrastructure Levy receipts from being received.
- Energy infrastructure is a particular issue in Greater Cambridge, and can lead to delays in bringing forward development if significant upgrades are required. District Network Operators are unable to bring forward such infrastructure ahead of need due to the risk of stranded assets, so the ability for local authorities to forward fund some of this infrastructure could help unlock development more quickly.

**Question 23:**

Do you agree that the scope of the reformed Infrastructure Levy should capture changes of use through permitted development rights? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Response to Question 23:**

- Yes.
- The scope of the reformed Infrastructure Levy should capture changes of use through permitted development rights.
- Permitted development rights enables the conversion of an existing building to that of residential use. Plainly in such circumstances there are consequences of the development that requires direct mitigation (i.e. capacity at the school will need increasing) where currently the cost is borne by the taxpayer. Perhaps more importantly a significant uplift in land value is derived from the change of use being permitted which is not currently being captured by the Government resulting in a disproportionate cost to the funding of infrastructure being borne by non-permitted developments.

**Question 24a:**

Do you agree that we should aim to secure at least the same amount of affordable housing under the Infrastructure Levy, and as much on-site affordable provision, as at present? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Response to Question 24a:**

- Yes.

- Government should aim to secure at least the same amount of affordable housing under the Infrastructure Levy, and as much on-site affordable provision, as at present. To do otherwise would do nothing to help deal with the housing affordability crises, particularly in areas such as Greater Cambridge.

**Question 24b:**

Should affordable housing be secured as in-kind payment towards the Infrastructure Levy, or as a 'right to purchase' at discounted rates for local authorities? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Response to Question 24b:**

- Yes, affordable housing should be secured as an in-kind payment towards the Infrastructure Levy.
- The proposals for the delivery of affordable are that the cost, that is associated with the provision of in-kind affordable housing, simply be deducted from the Infrastructure Levy contribution.
- As an alternative approach the Infrastructure Levy would assume a full market proposal and the local authority would either elect to use the Levy to purchase units on 'first refusal' basis.
- Whilst it is our view that affordable housing should be secured as in-kind payment towards the Infrastructure Levy, however it should be within the gift of the local authority to introduce (through the development plan) a/the alternate approach where the route is determined on a case by case basis or where a development plan has established a threshold above which in-kind provision will operate.
- As a broad-brush approach in-kind provision of affordable housing, where the cost of providing those affordable dwellings is recognised in the value uplift calculation, would provide the most certainty to the development industry.
- However, there are exceptional instances where either affordable housing is best provided for as an offsite contribution (I.e. where the development is for a barn conversion which, due to high maintenance costs, may not be appropriate for affordable housing) or where the local authority seeks to maximise the Infrastructure Levy in order to fund specific infrastructure that (for local reasons) takes greater priority than affordable housing. In those circumstances the local authority should be able to elect, prior to the grant of planning permission, that affordable housing requirements are met through a greater Infrastructure Levy payment.
- Additionally the in-kind model for affordable housing guarantees that the cost of affordable housing is always borne first, whereas through section 106 agreements a decision taker has the flexibility to apportion the cost associated

with planning obligations (i.e. affordable housing, onsite infrastructure, offsite contributions) as they see fit having regard to site specific circumstance.

**Question 24c:**

If an in-kind delivery approach is taken, should we mitigate against local authority overpayment risk? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Response to Question 24c:**

- Yes. the Local Authority should be mitigated against risk but this should not be at the expense of delivery of affordable housing.
- One of the key priorities for Grater Cambridge is maximising the delivery of affordable housing to meet identified needs. So, it will be very important that a new system did not undermine that and result in a loss of affordable housing provision.

**Question 24d:**

If an in-kind delivery approach is taken, are there additional steps that would need to be taken to support affordable housing quality? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Response to Question 24d:**

- Yes.
- Para 4.22 of the White Paper proposes that local authorities would work with a 'nominated' affordable housing provider. It is unclear from this statement as to who would nominate the affordable housing provider. The local authority would be best placed to select the affordable housing provider to ensure quality of housing management and would welcome greater control over this. There would need to be further detail as to how this would work in practice.
- Para 4.24 of the White Paper would seem to be contradictory to the objectives of the White Paper, to provide good quality, well designed, beautiful places to live. If this is the case, why would there need to be an option to revert back to cash contributions if no provider was willing to buy the homes due to their poor quality?
- Para 4.24 also suggests that local authorities could accept infrastructure levy receipts in the form of land within or adjacent to a site. Whilst the provision of land within the development would be an acceptable form to provide the affordable housing, and would allow local authorities, working with housing providers, to provide a more bespoke offer for the affordable housing, we would be concerned in terms of segregation of the affordable housing to less

attractive locations within a development. This could add to the stigmatisation of affordable housing which is in direct contravention to the Social Housing Green Paper.

**Question 25:**

Should local authorities have fewer restrictions over how they spend the Infrastructure Levy? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Response to Question 25:**

- Yes.
- Local authorities should have fewer restrictions over how they spend the Infrastructure Levy. Whilst it may be desirable for a proportion of the Infrastructure Levy to be ring fenced for the provision of Affordable Housing, the local authority should have absolute discretion as to how it should invest in infrastructure to mitigate the impact of new development but also to improve the environment and quality of life for existing residents (not always achieved through the provision of infrastructure).
- There is a strong link between where development occurs and where funding should be directed in the first instance, especially as this often provides an incentive to local communities to allow development in their area. The proposal for a Neighbourhood Share of the Infrastructure Levy to be retained within the locality of the development the spending of which would be administered by a Parish Council or appropriate Neighbourhood Forum is supported.

**Question 25a:**

If yes, should an affordable housing 'ring-fence' be developed? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Response to Question 25a:**

- Yes. Affordable housing should be ring fenced in some way to ensure that contributions received under the Infrastructure Levy are not misappropriated by the local authority during periods where there may be other pressures.

## What happens next?

### **Question 26:**

Do you have any views on the potential impact of the proposals raised in this consultation on people with protected characteristics as defined in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010?

### **Response to Question 26:**

- No response proposed.

## Appendix 2 Changes to the current planning system - Draft Response

### Changes to the Standard method

#### Question 1:

Do you agree that planning practice guidance should be amended to specify that the appropriate baseline for the standard method is *whichever is the higher of* the level of 0.5% of housing stock in each local authority area OR the latest household projections averaged over a 10-year period?

#### Question 2:

In the stock element of the baseline, do you agree that 0.5% of existing stock for the standard method is appropriate? If not, please explain why.

#### Question 3:

Do you agree that using the workplace-based median house price to median earnings ratio from the most recent year for which data is available to adjust the standard method's baseline is appropriate? If not, please explain why.

#### Question 4:

Do you agree that incorporating an adjustment for the change of affordability over 10 years is a positive way to look at whether affordability has improved? If not, please explain why.

#### Question 5:

Do you agree that affordability is given an appropriate weighting within the standard method? If not, please explain why.

#### Response to Questions 1 to 5

We support the principles on which the proposed changes to the Standard Method are set, including:

- Being more agile in using up to date data – noting that the latest household projections provide the most robust estimates of future growth
- Increased stability - relating to incorporating housing stock into the potential baseline
- Achieving a better distribution of homes where homes are identified in more high-demand areas, by placing greater weight within the standard method calculation on affordability, including incorporating trends over time.

Notwithstanding the above, we note that there remains a tension between the understandable aims of agility of using up to date data and of increased stability. For areas where household projections form the baseline in particular, there will still be volatility as new data is published.

Further to the above, we note that the supporting policy is not the subject of this consultation, and that as such, this standard method provides the starting point and not the final housing requirement. We consider that the detail of this supporting policy will be critical in understanding whether the proposed changes achieve their intended aims.

### **Questions 6 and 7**

Do you agree that authorities should be planning having regard to their revised standard method need figure, from the publication date of the revised guidance, with the exception of:

Authorities which are already at the second stage of the strategic plan consultation process (Regulation 19), which should be given 6 months to submit their plan to the Planning Inspectorate for examination?

Authorities close to publishing their second stage consultation (Regulation 19), which should be given 3 months from the publication date of the revised guidance to publish their Regulation 19 plan, and a further 6 months to submit their plan to the Planning Inspectorate? If not, please explain why. Are there particular circumstances which need to be catered for?

### **Response to Questions 6 and 7**

This circumstance does not apply to Greater Cambridge, but clearly appropriate transition arrangements should be in place.

## **Setting developer contributions for First Homes**

### **Question 8:**

The Government is proposing policy compliant planning applications will deliver a minimum of 25% of onsite affordable housing as First Homes, and a minimum of 25% of offsite contributions towards First Homes where appropriate. Which do you think is the most appropriate option for the remaining 75% of affordable housing secured through developer contributions? Please provide reasons and / or evidence for your views (if possible):



- i) Prioritising the replacement of affordable home ownership tenures, and delivering rental tenures in the ratio set out in the local plan policy.
- ii) Negotiation between a local authority and developer.
- iii) Other (please specify)

### **Response to Question 8**

iii. other.

The Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council are extremely concerned about these proposals. The proposals would reduce Councils' ability to direct affordable homes to the products that are most needed locally. This will impact directly on those most in need of affordable accommodation.

In terms of the options proposed, the remaining 75% affordable tenure should be set by the Local Planning Authority based on identified housing need and not left open for negotiation with the Developer. Local Housing Authorities have a duty to house those that are homeless or facing homelessness and it is highly unlikely that these households would be able to afford or could access a mortgage for a First Home. Therefore it is essential that the LPA can plan appropriately to accommodate the wider housing needs, not just those wanting to purchase a home.

We do have major concerns about implementing a set target for First Homes. The requirement for 25% of affordable housing to be First Homes would knock out any other intermediate tenures under the City Council's 75/25 social/affordable rent v intermediate policy and South Cambs at 70/30. We should be moving towards a better mix of intermediate tenure types to meet a wider range of needs, but would be unable to do this unless the social/affordable rent percentage was reduced. However, needs analysis shows that the greatest priority for both Councils is the provision of affordable rented/social rented homes. Reducing social/affordable rent would impact on the over 3,000 applicants on Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire housing registers, the vast majority of whom would be unable to afford to buy First Homes.

Replacing shared ownership with First Homes would also affect providers' ability to deliver social/affordable rent, as shared ownership is often used as cross-subsidy. Additional grant would need to be available to make up for the shortfall. To ensure that sites are viable to develop a high proportion of affordable rented/social rented homes, alongside First Homes, it is essential that the Affordable Housing Programme is overhauled to ensure appropriate grant funding is given to the delivery of this tenure.

We are also concerned to note from the government response to the First Homes consultation, that it is likely to be the LPA who will oversee the allocations of First Homes. This would place a huge burden on the LPA, who do not have the resources in place to deal with this. Consideration should be given to using the Help to Buy Agents to run this model alongside other intermediate products. It would therefore make a one-stop shop which is simple for both customer and utilises the expertise already in that sector.

What would be the fallback if First Homes did not attract sufficient demand for the properties? We would want to see that these are swapped to Affordable Rent/Social Rent where we know the demand lies.

**Question 9:**

Should the existing exemptions from the requirement for affordable home ownership products (e.g. for build to rent) also apply to apply to this First Homes requirement?

**Response to Question 9:**

Yes we agree that the existing exemptions from the requirement for affordable home ownership products should also apply to First Homes. We cannot see how you could provide First Homes as part of an overall Build to Rent Scheme. This would impact on the model which is to provide Affordable Private Rent. There are also management and service charge issues where tenures are mixed within apartment blocks, which is likely to be the general form of a Build to Rent Scheme.

**Question 10:**

Are any existing exemptions not required? If not, please set out which exemptions and why.

**Response to Question 10:**

No. They are all required.

**Question 11:**

Are any other exemptions needed? If so, please provide reasons and /or evidence for your views.

**Response to Question 11:**

Yes. The 25% minimum provision proposed should not be applicable to rural exception sites, which should be based on identified housing need for the locality. This may include an element of First Homes if the evidence suggests that there is a need for this form of tenure but it should not be prescriptive.

**Question 12:**

Do you agree with the proposed approach to transitional arrangements?

**Response to Question 12:**

No.

Some flexibility on applications already being processed is clearly helpful.

There appears to be an assumption that First Homes could just replace the alternative home-ownership products. However, this is not the case, as shared ownership helps to cross-subsidise the Affordable Rent and therefore without shared ownership this will affect the viability of the Affordable Rented.

Given the time and resources needed for Local Plan reviews, the transition solution proposed to simply update policies would not allow a quick change to resolve potentially significant issues.

**Question 13:**

Do you agree with the proposed approach to different levels of discount?

**Response to Question 13:**

Yes, local authorities needs some flexibility over discount levels based on local affordability.

However, it is likely that if a higher discount is sought due to affordability issues and a minimum of 25% of First Homes is still required, it is likely that this will be to the detriment of the provision of Affordable Rented/Social Rented homes due to viability of providing a higher discounted First Homes.

**Question 14:**

Do you agree with the approach of allowing a small proportion of market housing on First Homes exception sites, in order to ensure site viability?

**Response to Question 14:**

We are pleased to see the inclusion of other tenure types to be considered within an entry level exception site, as well as a proportion of market homes to help with viability. However, we have concerns that this provision of a First Homes led development is likely in itself to only increase the land values for that development and with the ability to provide market homes as well will only incentive landowners to seek higher prices. It would be helpful if government could apply a land value, perhaps proportion to the value of the scheme based on an all First Homes development, with the ability to provide market homes to cross subsidise some Affordable Rents. First Homes will attract much higher land values than the typical rural exception site. It is therefore likely that rural exception sites will no longer come forward.

**Question 15:**

Do you agree with the removal of the site size threshold set out in the National Planning Policy Framework?

**Response to Question 15:**

Yes. The site size threshold as a percentage of the overall existing settlement was always difficult to quantify and therefore we welcome that schemes should be considered in the context of being proportionate in size to the existing settlement

**Question 16:**

Do you agree that the First Homes exception sites policy should not apply in designated rural areas?

**Response to Question 16:**

No. We do not agree that rural exception sites should only be allowed within designated rural areas. This is not a condition within the NPPF and many rural areas that are not designated have been successful in providing much needed affordable housing for local people. Whilst the inclusion of entry level exception site schemes is likely to impact on the number of rural exception sites coming forward, we would still like the option to deliver rural exception sites based on local need where there is a willing and philanthropic landowner. The removal of rural exception

sites will also impact on the ability to bring forward community-led development, which the government have promoted over the last few years.

If government intend to remove the ability to deliver rural exception sites unless it is a Rural Designated Area – what comfort can be given that the government would be open to consider new areas for designation as rural areas.

## **Supporting small and medium-sized developers**

### **Question 17:**

Do you agree with the proposed approach to raise the small sites threshold for a time-limited period?

### **Response to Question 17:**

No.

Increasing the threshold, even for a temporary period, is not supported. Again, it will reduce the Councils ability to deliver affordable housing in an area where there is a high level of need.

Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council have major concerns with proposal to increase threshold. There are high levels of need for social/affordable rent with around 3,100 applicants on Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire housing registers.

Raising the threshold would appear to conflict with the Planning White Paper desire to maintain/increase current delivery of affordable housing.

There is reference to planning guidance including measures to prevent sites being broken up to stay under the threshold. Without detail of how this could be applied, the Councils remain concerned that this issue could arise given the significant impact of being either side of the threshold.

There are 1,100 dwellings anticipated on sites with planning permission or allocations on sites of 10-50 dwellings in the current Greater Cambridge housing trajectory, all of which would be required by policy to deliver affordable housing. A change in threshold would mean any sites gaining planning permission in the period covered would not contribute. Impact could be even greater given the potential for applicants to seek to revise or seek new consents which would remove their requirement to deliver affordable homes.

South Cambridgeshire District is a rural settlement with over 100 villages. For many villages, affordable housing can only be delivered either through a rural exception site or through S.106 Agreements. As the majority of our villages are small, they are unlikely to take developments of more than 50 units. This in effect means that many of our villages will not be able to deliver affordable housing while the raised threshold is in place. This will have a significant impact on the sustainability of the future of our villages, to ensure affordable homes of all tenures can be delivered.

For example, from planning permissions granted in South Cambridgeshire in 2019/20, the Council would lose a third of the affordable homes that would be provided.

**Question 18:**

What is the appropriate level of small sites threshold?

- i i) Up to 40 homes
- ii ii) Up to 50 homes
- iii) Other (please specify)

**Response to Question 18:**

iii. In Greater Cambridge experience suggests that the threshold of 10 units has not been a deterrent to developers building homes, or that viability is impacted. We cannot understand the rationale, therefore, for this proposal, especially at a time when government say they want to increase the delivery of affordable housing. We therefore would want to see the threshold of 10 units or more remain.

**Question 19:**

Do you agree with the proposed approach to the site size threshold?

**Response to Question 19:**

In terms of a time limit, Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council have serious concerns of the implications that such a short-term measure would bring. Current planning applications approved for schemes under 50 units are likely to be resubmitted to avoid the affordable housing contribution. This is likely to impact on the projected housing delivery supply and could have severe implications on the Council's five year land supply.

**Question 20:**

Do you agree with linking the time-limited period to economic recovery and raising the threshold for an initial period of 18 months?

**Response to Question 20:**

No. This proposal would give uncertainty to the time period, and could result in it being extended. The impact on affordable housing delivery could therefore be extended further, increasing the impact on those most in housing need.

**Question 21:**

Do you agree with the proposed approach to minimising threshold effects?

**Response to Question 21:**

We already take into account cumulative development on sites to count towards the affordable housing contribution, but would welcome further guidance on this to avoid challenges. However, we do not believe the threshold should change from the current level.

**Question 22:**

Do you agree with the Government's proposed approach to setting thresholds in rural areas?

**Response to Question 22:**

No. Impact on affordable housing delivery will be significant on rural areas where they are not designated rural areas.

By increasing the threshold to 40 or 50 units will mean the death of affordable housing for many of our small villages. In order to deliver a sustainable development strategy the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan restricts the scheme size in small villages to below this threshold. This would mean that no new affordable housing would come though whilst the raised thresholds was in place.

Schemes below the proposed threshold are viable. Evidence that informed the local plan showed that thresholds below 10 were viable. Delivery of affordable housing on smaller sites has made a significant contribution to the sustainability of our communities.

The additional implication of removing the ability to deliver rural exception sites will also impact on being able to provide affordable rented/social rented homes where it is most needed.

**Question 23:**

Are there any other ways in which the Government can support SME builders to deliver new homes during the economic recovery period?

**Response to Question 23:**

Yes. If the proposal is to support SME builders to deliver new homes during economic recovery, perhaps government could look at implementing a threshold dependent on the size and profit of the SME builder. Whilst we would want to support local builders, we do not feel that one size fits all in terms of setting a different threshold.

Funding for SMEs to help deliver affordable homes would ensure that the support is given to those that need it but not at the expense of delivering affordable housing.

## **Extension of the Permission in Principle consent regime**

**Question 24:**

Do you agree that the new Permission in Principle should remove the restriction on major development?

**Response to Question 24:**

No. The proposals would result in a significant scale of site to go through this process. There are many issues of technical detail that would not be explored until after the development principle has been established. Whilst the risk on small sites may be low, at this development scale those issues could be more significant.

**Question 25:**

Should the new Permission in Principle for major development set any limit on the amount of commercial development (providing housing still occupies the majority of the floorspace of the overall scheme)? Please provide any comments in support of your views.



**Response to Question 25:**

Yes, a threshold should be set if the permission in principle route is to apply to “housing led” schemes. This is even more the case now that many of the previous use classes have now been merged to create a more flexible approach to change of use. This has the potential to result in issues of “bad neighbours” within a single mixed use site and so this potential should be limited to try to mitigate this risk. A limit would also be informative when deciding what the word “majority” means, as set out in the question above.

**Question 26:**

Do you agree with our proposal that information requirements for Permission in Principle by application for major development should broadly remain unchanged? If you disagree, what changes would you suggest and why?

**Response to Question 26:**

No. The timescales proposed for receiving and processing comments for such large schemes are extremely short. This would impact on the ability of communities to engage in the planning process, where such sites could have significant impact on their communities, and particularly given the limited range of issues that can be considered under this process.

Such a limited provision of information for potentially such large sites also means that there is the potential for in principle decisions to be uninformed of potentially constraining factors, such as contamination and other environmental factors.

The timeframe for determining such applications also does not take account of the time it can take statutory consultees such as the Environment Agency and others to respond.

**Question 27:**

Should there be an additional height parameter for Permission in Principle? Please provide comments in support of your views.

**Response to Question 27:**

The acceptable height of a scheme is driven by site context and design quality. This is not something that should be arbitrarily determined on a nationwide basis. Again, this is particularly the case when considering larger sites.

**Question 28:**

Do you agree that publicity arrangements for Permission in Principle by application should be extended for large developments? If so, should local planning authorities be:

- i) required to publish a notice in a local newspaper?
- ii) subject to a general requirement to publicise the application or
- iii) both?
- iv) disagree

If you disagree, please state your reasons.

**Response to Question 28:**

iii. Both should apply, however given the very short timescales involved in determining these applications, newspaper adverts may not always achieve the aim as effectively. Further, there is likely to be an accusation of pushing through major proposals without having sufficient time to engage with the local community. In turn this could build resentment towards the scheme and planning more generally

**Question 29:**

Do you agree with our proposal for a banded fee structure based on a flat fee per hectare, with a maximum fee cap?

**Question 30:**

What level of flat fee do you consider appropriate, and why?

**Response to Questions 29 and 30:**

A banded fee structure is potentially a fairer way to approach this, however it is still likely to result in reduced fees for local planning authorities at a time when existing fees often don't cover the costs of processing such applications.

Determination of an appropriate flat fee should be based on a realistic understanding of local costs involved in processing the application. This is likely to vary between local authority areas and so suggesting a blanket flat fee is not possible.

**Question 31:**

Do you agree that any brownfield site that is granted Permission in Principle through the application process should be included in Part 2 of the Brownfield Land Register? If you disagree, please state why.

**Response to Question 31:**

If proposals in this consultation are taken forward, then sites could be included in the part 2 of the register, as this would in effect simply be listing permissions in principle already established.

**Question 32:**

What guidance would help support applicants and local planning authorities to make decisions about Permission in Principle? Where possible, please set out any areas of guidance you consider are currently lacking and would assist stakeholders.

**Response to Question 32:**

The government should take advice from the development industry as to why the permission in principle route has been unpopular up to now. Anecdotal evidence would suggest that many developers want to have a greater degree of certainty around complex technical issues earlier in the process in order that they can properly plan their development and not be pushing complex issues back. Whether there is guidance that could be produced to give applicants more comfort in this area is probably best addressed in responses from applicants and developers.

**Question 33:**

What costs and benefits do you envisage the proposed scheme would cause? Where you have identified drawbacks, how might these be overcome?

**Question 34:**

To what extent do you consider landowners and developers are likely to use the proposed measure? Please provide evidence where possible.

**Response to Questions 33 and 34**

Enabling major developments to receive permission in principle and then the subsequent technical consent could have implications for a Council's five year supply. The definition of a deliverable site refers to sites with detailed planning permission being considered deliverable until the permission expires – it is not clear whether this encompasses technical details consent following on from a permission

in principle. The definition of deliverable only refers to permission in principle in part b of the definition.

If major developments are able to be brought forward via permission in principle and technical consent details, and the definition of deliverable remains as currently, there will be uncertainty as to where these sites with technical details consent fall in the definition of deliverable, therefore causing uncertainty for Councils when preparing and defending their five year supply.

Local evidence would suggest that there have been few such applications for permission in principle under the existing process. If it has not been appealing on the smaller scale applications, then it is uncertain as to whether it will appeal for larger applications. Further, in an area such as Greater Cambridge, where land and development values are high, it is again anticipated that many developers would prefer the certainty and detail of a full planning application rather than this in principle approach.

## **Public Sector Equality Duty**

### **Question 35:**

In light of the proposals set out in this consultation, are there any direct or indirect impacts in terms of eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations on people who share characteristics protected under the Public Sector Equality Duty?

If so, please specify the proposal and explain the impact. If there is an impact – are there any actions which the department could take to mitigate that impact?

### **Response to Question 35**

No response proposed.



## Item

### **Review of Pre-application Charging Schemes and Update on Pre-application Service**

**To:**

Rep To

Planning and Transport Committee    29 September 2020

**Report by:**

Stephen Kelly

Email: [Stephen.Kelly@greatercambridgeplanning.org](mailto:Stephen.Kelly@greatercambridgeplanning.org)

Tel: 07711 918993

**Wards affected:**

All

## **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 Pre application advice is an important and valued, if discretionary, service provided by the Shared Planning Service. Good pre-application advice can help to ensure that the objectives of the Council to deliver high quality development are achieved, effectively and efficiently to the benefit of the area as a whole and to users to the service. The existing arrangements for pre-application advice in the City and SCDC operate to a different format, and with different charges. Feedback on the current service provided has been mixed.
- 1.2 For that reason, the Shared Planning Service committed to review and integrate its process for providing pre-application advice in its 2020/2021 Business Plan. Having begun that process earlier in the year, this report seeks approval for the proposed future arrangements for (including charges) for pre-application advice. This service offer will then sit alongside the statutory planning application process (where fees and process are determined nationally) and which is unaffected by these proposals.

- 1.3 The new arrangements outlined, bring together the two separate advice offers into a new single process, operating across the City and SCDC areas, to a common charging regime. The service offer has been developed through engagement with local architects and agents (to determine what they and their clients require and value) and has been accompanied by extensive work across both Councils to establish the cost of delivering such services - to ensure that these can be delivered within the available resources of the Councils. The new “service offer” will also be accompanied by new booking arrangements and information online. In recognition of the discretionary nature of the service, and to encourage users to engage with the service, in some cases, the fees proposed do not represent the full cost of delivery. This is particularly the case where the service wants to support householders undertaking projects, and small businesses with advice.
- 1.4 This proposal is also due to be considered by the Cabinet of South Cambridgeshire District Council at their meeting in October.

## 2. Recommendations

a) That the Committee recommend to the Portfolio Holder for Planning to agree the proposals for CCC/SCDC to introduce the revised pre-application service offer and charging schedule set out in this report for the Cambridge City Council area from 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020

## 3. Background

- 3.1 The GCSPS Business Plan 2020-2021 includes a commitment to review the shared pre-application advice services of the LPA, including considering a new fee charging schedule and service offer to improve the effectiveness and value of the discretionary service and its cost recovery.
- 3.2 The GCSPS has been operating using the two existing separate charging schemes for Cambridge City and SCDC, neither of which have been updated for several years. The objectives included an aspiration to introduce a single unified charging scheme to ensure consistency of approach across the service, enable processes to align efficiently and to improve the customer experience and outcomes.
- 3.3 A range of specialists and technical officers across the planning service and from other Council services also contribute towards the pre-application process and the recovery of their costs has been inconsistent in some cases. The project therefore also includes improvements to processes to address this issue. Engagement has taken place with key services involved in the pre-application process across the two Councils to ensure that their inputs have been included in the review.

## 4. Considerations

- 4.1 Pre-application advice and front loading of the planning system is strongly encouraged **by Government policy through the National Planning Policy Framework. It provides an** opportunity to engage with developers at an early stage to address key issues rather than at the planning application stage when this will otherwise result in delays and the need for re-consultation in many cases. It can therefore help save applicants, agents, and developers time and cost by ensuring they submit high quality

schemes and applications that stand a greater chance of being granted approval within the statutory timescales. For the Planning Authority, improving the quality of application submissions in this way, can also improve process efficiency whilst helping to drive up the quality of the outcome secured. Given that planning application fees are set nationally, and historically have not covered fully the costs of delivering the application process, pre-application charges can also play an important part in helping authorities to offset the costs of providing planning advice.

- 4.2 The setting of discretionary charges is covered by the Local Government Act. This makes clear that such charges cannot be levied to deliver a profit for the provider. Given the benefits to the Planning Authority of pre-application advice, it is also important that the charges are set at rates that are appropriate and that encourage use of the service. The purpose of pre-application advice is to ensure that applicants can prepare and submit high quality applications which can be supported without the need for amendment. To this end, the cost of services should incentivise such early engagement/front loading rather than discourage it.
- 4.3 Given recent challenges and feedback from agents about the quality and performance of the existing pre-application services, the proposals suggest a process of transitional charging for the next year – to encourage agents who may feel disinclined to use the pre-application service at present, to re-engage with it. In addition, the service has introduced new time recording mechanisms to help to track staff time (and costs) spent on different activities. Whilst the service offer and proposed fees have been informed by reference to feedback and available data, it is important that as the service rolls out, officers can take stock and test the assumptions used to inform the proposal. Accordingly, a review of the service offer, and charges is therefore proposed 12 months after it is implemented (on 2<sup>nd</sup> November).
- 4.4 The new proposals introduce a charge, in the City, for householder advice for the first time. City Council has not previously charged for householder advice but SCDC did. The budget papers for this year recognised the need to improve income for the service and proposed that charges for householder applications would be included in the new pre-application offer. The charge proposed reflects a subsidised cost of delivering the services outlined, which officers want to monitor carefully. In addition to these charged services, informal advice will continue to be provided by way of the duty planner service by telephone. The service is also seeking to put more targeted advice and assistance online to supplement its charged services. In the City Council budget for 2020/21, provision has nevertheless already been made for the introduction of charges for householders – reflecting the challenging financial position (pre-Covid) that the service and the Council faces.
- 4.5 The SCDC scheme also included specific discounts for charities; the City scheme kept this facility as a discretionary provision – recognising that a number of large institutions were registered charities. This provision was rarely applied however, and due to the variety of charity types, discounts for pre-application fees for charities is proposed to be removed.
- 4.6 However, given the importance to both Councils of supporting the local economic recovery, a single discounted charge for planning advice to small businesses is now also proposed.

## **Review Process**

- 4.7 The review of the pre-application service has encompassed a number of stages:
- Engagement with users on existing services and potential new service offers
  - Review effectiveness of service delivery (including partners)
  - Identify full costs of service delivery by planning officers
  - Identify full cost for specialist officers
  - Benchmark/compare against a range of comparable local authorities
  - Review cost of proposed service offer
  - Compile revised charging schedule based on increasing charges on an improved costs recovery basis.
- 4.8 The review also included an analysis of pre-application charging schemes from other comparable local authorities with similar levels of pre application activity, relative to the various categories of proposal types e.g. householder, minor, small major, large-scale major etc. Charges were then formulated based on an analysis of costs of officer time typically spent on the different categories of pre-application proposals.
- 4.9 Engagement has also taken place with specialists and technical staff within the wider service and other Council services to quantify the amount of time spent by them on provision of pre-application advice. The resulting costs were then referenced to a range of other comparable authorities. (Please see appendix 3).
- 4.10 The proposed updated fee schedule is attached at appendix 1. Appendix 2 shows the current local authority fees alongside the proposed new fees and the range of benchmarked authorities' fees. Officers consider that an appropriate balance has been struck between the need to update the charges to improve costs recovery, and a recognition that there are further improvements that need to be made to the pre - application service before increasing charges any further. Over the next 12 months, further data will be collected through the new officer time recording system which will allow the charges to be reviewed at the end of that period and in the context of further improvements having been made to the pre-application service.

## **Service Improvements**

- 4.11 Following stakeholder engagement a number of additional improvements to the advice service are also proposed:
- Adopt the standard "traffic-light" pre-application response template used by Strategic Sites team and extend use across the service to deliver a unified consistent approach.
  - Provide clear timescales and performance management arrangements to responses, based on the nature and complexity of the proposals
  - Introduce short recorded video meetings for straightforward proposals
  - Improved utilisation of workflow software to improve response times
  - Design and deploy new e-form (accessible via websites/Customer Portals) to incorporate a 'pick and mix' menu allowing customers to select type of advice and request specialists
- 4.12 In parallel with the service improvements highlighted above, there will be a need to review service level agreements (SLAs) with other services to help embed the process within their associated operational practices. This is to ensure that the



planning service can meet the required deadlines for responses, where these also need to incorporate specialist or technical officer inputs.

- 4.13 Responding to Covid, and the demand from agents and architects for a short and quick meeting format, recorded video meetings will also be introduced. These will be suitable for straightforward proposals and “in principle” discussions at early stages with senior officers (where capacity is available and at an elevated rate reflecting the opportunity and direct costs) of a project. Alternatively, for more complex proposals and where a more detailed response is required, the option for tailored responses remain open to customers - with the ability to request attendance by specialists for specific meetings using online menus.
- 4.14 To underpin the effective assessment of the cost of service delivery, and to monitor staff time spent on this service, a new time recording system has also been introduced across the Shared Planning Service. This system will allow managers to check that the new service is both priced in a way that improves cost recovery and is able to respond to demand/data about usage as the new offer rolls out. The data is expected to form a key part of the service’s review in 12 months’ time.

## 5 Implications

- 5.1 In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered:

### ***Financial***

- 5.2 These proposals do not impact planning application fees - which are set nationally. Instead, the proposals seek to address the service need to manage the cost of its discretionary services and aim to increase a greater proportion of that cost through charges. For planning advice, (where the service provided can lead to significant financial benefits accruing to property/land owners and developers) the charging schedule reflects a need to support homeowners and small businesses, whilst reducing the subsidy provided by both Councils for this service for more substantial development projects – and help respond to the growing pressure on costs and income facing both Council Planning Services.
- 5.3 Appendix 2 provides for comparison purposes, details of charges from other Council Planning Services which demonstrates how the proposed costs compare to other comparable local authorities. It is intended that the scheme is reviewed in 12 months’ time, based on additional data analysis that will have been secured, in the context of implementation of improvements to the service and customer feedback.
- 5.4 This proposal does not include Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) which are subject to a separate ongoing GCSPS project.

### ***Legal***

none

## ***Staffing***

- 5.5 There is currently a backlog of pre-application enquiries and staff are working with two separate processes. Aligning the processes and introducing measures such as video meetings and simplified traffic light templates will help ensure staff are able to respond in a more timely and consistent way.
- 5.6 This will also reduce officer time and improve capacity as well as addressing will overall workloads. However, staff will also need to be supported as the service transitions to a more front-loaded way of working giving greater priority to pre-application enquiries.

## ***Risk Management***

- 5.7 Moving to a more front-loaded service will help to mitigate both the authorities and applicants' risks with the planning application process, and in turn should support both applicant and the Councils to reduce the costs of failure demand, including the risk of planning appeals or poor quality and inappropriate development. Service risks associated with the provision of advice are limited, subject to appropriate qualifications and information provided at the start of the process.

## **6 Equality and Diversity**

- 6.1 An EqlA has been carried out. Small businesses may be particularly affected by the Covid19 outbreak and a significantly lower, flat-rate fee for small businesses is proposed.
- 6.2 The introduction of a charge for homeowner pre-application advice in City where there has been none previously will impact homeowners seeking pre-application advice from City for home improvements, however, this does align homeowner charging with SCDC and some other local authorities.

## **7 Climate Change**

Delivering timely, and early advice, notably around the adopted policy framework which seeks to support the move towards a low carbon and climate sensitive future will have a positive impact upon the Council's objectives. The facility to deliver the service online, and via electronic medium will also assist broader corporate objectives of reducing the need for avoidable travel.

## **8. Community Diversity**

None

## **9. Consultation responses**

No formal consultation has taken place but there has been interactive engagement with planning agents through 1:1 sessions and the "agents forum" and their feedback is reflected in this report and responded to in the service improvements that are proposed to be introduced. Engagement has also taken place with other services across the two Councils that contribute to the pre application process through provision of technical or specialist advice.

## 10. Effect on Strategic Aims

### **Cambridge City Council**

#### **Aim - 4.1.1 Ensure planning applications are dealt with within target timescales and resources**

Improving the pre-application service supports timely responses and increasing fees helps provide the resources needed to provide the service and deliver improvements over the next 12 months

### **Cambridge City Council**

#### **Aim - 4.3.4 Grow income-generating services including planning services & building control, open space hire, trade waste, and wider service charges to help cover costs.**

The improved service expected to be delivered over 12 months will justify a further increase in fees which will move GCSPS closer to becoming a fully cost-recoverable service

### **South Cambridgeshire District Council**

#### **Aim - Growing local businesses and economies**

Small business discounts are in support of businesses which otherwise may find commercial development pre-application advice prohibitively expensive

### **South Cambridgeshire District Council**

#### **Aim - Change the way our services are delivered so they are easier for businesses to easily get what they need**

Improved processes will make it easier for businesses to obtain quality pre-application advice

### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Proposed pre-app fee schedule

Appendix 2 – Current and proposed fees with other local authority fee ranges

Appendix 3 – Research on other planning authorities

### **Background Papers**

Where the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 require documents to be open to inspection by members of the public, they must be available for inspection: -

- (a) at all reasonable hours at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council;
- (b) on the Council's website; and
- (c) in the case of documents to be available for inspection pursuant to regulation 15, on payment of a reasonable fee required by the Council by the person seeking to inspect the documents at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council.

List documents and link to relevant page on the public website.

**Report Author:** Andrew Jennings – Project Manager  
Telephone: 07584 033868

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Pre-app Advice Category	Cost to applicant (Planning Officer only)	What's Included	Notes
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\*All fees are ex-VAT

Householders			
Free of charge, 15-minute meeting with a Duty Planner	Free of charge	15 minute, pre-booked, face-to-face discussion, not including site visit. This free service will be of particular benefit to neighbours and those without firm plans	This can be booked by visiting the following link <i>[insert link here to relevant booking page]</i>
30 minute Householder advice	£ 75	30 minutes face-to-face (not including site visit, and does not include written response) for simple alterations e.g. conservatories, repair work, garden shed	These can be booked using the pre-app booking form at <i>[insert link here]</i>
Householder No Site Visit	£ 150	Background research on your property. A face to face meeting 1 hour meeting (not a site visit). A written response. No specialist involved	These can be booked using the pre-app booking form at <i>[insert link here]</i>
Householder Including Site Visit	£ 230	Background research on your property. A 1 hour meeting on site. A written response. No specialist involved	These can be booked using the pre-app booking form at <i>[insert link here]</i>

Pre-app Advice for Residential Developments			
(Minor) 1-2 dwellings	£ 317	Background research about your site and proposal. A site visit from a planning officer. Written advice and feedback.	These can be booked using the pre-app booking form at <i>[insert link here]</i>
(Minor) 3-9 dwellings	£ 829	Background research about your site and proposal. A site visit from a planning officer. Written advice and feedback.	These can be booked using the pre-app booking form at <i>[insert link here]</i>
(Major) 10-24 dwellings	£ 1,285	Background research about your site and proposal. A site visit from a planning officer. Written advice and feedback.	These can be booked using the pre-app booking form at <i>[insert link here]</i>
(Major) 25-50 dwellings	£ 1,928	Background research about your site and proposal. A site visit from a planning officer. Written advice and feedback.	These can be booked using the pre-app booking form at <i>[insert link here]</i>
(Major) 51-100 dwellings	£ 2,767	Background research about your site and proposal. A site visit from a planning officer. Written advice and feedback.	These can be booked using the pre-app booking form at <i>[insert link here]</i>
100+ dwellings PPA	Bespoke	Bespoke - potential PPA	Please contact planning@...

Pre-app Advice for Non-Residential Developments			
(Minor) Up to 499m2	£ 623	Background research about your site and proposal. A site visit from a planning officer. Written advice and feedback.	These can be booked using the pre-app booking form at <i>[insert link here]</i>
(Minor) 500-999 m2	£ 817	Background research about your site and proposal. A site visit from a planning officer. Written advice and feedback.	These can be booked using the pre-app booking form at <i>[insert link here]</i>
(Major) 1000-1999m2	£ 1,290	Background research about your site and proposal. A site visit from a planning officer. Written advice and feedback.	These can be booked using the pre-app booking form at <i>[insert link here]</i>
(Major) 2000-9999m2	£ 2,700	Background research about your site and proposal. A site visit from a planning officer. Written advice and feedback.	These can be booked using the pre-app booking form at <i>[insert link here]</i>
(Major) 10000+m2	£ 2,981	Background research about your site and proposal. A site visit from a planning officer. Written advice and feedback.	These can be booked using the pre-app booking form at <i>[insert link here]</i>
Complex developments PPA	Bespoke	Bespoke - potential PPA	Please contact planning@...
Small businesses (9 employees or fewer)	£ 230		These can be booked using the pre-app booking form at <i>[insert link here]</i>

Senior manager meetings	£ 250	A one-hour meeting with a GCSPS senior manager, subject to availability	
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Pre-app Advice for Other Types of Development			
Agriculture	£ 340	Background research about your site and proposal. A site visit from a planning officer. Written advice and feedback.	These can be booked using the pre-app booking form at <a href="#">[insert link here]</a>
Wind/solar	Under 1 hectare £560; more than 1 hectare £2530	Background research about your site and proposal. A site visit from a planning officer. Written advice and feedback.	These can be booked using the pre-app booking form at <a href="#">[insert link here]</a>
Discharge of conditions (only for major schemes)	£ 230	Background research about your site and proposal. A site visit from a planning officer. Written advice and feedback.	These can be booked using the pre-app booking form at <a href="#">[insert link here]</a>
Student accommodation	50% of the base fee for similar sized residential developments	Background research about your site and proposal. A site visit from a planning officer. Written advice and feedback.	These can be booked using the pre-app booking form at <a href="#">[insert link here]</a>
Telecoms	£ 300	Background research about your site and proposal. A site visit from a planning officer. Written advice and feedback.	These can be booked using the pre-app booking form at <a href="#">[insert link here]</a>
Listed building (for listed building consent only)	£ 250	Background research about your site and proposal. A site visit from a planning officer. Written advice and feedback.	These can be booked using the pre-app booking form at <a href="#">[insert link here]</a>

1. All fees are ex-VAT
2. Specialist advice can be added at an additional cost. Click [here](#) to select specialists and ascertain a new total using our pre-app e-form
3. Further advice on the same development can be sought by using the bespoke category, and entering your pre-application reference
4. We reserve the right to refuse to provide pre-application advice
5. No pre-app fee payable for Proposals where an application is due to an article 4 direction or where permitted development rights have
6. Mixed-use developments will be charged at the higher rate of either the residential or non-residential element
7. No fee is payable for developments specifically required for the needs of disabled persons
8. No fee is payable for developments required by and for Parish Councils

Pre-app type	Description of what's provided	Existing SCDC fee	Existing City Fee	Proposed initial base fee	Proposed Fee for officer plus typical specialists
15 minute meeting with Duty Planner	15 minute (max) meeting with a duty planner. No formal advice given - useful for neighbours or householders seeking information	Free	Free	Free	n/a - no specialists involved
30 minute Householder advice	30 minutes face-to-face (not including site visit, and does not include written response) for simple alterations e.g. conservatories, repair work, garden shed	N/A	N/A	£ 75	n/a - no specialists involved
Householder No site visit	Background research on your property. A face to face meeting 1 hour meeting (not a site visit). A written response. *Specialist officers can be added with additional cost	£ 85	Free	£ 150	n/a - no specialists involved
Householder Site visit	Background research on your property. A 1 hour meeting on site. A written response. *Specialist officers can be added with additional cost	£ 105	£ 50	£ 230	n/a - no specialists involved
Householder with Specialist Advice - without site visit	Aimed at householder developments that are listed, in conservation areas, or are considered complex developments. Background research on your property. A 1 hour meeting (not a site visit). A written response.	£ 230	£ 113	n/a - specialists always involved	£ 225
Householder with Specialist Advice - including site visit	Aimed at householder developments that are listed, in conservation areas, or are considered complex developments. Background research on your property. A 1 hour meeting on site. A written response.	£ 230	£ 203	n/a - specialists always involved	£ 305
(Minor) 1 dwelling	Background research about your site and proposal. Written advice and feedback. Specialists can be added at an additional cost.	£ 265	£ 200	£ 317	£ 355
(Minor) 2-9 dwellings	Background research about your site and proposal. Written advice and feedback. Specialists can be added at an additional cost.	£ 800	£ 300	£ 829	£ 884
(Major) 10-24 dwellings	Background research about your site and proposal. Written advice and feedback. Specialists can be added at an additional cost.	£ 800	600 (1hr)	£ 1,285	£ 1,517
(Major) 25-50 dwellings	Background research about your site and proposal. Written advice and feedback. Specialists can be added at an additional cost.	£ 800	£600 (1hr)	£ 1,928	£ 2,440
(Major) 51-100 dwellings	Background research about your site and proposal. Written advice and feedback. Specialists can be added at an additional cost.	£ 2,530	£600 (1hr)	£ 2,767	£ 3,520
(Minor) Up to 499m2	Background research about your site and proposal. Written advice and feedback. Specialists can be added at an additional cost.	£ 340	£600 (1hr)	£ 623	£ 794
(Minor) 500-999 m2	Background research about your site and proposal. Written advice and feedback. Specialists can be added at an additional cost.	£ 340	£600 (1hr)	£ 817	£ 1,069
(Major) 1000-1999m2	Background research about your site and proposal. Written advice and feedback. Specialists can be added at an additional cost.	£ 660	£600 (1hr)	£ 1,290	£ 1,650
(Major) 2000-9999m2	Background research about your site and proposal. Written advice and feedback. Specialists can be added at an additional cost.	£ 2,530	£962.50 (2hr)	£ 2,700	£ 3,544
(Major) 10000+m2	Background research about your site and proposal. Written advice and feedback. Specialists can be added at an additional cost.	£ 2,530	£962.50 (2hr)	£ 2,981	£ 5,081
Small business discounted rate	Background research about your site and proposal. Written advice and feedback.	£ 230	n/a	£ 230	£ 230

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Milton Keynes				Haringey				Central Bedfordshire				West Oxfordshire District Council				Vale of White Horse				Redbridge				Kensington & Chelsea									
Service	What's included	Cost	Notes	Service	What's included	Cost	Notes	Service	What's included	Cost	Notes	Service	What's included	Cost	Notes	Service	What's included	Cost	Notes	Service	What's included	Cost	Notes	Service	What's included	Cost Level 1	Cost Level 2	Cost Level 2 follow up	Cost Level 3	Cost Level 3 follow up	Cost Level 4	Notes	
Householder				Householder				Householder				Householder				Householder				Householder				Householder									
Householder	Written response only (4 weeks or otherwise agreed)	£180	Site visits are not included within the pre-application fee. It will cost an additional £150 (+VAT) per officer.	Householder	Meeting & written response (Appointment within 10 days of request, written advice 20 days following meeting)	£320	Site visits not included in the pre-application fee. It will cost an additional £170.40	Householder and change of use (no floor space created)	Written response (4 weeks from validation)	£90.72	Follow up advice £60.48 Follow up meeting £30.24	Householder	Written response within 15 days and/or meeting if necessary & agree a timescale for full written response		Free	Householder extensions & alterations & ancillary garden buildings	Written response	£100	Officer meeting followed by written response £150 Charge for site visit followed by written response £200 Follow up letter - New enquiry	Duty Planner Standard Service Single development on a dwelling or flat - site cannot be listed or in a conservation area	20 minute meeting with officer not written response	£95		Householder not including subterranean	See notes field	£465	£465	£315	£565	£415	<p><b>LEVEL 1:</b></p> <p>This gives the simplest level of advice about the principle of a proposal. It will suit you if you want to avoid the time and expense of getting detailed plans drawn and do not want detailed advice.</p> <p>We will not visit the site and we provide a written summary of our advice within two weeks.</p> <p>We will advise only whether the principle of the type of development you want to do is acceptable. Examples might be asking us about the principle of extending the roof of your house or the principle of converting a building into flats.</p> <p>You will normally find it helpful to get more advice from us through levels two or three before you apply. We also cannot offer this service for alterations to listed buildings.</p>		
Listed Building	Site meeting from conservation officer only, and written response (4 weeks or otherwise agreed)	£240		Householder Delivery Contract	Offer more comprehensive background research, meeting & written advice	Bespoke										Householder listed building (advice on listed building only)	Written response	£150	Officer meeting followed by written response £200 Charge for site visit followed by written response £250 Follow up letter - New enquiry	Duty Planner Advanced Service Multiple developments on a dwelling or flat - site can be listed or in a conservation area	Written response 10 working days from payment	£175		Householder including subterranean	See notes field	£600	£905	£655	£1,005	£750	<p><b>LEVEL 2:</b></p> <p>This will provide you with much more detailed written advice than level one, including on the detail of your proposal, within four weeks of your request. It will also include advice from internal consultees, such as Highways and Transportation, where relevant.</p> <p>We will not include a meeting to discuss your proposals or explore alternatives. Under the temporary arrangements we will no longer visit your property but we will expect you to provide extensive photographs of the property and the neighbouring buildings and context. If the Planning Officer dealing with your request thinks they need additional photos please be prepared to provide them. We will also use satellite imagery planning history at yours and neighbouring properties, as well as our detailed knowledge and understanding of the borough to offer our advice.</p>		
																																<p><b>LEVEL 3:</b></p> <p>This is the same as level two but also includes a meeting to explain our advice and explore improvements and alternatives with you. Following the meeting we will issue our advice in writing within five weeks of your original request.</p> <p>We will no longer be carrying out these meetings face to face. We will discuss arrangements with you on an individual basis however, we can do this by Skype or telephone, whether with one or more individuals. Please speak to you Planning Officer once registered to discuss arrangements.</p> <p><b>LEVEL 4:</b></p> <p>This is designed for larger and more complex proposals where ongoing advice is required from a range of officers, possibly over many months or years.</p> <p>We manage the process through a PPA with you, following an initial scoping meeting to agree the objectives of the agreement including timescales, key milestones and scheduled meetings. In some cases it might include preparing a brief of SPD to guide development of the site</p>	
Residential				Residential				Residential				Residential				Residential				Residential				Residential									
Service	What's included	Cost	Notes	Service	What's included	Cost	Notes	Service	What's included	Cost	Notes	Service	What's included	Cost	Notes	Service	What's included	Cost	Notes	Service	What's included	Cost	Notes	Service	What's included	Cost Level 1	Cost Level 2	Cost Level 2 follow up	Cost Level 3	Cost Level 3 follow up			
2 - 4 dwelling	Up to 1 hr meeting & written response (4 weeks or otherwise agreed)	£600	Site visits are not included within the pre-application fee. It will cost an additional £150 (+VAT) per officer.	6 - 9 dwellings	Advise from & meetings with the relevant specialist officers & written response (Appointment within 10 days of request, written advice 20 days following meeting)	£2,094.60		2 - 4 dwellings	Half hr meeting & written response (28 day process)	£322.56	Follow up advice £215.04 Follow up meeting £107.52	3 - 14 dwellings	Written response within 15 days and/or meeting if necessary & agree a timescale for full written response	Written advice only £396	Meeting & Written Advice £778.80	3 - 4 dwellings	Written response	£968.56	Officer meeting followed by written response £1,109.59 Charge for site visit followed by written response £1,320.67 Follow up letter - Bespoke	2 - 4 dwellings	Optional meeting with officer & written response within 15 days of meeting or receipt of payment if no meeting	£1,000	Additional meeting with officer £250	5 - 9 dwellings	See notes field	£2,465	£2,465	£1,820	£2,590	£1,950			
5 - 9 dwellings	Up to 1 hr meeting & written response (4 weeks or otherwise agreed)	£1,200		10 - 24 dwellings	Advise from & meetings with the relevant specialist officers & written response (Appointment within 10 days of request, written advice 20 days following meeting)	£5,466.60		5 - 9 dwellings	Half hr meeting & written response (28 day process)	£645.12	Follow up advice £430.08 Follow up meeting £215.04	15 - 100 dwellings	Written response within 15 days and/or meeting if necessary & agree a timescale for full written response	Written advice only £794.40	Meeting & Written Advice £1,587.60	5 - 9 dwellings	Written response	£1,239.82	Officer meeting followed by written response £1,545.15 Charge for site visit followed by written response £1,853.01 Follow up letter -Bespoke	5 - 9 dwellings	Optional meeting with officer & written response within 15 days of meeting or receipt of payment if no meeting	£1,500	Additional meeting with officer £250	10 - 49 dwellings	See notes field	£3,270	£4,165	£2,865	£4,295	£3,095			
10 - 24 dwellings	Up to 1 hr meeting & written response (6 weeks or otherwise agreed)	£1,800		25 - 50 dwellings	Advise from & meetings with the relevant specialist officers & written response (Appointment within 10 days of request, written advice 20 days following meeting)	£7,581.30	Site visits not included in the pre-application fee. It will cost an additional £170.40	10 - 19 dwellings	Up to 2 hrs of officer meeting time & written response (8 week process)	£1,031.91	Follow up advice £687.96 Follow up meeting £343.98	100 - dwellings plus	Written response within 15 days and/or meeting if necessary & agree a timescale for full written response	Written advice only £1,587.60	Meeting & Written Advice £3,177.60	10 - 50 dwellings	Written response	£1,588.99	Officer meeting followed by written response £2,377.99 Charge for site visit followed by written response £2,789.11 Follow up letter -Bespoke	10 -24 dwellings	A meeting with officer & other relevant specialist officers & written response within 15 working days of meeting	£3,000		50 - 199 dwellings	See notes field	£5,445	£6,345	£4,740	£6,855	£5,250			
25 - 49 dwellings	Up to 1 hr meeting & written response (6 weeks or otherwise agreed)	£3,000		51 - 100 dwellings	Advise from & meetings with the relevant specialist officers & written response (Appointment within 10 days of request, written advice 20 days following meeting)	£7,581.30		20 -19 dwellings	Up to 2 hrs of officer meeting time & written response (8 week process)	£1,548.54	Follow up advice £1,032.36 Follow up meeting £516.18					51 - 199 dwellings	Written response	£2,020.28	Officer meeting followed by written response £3,446.91 Charge for site visit followed by written response £3,934.28 Follow up letter -Bespoke	25 - 49 dwellings	A meeting with officer & other relevant specialist officers & written response within 15 working days of meeting	£4,500		200 plus dwellings	See notes field	£10,145	£11,045	£7,570	£11,735	£8,260			
50 - 199 dwellings	Up to 2 hr meeting & written response (6 weeks or otherwise agreed)	£6,000	Recommend entering into PPA	100 or more	PPA	Bespoke		30 - 49 dwellings	Up to 2 hrs of officer meeting time & written response (8 week process)	£2,580.48	Follow up advice £1,720.32 Follow up meeting £8,60.16					200 or more dwellings	Written response	Bespoke		50 - 100 dwellings	A meeting with officer & other relevant specialist officers & written response within 15 working days of meeting	£6,000											
200 - 499 dwellings	Up to 2 hr meeting & written response (6 weeks or otherwise agreed)	£9,000	Recommend entering into PPA					50 or more dwellings	PPA	Bespoke										100 or more dwellings	A meeting with officer & other relevant specialist officers & written response within 15 working days of meeting	Dependent of scale of development											
500 or more dwellings	Up to 2 hr meeting & written response (6 weeks or otherwise agreed)	£12,000	Recommend entering into PPA																	Major/Strategic Development feasibility/In Principle Development	1.5hr meeting with officer (accompanied by Planning Policy, Urban Design & Highways). A short-written feedback letter detailing the principle of development, discussion of key highways/access & key design parameters within 15 days of meeting	£10,000											
Commercial				Commercial				Commercial				Commercial				Commercial				Commercial				Commercial									
Service	What's included	Cost	Notes	Service	What's included	Cost	Notes	Service	What's included	Cost	Notes	Service	What's included	Cost	Notes	Service	What's included	Cost	Notes	Service	What's included	Cost	Notes	Service	What's included	Cost Level 1	Cost Level 2	Cost Level 2 follow up	Cost Level 3	Cost Level 3 follow up			
500 - 999 sqm	Up to 1 hr meeting & written response (4 weeks or otherwise agreed)	£1,200	Site visits are not included within the pre-application fee. It will cost an additional £150 (+VAT) per officer.	500 - 999 sqm	Advise from & meetings with the relevant specialist officers & written response (Appointment within 10 days of request, written advice 20 days following meeting)	£2,094.60		1000 - 1999 sqm	Up to 2 hrs of officer meeting time & written response (8 week process)	£1,031.91	Follow up advice £687.96 Follow up meeting £343.98	500 - 999 sqm	Written response within 15 days and/or meeting if necessary & agree a timescale for full written response	Written advice only £396	Meeting & Written Advice £778.80	1,000 - 9,999 sqm	Written response	Bespoke		100 - 499 sqm	Optional meeting with officer & written response within 15 days of meeting or receipt of payment if no meeting	£1,000	Additional meeting with officer £250	100 - 499 sqm	See notes field	£920	£920	£615	£1,015	£715			
1000 - 2400 sqm	Up to 1 hr meeting & written response (6 weeks or otherwise agreed)	£1,800		1000 - 1999 sqm	Advise from & meetings with the relevant specialist officers & written response (Appointment within 10 days of request, written advice 20 days following meeting)	£5,466.60		2000 - 2999 sqm	Up to 2 hrs of officer meeting time & written response (8 week process)	£1,548.54	Follow up advice £1,032.36 Follow up meeting £516.18	1000 - 2999 sqm	Written response within 15 days and/or meeting if necessary & agree a timescale for full written response	Written advice only £794.40	Meeting & Written Advice £1,587.60	10,000 or more sqm	Written response	Bespoke		500 - 999 sqm	Optional meeting with officer & written response within 15 days of meeting or receipt of payment if no meeting	£1,500	Additional meeting with officer £350	500 - 999 sqm	See notes field	£2,465	£2,465	£1,820	£2,590	£1,950			
2500 - 9999 sqm	Up to 1 hr meeting & written response (6 weeks or otherwise agreed)	£3,000		2000 - 9999 sqm	Advise from & meetings with the relevant specialist officers & written response (Appointment within 10 days of request, written advice 20 days following meeting)	£7,581.60	Site visits not included in the pre-application fee. It will cost an additional £170.40	3000 sqm plus	Up to 2 hrs of officer meeting time & written response (8 week process)	£2,580.48	Follow up advice £1,720.32 Follow up meeting £8,60.16	3000 sqm plus	Written response within 15 days and/or meeting if necessary & agree a timescale for full written response	Written advice only £1,587.60	Meeting & Written Advice £3,177.60					1,000 - 2,499 sqm	A meeting with officer & other relevant specialist officers & written response within 15 working days of meeting	£3,000		1,000 - 4,999 sqm	See notes field	£3,270	£4,165	£2,865	£4,295	£3,095			
10,000 sqm or more	Up to a 2 hr meeting & written response (6 weeks or otherwise agreed)	£12,000		10,000 sqm	Advise from & meetings with the relevant specialist officers & written response (Appointment within 10 days of request, written advice 20 days following meeting)	£7,581.60														2,500 - 4,999 sqm	A meeting with officer & other relevant specialist officers & written response within 15 working days of meeting	£4,500		5,000 - 9,999 sqm	See notes field	£5,445	£6,345	£4,740	£6,855	£5,250			
				10,000 sqm or more	PPA	£7,581 for initial meeting	Bespoke price after initial meeting													5,000 - 9,999 sqm	A meeting with officer & other relevant specialist officers & written response within 15 working days of meeting	£6,000		10,000 or more	See notes field	£10,145	£11,045	£7,570	£11,735	£8,260			
																				10,000 or more	A meeting with officer & other relevant specialist officers & written response within 15 working days of meeting	Dependent of scale of development											

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Item

## **S106 FUNDING ROUND 2020: PLAY AREAS AND OPEN SPACES**



### **To:**

Councillor Katie Thornburrow,  
Executive Councillor for Planning and Open Spaces  
Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee

29/09/2020

### **Report by:**

Alistair Wilson, Development Manager, Streets & Open Spaces  
Tel: (01223) 458514 Email: [alistair.wilson@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:alistair.wilson@cambridge.gov.uk)

**Wards affected:** All, particularly Cherry Hinton, Coleridge, East Chesterton, Market, Queen Edith's, Trumpington, West Chesterton

## **Key Decision**

### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The Council uses S106 contributions paid by developers to mitigate the impact of developments on facilities and amenities in Cambridge. In line with the arrangements for annual S106 funding rounds agreed by the Executive Councillor in March 2019, the Council invited proposals from community groups and local residents for improving play areas and open spaces within the city as part of the 2020 round.
- 1.2 In view of the Covid-19 lockdown last spring, applications for the 2020 S106 funding round were invited over an extended period (from mid-March to the end of July 2020). Fifteen proposals relating to play areas and open spaces were received and have been assessed against the Council's agreed S106 selection criteria and in the context of the uneven spread across the city of the remaining generic S106 funds still available. This report summarises those applications and assessments and includes recommendations for allocating S106 funding to nine projects.

## 2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended to allocate the following types of S106 funding to the projects listed below, subject to business case approval (see Section 4 and Appendix C for more details).

	Project
N1	Chesterton Rec Ground wheel-sport facility (East Chesterton ward): an additional £20,000 (informal open space).
N2	Five Trees open space: wildflower and tree planting (East Chesterton): £5,000 (informal open space)
N3	Pearl Close play area & open space improvements (East Chesterton): £2,900 (play) and £3,000 (informal open space)
E1	Tree planting in open spaces in Coleridge ward: £13,000 (informal open space)
S3	Nightingale Avenue Rec footpath improvements (Queen Edith's ward): an additional £10,000 (informal open space)
S4	Landscaping for new Nightingale Rec Ground Pavilion (Queen Edith's): £10,000 (informal open space)
S5	Trumpington Rec Ground boundary landscaping (Trumpington): £70,000 (informal open space)
S6	Accordia open space improvements: installation of drainage swales and biodiversity information boards (Trumpington): £5,000 (informal open space)
WC1	Parker's Piece tree planting (Market): provisional allocation until June 2022 of £9,900 (informal open space) towards the wider project costs (see paragraph 4.3c).

## 3. Context

- 3.1. The Council has secured off-site S106 funding from developers to help mitigate the impact of local development. Prior to regulation changes in April 2015, most contributions agreed were broad-based or generic (for the provision or improvement of particular types of infrastructure in the city). Since then, all new S106 agreements have been for specific projects. See [www.cambridge.gov.uk/our-approach-to-s106](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/our-approach-to-s106) for an overview of the Council's approach to the use of S106 funding.

- 3.2 The Council runs annual S106 funding rounds to identify appropriate use of the generic S106 funding still available. The 2020 S106 funding round covers improvements to play areas and open spaces (the focus of this report) and community facilities (being reported to the Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee on 1 October 2020).
- 3.3 A 'golden rule' is that S106 funding has to be used for its intended purposes. Here are some examples of eligible project spend for the S106 contribution types being addressed in this report.
- a. 'Provision for children and teenagers' S106 contributions can be used for play equipment for children/teenagers and safety surfacing in Council play areas.
  - b. 'Informal open space' S106 contributions can be used on the following types of spend within the city's parks and green spaces: paths, landscaping (including skate / wheel-sports parks], fencing/gates, lighting related to the open space itself, signposting, trees/shrubs, drainage, habitat creation, benches, bins, and noticeboards.
- 3.4 Running annual S106 funding rounds enables the Council to make timely uses of the generic S106 funding left available, within S106 expiry or 'use-by' dates. At the same time, there is a recognition that the Covid-19 lockdown and resulting work pressures for the Streets & Open Spaces team means that many of the S106-funded projects from the 2019 round are still on-going. Appendix A provides an update on those projects and sets out revised project delivery timescales – with many now expected to be completed by the end of March 2021.
- 3.5 All wards in Cambridge have benefitted from the provision or improvement of play areas and open spaces, funded by local S106 contributions. However, as mentioned in previous S106 funding reports, the availability of the remaining generic S106 funds is limited and unevenly spread across the city.
- a. This reflects differences across the city in the amount and scale of:
    - (i) housing development per ward and (ii) S106-funded projects (completed or being developed) per ward to mitigate the impact of development.
  - b. In many cases, S106 contributions from a ward is spent in the same ward. However, as the purpose of S106 funding is to mitigate the impact of local development, it is sometimes appropriate for funds

from one ward to be spent on providing or improving nearby (or strategic) play areas and open spaces in another ward.

- c. Consistent with all previous S106 funding rounds, the 2020 generic S106 funding rounds has only been able to seek project proposals from those wards that still have S106 funding locally.

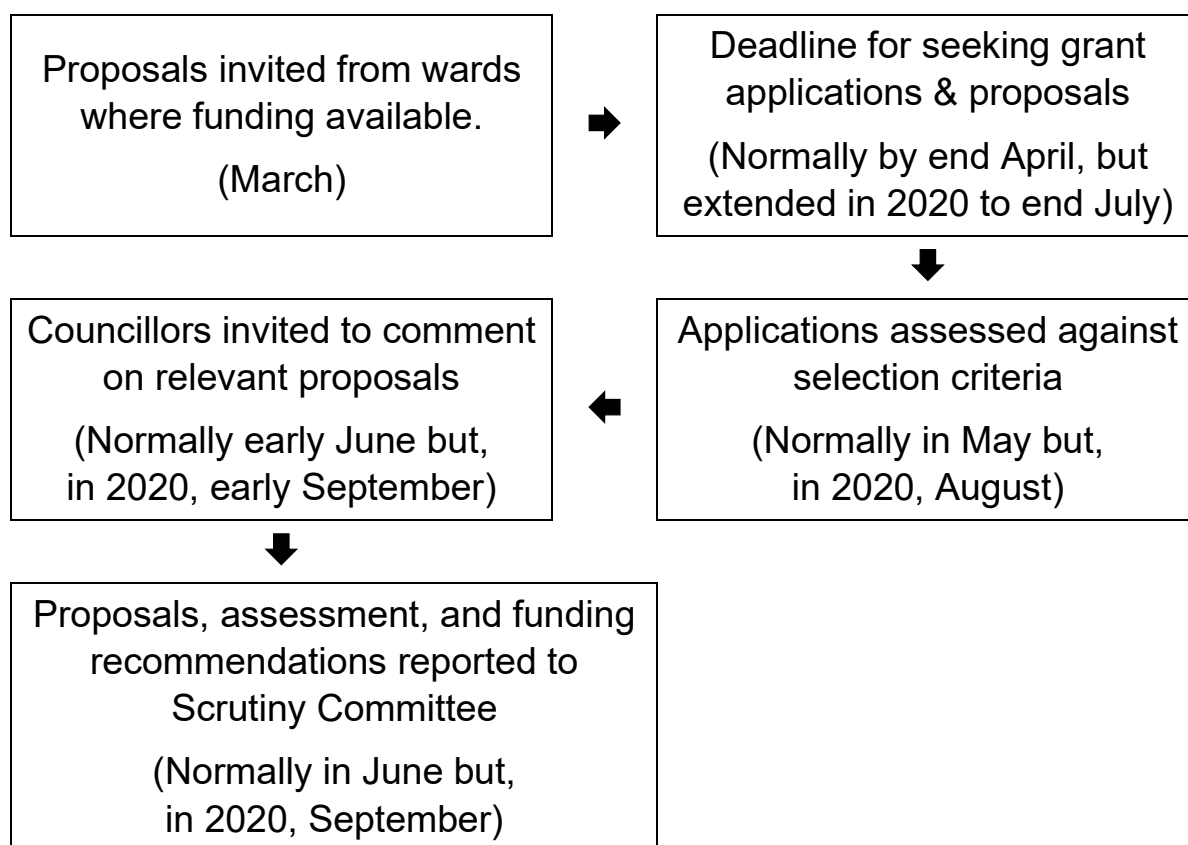
Table 1: S106 funding availability by ward

	<b>Generic S106 funds for</b>	
Wards	Play provision	Informal open spaces
<b>NORTH AREA</b>		
Arbury	Below £5,000	None
East Chesterton	Below £5,000	£7,000
West Chesterton	Below £5,000	£23,000
King's Hedges	None	None
<b>EAST AREA</b>		
Abbey	Below £5,000	None
Coleridge	£32,000	£34,000
Petersfield	None	None
Romsey	None	Below £5,000
<b>SOUTH AREA</b>		
Cherry Hinton	None	None
Queen Edith's <sup>1</sup>	£5,000	£21,000
Trumpington	£100,000	£72,000
<b>WEST / CENTRAL AREA</b>		
Castle ward	None	None
Market ward	None	£9,000 (almost £10,000)
Newnham ward	None	None

- 
1. Informal open space S106 funding in Queen Edith's ward has been reduced by £1,000 to allow for the provision of a gate at Holbrook Road play area. Although suggested in the 2020 round (see S2 in appendix C), it has been incorporated into play area improvements being delivered following the 2019 S106 funding round.

- 3.6 Table 1, on the previous page, sets out current generic S106 funding availability<sup>2</sup> by ward. This is much the same as the March 2020 analysis featured on the Council's website throughout the 2020 S106 funding round. This focussed attention on primarily seeking proposals for improving play areas in/near Coleridge and Trumpington wards; and open spaces in or near the Chesterton wards, Coleridge, Queen Edith's and Trumpington.
- 3.7 The arrangements for annual funding rounds for play area and open space improvements were agreed by the Executive Councillor following a report to the Community Services Scrutiny Committee on 21 March 2019. This process was followed for the 2020 round, albeit that it was extended in the context of the Coronavirus lockdown:

**Table 2:** Timescales for annual generic S106 funding round



2. Both this table and the earlier March 2020 analysis have taken account of the deallocation of £10,000 of informal open spaces S106 funds previously assigned to St Clement's Churchyard open space improvements (Market ward) after it became clear that the project, as originally proposed, could no longer be delivered.

- 3.8 The process has been publicised via the Council's website, social media, and news releases. Subject to local S106 funding availability, local ward councillors were invited to put forward eligible proposals for its use and asked to encourage local groups also to put forward eligible proposals. The S106 funding round guidance (including agreed selection criteria), which accompanied the application form, is set out in Appendix B.

#### **4. Assessment of proposals received in the 2020 S106 funding round**

- 4.1 The fifteen play area or open space improvements proposals have been assessed against the Council's agreed S106 selection criteria (see Appendix C)<sup>3</sup>. The comments made by local Members on eligible proposals relating to their part of the city can be found in Appendix D.
- 4.2 Of those 15 proposals, six have been discounted through the assessment process:
- a. Two are not eligible for the play provision or informal open space S106 funding available in the 2020 round<sup>4</sup>
    - Cambridge North railway bridge mural (N4)
    - Ferry Path / Ferry landing improvements (N5)
  - b. Two are already being addressed as part of projects already prioritised as part of the 2019 S106 funding round
    - Chestnut Grove Rec Ground bench (N6)
    - Holbrook Road play area improvements (S2)
  - c. One (Cherry Hinton skate park improvements, S1) is not affordable from the informal open spaces S106 funding available locally
  - d. Officers advise deferring funding for Coleridge Rec Ground footpath improvements (E2) until it can be considered alongside other local improvements being scoped for Coleridge Rec Ground next year, in order to ensure a joined-up approach (not cutting across each other).
- 4.3 The nine remaining proposals would represent eligible uses of the S106 funding available and, subject to the following three points, can be afforded from available S106 contributions in relevant parts of the city.

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3. The reference numbers for the play area and informal open spaces proposals in this report are based on the area of the city that they are from (e.g., West/Central [WC]).

4. In addition, some repair and maintenance works included in the Accordia open space improvement proposals (S6) would also be ineligible for S106 funding. However, two suggested improvements would be eligible.



- a. The recommendation in section 2 to allocate £2,900 of play provision S106 funding to the Pearl Close proposal in East Chesterton (N3) represents the full amount of local generic S106 funding available.
- b. Officer estimates of the likely costs of the Trumpington Rec Ground boundary landscaping proposal (S5) and the installation of drainage swales and biodiversity information boards at the Accordia development (S6) indicate that these might exceed that availability of generic informal space S106 funding from Trumpington ward. However, this can be overcome by making use of some or all of a specific S106 contribution received for open space improvement (including landscaping at King George V playing field [i.e. Trumpington Rec Ground]). As a result, both proposals S5 and S6 seem affordable.
- c. The overall cost of the Parker's Piece tree planting project (WC1) is estimated at £18,000. Whilst this is more than the £9,900 or so available from Market ward, this contribution would still be helpful and could enable the Council to secure match funding from other external sources. Section 2 of this report recommends that this S106 funding be provisionally allocated to the project until June 2022. If the remaining funding cannot be found by then and the wider project cannot progress, the provisional allocation would need to be reviewed and, possibly reallocated. That said, officers are confident that this project is realistic and achievable.

## **5. Implications**

### **5.1 Financial implications:** This report has taken account of both:

- a. the eligibility and affordability of the proposals being recommended in the 2020 S106 funding round, alongside compliance with the three statutory tests for the use of S106 funding; and
- b. whether any currently allocated or unallocated S106 contributions in the 'play provision' or 'informal open space' S106 contribution types are at imminent risk in terms of expiry or 'use by' dates.
  - i. Most of the proposals received in 2020 S106 funding round have sought informal open space S106 funding. Of the £100,000 of generic play provision S106 funding in Trumpington ward, there is around £70,000 from a development near Cambridge Station, that needs to be contractually committed by October 2023. Whilst there is still plenty of time for this to be used, it would be useful

for proposals to come forward in the 2021 S106 funding round next spring, so that this funding could be allocated in the priority-setting report next June<sup>5,6</sup>.

- ii. As mentioned in the play area and open spaces S106 report in March 2019, officers are also mindful that there is an £85,000 allocation of informal open space S106 funding from the 2015 S106 funding round for the improvement of the Coldham's Common BMX track. The oldest contributions assigned to this project need to be used by October 2023. The latest update is that the consultants appointed to assess the feasibility of the project are reviewing their findings and options prior to wider stakeholder engagement. Officers aim to report back to the relevant scrutiny committee in June 2021, with proposals and revised costs for the way forward, in order to ensure that the S106 contributions currently allocated can be used on time.
- c. The latest generic S106 funding availability figures included in Table 1 under paragraph 3.5 highlights a number of wards which have less than £5,000 of generic play provision or informal open space S106 funding available. Such sums could be put towards relevant projects in or near the ward for which specific S106 contributions are being collected in due course.

6.2 **Staffing implications:** The delivery of the prioritised projects will be managed within existing resources within the Streets & Open Spaces team.

6.3 **Equality and poverty implications:** The primary purpose of S106 funding is to mitigate the impact of development (not address pre-existing needs). The equality implications for particular S106-funded proposals are considered at the business case stage before projects are implemented.

6.4 **Other implications:** Climate change, community safety and other considerations are also addressed at the business case stage.

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5. Consistent with paragraph 3.5b, these proposals for play area improvements may either be in the same ward as the development being mitigated or nearby in another ward.

6. The 2021 funding round is scheduled to revert to the normal timescales as set out in Table 2 under paragraph 3.7.

## **7. Consultation and communication considerations**

- 7.1 The arrangements taken to publicise the 2020 funding round have been explained in paragraphs 3.7, 3.8 and 4.1 and Appendix D. Those proposals recommended for S106 funding, if approved, will be subject to further consultation as part of the business case process.

## **8. Background papers**

Background papers used in the preparation of this report:

- 'S106 Funding: Next Steps (Streets and Open spaces)' report to Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee, 21 March 2019.
- 'Approach to S106 funding' briefing note, available at [www.cambridge.gov.uk/our-approach-to-s106](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/our-approach-to-s106).
- 'Availability of S106 funding by ward for play areas and open spaces', Cambridge City Council, March 2020.
- S106 project proposals received during the 2020 S106 funding round for play provision and informal open space S106 contributions.

## **9. Appendices**

- Appendix A: Progress made on 2019 S106 funding round priorities
- Appendix B: S106 guidance for proposing improvements to play areas and open spaces in Cambridge: 2020 S106 funding round
- Appendix C: Summary of 2020 S106 proposals and officer assessments: play areas and open Spaces
- Appendix D: Summary of comments received from councillors on applications received in 2020 S106 funding round

## **10. Inspection of papers**

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

Alistair Wilson, Development Manager, Streets & Open Spaces,  
(tel: 01223 458514, email: [alistair.wilson@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:alistair.wilson@cambridge.gov.uk))

Tim Wetherfield, Urban Growth Project Manager, Corporate Strategy  
(<tel:01233> 457313, email: [tim.wetherfield@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:tim.wetherfield@cambridge.gov.uk))

## Appendix A: Progress made on 2019 S106 funding round prioritised projects

Funding decisions made by the Executive Councillor for Planning & Open Spaces: 25 June 2019.

2019 prioritised S106-funded projects	S106 allocated		Update (Anticipated delivery timescales include assumptions about Covid-19 and weather permitting)
	Play area	Open space	
Logan's Meadow: provide more benches and bins	-	£7,500	Public consultation in September/October on outline concept for Logan's Meadow extension. Includes proposals for bin and bench provision.
Bramblefields local nature reserve: more planting	-	£7,500	Public consultation planned for November/December 2020.
Arbury Court play area: landscaping & equipment	£15,000	£15,000	Business case approved. Tendering process under way. Public consultation planned in November/December. Anticipated delivery by end March 2021.
Jubilee Gardens: improved access, landscaping, planting, and seating	-	£40,000	Project details being developed. Business case to be considered by Spring 2021, prior to anticipated delivery in Summer 2021. See Appendix E for comments from Councillor Sargeant. Officers consider the current level of funding to be sufficient.
Chestnut Grove Play Area: benches and bins	-	£7,500	Anticipated delivery by end March 2021.
Thorpe Way Rec Ground: new footpath	-	£15,000	Anticipated delivery by end March 2021.

	S106 allocated		
	Play area	Open space	
2019 prioritised S106-funded projects			Update (Anticipated delivery timescales include assumptions about Covid-19 and weather permitting)
Robert May Close play area: equipment and benches	£35k	£5,000	Business case approved. Tendering process under way. Public consultation planned in November/December. Anticipated delivery by end March 2021.
Cherry Hinton Hall play area improvements (incl. accessible play equipment & landscaping)	£90k	£60,000	Business case approved. Contract awarded. Anticipated delivery by end January 2021.
Holbrook Road play area: additional equipment & bench	£46k	£1,000	Business case approved. Tendering process under way. Public consultation planned in November/December. Anticipated delivery by end March 2021. Will incorporate suggestion S2 in the 2020 S106 round for a play area new gate (see footnote 1 of main report and Appendix D).
Nightingale Avenue Rec Ground: new all-weather footpath between car park and community garden	-	£15,000	Will be taken forward alongside proposal S3 in the 2020 S106 round for further footpath improvements, assuming the recommendation for £10,000 of additional funding is agreed. The business case will be reported in spring 2021.
Nightingale Avenue Rec Ground community garden: accessible poly-tunnel		£1,500	Purchased and currently being erected by volunteer group.
Consort Way play area: fencing	-	£30,000	Cost estimates reduced following further scoping of project. Order placed. Expected by end October 2020.

	S106 allocated		
	Play area	Open space	
2019 prioritised S106-funded projects			Update (Anticipated delivery timescales include assumptions about Covid-19 and weather permitting)
Jesus Green: new wildflower meadow	-	£18,000	Completed. Laid as turf in March 2020, with full flower in first year. First cut & collect by volunteer team in mid-September. Perennial mix, so will flower year-on-year with single autumn cut & collect.
Jesus Green ditch: improve landscaping & biodiversity	-	£53,000	Technical analysis commissioned to inform design for public consultation in November/December 2020.
Jesus Green: ecological/ educational space	-	£7,000	To be incorporated into Jesus Green ditch enhancement S106 project.
Jesus Green: BBQ area & signs, drinking water fountain	-	£12,500	BBQ area and signs complete. Drinking water fountain to be delivered by March 2021.
Midsummer Common community orchard: drinking water fountain	-	£2,500	Drinking water fountain to be delivered by March 2021.
Sheep's Green LNR: biodiversity bank improvements at Mill Pond	-	£22,000	Being taken forward alongside (non-S106 funded remedial works). S106 funding now being focused on enhancing adjacent ditches for fish nursery & water vole habitat.
'Bee banks' at parks in East Chesterton, Coleridge, Trumpington and Market wards	-	£5,000	Logan's Meadow Bee bank consultation complete. Installation is due in October 2020. Bramble field Bee bank is also due for consultation. Further bee bank proposals to be to be designed.

## S106 guidance for proposing improvements to play areas and open spaces in Cambridge

### 2020 S106 funding round



**The City Council is inviting proposals for improvements to public play areas and open spaces in those parts of the city where S106 funding is available locally.**

Given the Coronavirus pandemic, the timescales for making an application in the 2020 S106 funding round have been extended until 30 July 2020 (three months later than the original deadline), in order to give community groups more time to work up their proposals. If you have any other queries, please email [S106@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:S106@cambridge.gov.uk).

The focus is now primarily on seeking proposals for improving:

- play areas in (or near) Coleridge and Trumpington wards; and
- open spaces in (or near) the Chesterton wards, Coleridge, Queen Edith's and Trumpington.

Please see the 'Mid-March 2020 estimates of generic S106 funding availability for play areas and open spaces', which can be found on the Council's [S106 priority-setting](#) web page.

As a rough guide, up to £25,000 could provide additional items of equipment and landscaping features. Up to £50,000 could help refurbish an existing small play area or open space. Similarly, up to £75,000 could help improve an existing medium-sized play area or open space and, over £75,000, an existing large play area or open space.

**How to apply:** Please complete the form on the next two pages and return it by 30 July 2020 by email ([S106@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:S106@cambridge.gov.uk)) or by post to S106 Funding, Corporate Strategy, Cambridge City Council, PO Box 700, Cambridge, CB1 0JH.

**Assessment process:** Proposals will be assessed against the following selection criteria.

Proposals need to be:

- a. eligible for S106 funding (i.e., within the city of Cambridge and **not** for repairs, maintenance, like-for-like replacements nor running costs).
- b. affordable within the S106 funding available in the appropriate contribution type.
- c. about providing additional benefit.
- d. an effective use of resources (e.g., related to relevant Council strategies, such as the Outdoor Play Investment Strategy).
- e. accessible, in line with Council equalities policies.
- f. realistic, achievable & ready (i.e., deliverable within around 18 months of a funding decision);
- g. financially viable, with a robust business case and/or management plan.

For eligible proposals, council officers will scope out what might be possible within the S106 funding available locally. The views of relevant ward councillors will also be invited.

Note: there is a separate form (visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk/s106-priority-setting](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/s106-priority-setting)) if you are looking to make a S106 community facilities grant application.

Updated: 29/6/20 (with new 30 July 2020 application deadline)



## Appendix C: Summary of 2020 S106 proposals and officer assessments

	Summary of proposal	Officer assessment
<b>NORTH AREA</b>		
N1	<p><b>Chesterton Rec Ground wheel-sport facility</b> (East Chesterton ward)</p> <p>Officer proposal seeking a further £20k, (alongside the £50k already allocated to the project) to design and build a modern and inclusive outdoor wheel-sports facility (for bikes, scooters, and skateboards).</p>	<p>This additional funding would allow this wheel-sports facility to be on a par with the one introduced at Trumpington Rec Ground last year. These improved proposals were requested by the scrutiny committee. The overall scheme costs could be afforded from contributions from East &amp; West Chesterton and other nearby developments.</p> <p><b>Recommended S106 funding:</b> £20,000 (informal open space)</p>
N2	<p><b>Five Trees open space planting</b> (East Chesterton)</p> <p>Proposal from a local resident to improve the open space's biodiversity by introducing native wildflower areas and planting native tree and orchard species.</p>	<p>Meets the selection criteria and could be affordable from open space contributions available from East Chesterton ward.</p> <p><b>Recommended S106 funding:</b> £5,000 (informal open space)</p>
N3	<p><b>Pearl Close play area &amp; open space improvements</b> (East Chesterton)</p> <p>Proposal from a local resident for new play equipment at the play park. Also, a community garden with fruit trees and raised beds, which disabled residents could use.</p>	<p>Meets the selection criteria and could be afforded from the open space contributions and 'minimal' play provision contributions available from East Chesterton ward.</p> <p><b>Recommended S106 funding:</b> £2,900 (play provision) and £3,000 (informal open space)</p>

	Summary of proposal	Officer assessment
N4	<b>Cambridge North Railway Bridge mural</b> (East Chesterton)  Proposal from a local resident for a mural to cover current graffiti.	Not eligible for the S106 funding available in the 2020 S106 funding round, which does not include public art.
N5	<b>Ferry Path and Ferry landing improvements</b> (West Chesterton)  Local residents propose to transform the mostly barren fence side of the Ferry Path and Ferry Landing into a strip of sustainable plants & flowers.	Not eligible. Sounds a really interesting community proposal for this residential/ pedestrian area, but it would not meet the eligibility criteria for S106 open space funding. Officers are exploring whether any other sources of funding might be available instead.
N6	<b>Chestnut Grove Rec Ground bench</b> (West Chesterton)  Proposal from a local resident for repairing or replacing the bench at the recreation ground.	Already in hand. £7,500 was allocated in the 2019 round for new benches & bins there.
<b>EAST AREA</b>		
E1	<b>Tree planting in open spaces in Coleridge</b> (Coleridge ward)  Officer proposal for high-quality tree-planting at Coleridge Rec Ground, Lichfield Road play area & St Thomas' Square play area.	Meets the selection criteria. Could be afforded from informal open space S106 contributions from Coleridge ward.  <b>Recommended S106 funding:</b> £13,000 (informal open space)

	Summary of proposal	Officer assessment
E2	<p><b>Coleridge Rec Ground footpath improvements</b> (Coleridge)</p> <p>Officer proposal to widen and resurface some existing footways and create additional footways, giving easier all-year access to facilities.</p>	Meets the selection criteria, BUT it would be advisable to defer making path improvements until this can be placed in the context of more detailed plans for improving the pavilion there (already allocated outdoor sports S106 funds), which are being developed for the 2021 round. This is in case of any changes to the pavilion 'footprint'.
<b>SOUTH AREA</b>		
S1	<p><b>Cherry Hinton Rec Ground skatepark improvements</b> (Cherry Hinton ward)</p> <p>Proposed by two skate park users seeking an extension of the skatepark and to remove the grass hump in the middle of the park. They suggest that this would create more space for skaters and provide a safer environment.</p>	Not affordable. No informal open space S106 funds left from Cherry Hinton after the £400,000 Cherry Hinton Hall grounds improvements and the planned landscaping improvements as part of the Cherry Hinton Hall play area refurbishment (prioritised in the 2019 round): these schemes have also been funded from other parts of South Area.
S2	<p><b>Holbrook Road play area gate</b> (Queen Edith's ward)</p> <p>Proposal from the Children and Young People's Participation Service for a gate to the play area to ensure that children cannot run out into the busy road.</p>	Already being addressed. As S106 funding was allocated in the 2019 round for improving Holbrook Road play area, this suggestion has already been incorporated into the business case for implementing that project.

	Summary of proposal	Officer assessment
S3	<p><b>Nightingale Avenue Rec footpath improvements:</b> (Queen Edith's ward)</p> <p>Officer proposal to improve &amp; reconfigure footways and add new ones to allow easier access to facilities.</p>	<p>Meets all the selection criteria. This would be in addition to the £15,000 allocated in the 2019 round for a new all-weather footpath between car park and community garden.</p> <p><b>Recommended S106 funding:</b> £10,000 (informal open space)</p>
S4	<p><b>Landscaping for new Nightingale Rec Pavilion</b> (Queen Edith's ward)</p> <p>Proposed by officers to improve the landscaping and planting around the new pavilion.</p>	<p>Meets all the selection criteria. Proposals for further community facilities and outdoor sports S106 funding for this Pavilion project are also due to be considered in the S106 report to the Environment &amp; Community Scrutiny Committee on 1 October 2020.</p> <p><b>Recommended S106 funding:</b> £10,000 (informal open space)</p>
S5	<p><b>Trumpington Rec Ground boundary landscaping:</b> (Trumpington ward)</p> <p>Proposal from a local councillor for an earth bund or swale with wildflower planting (or some other of knee-high barrier) around the perimeter of the open space – as an environmental enhancement, which would also help to protect recreational use by local residents.</p>	<p>Meets the selection criteria. In addition to generic informal open space S106 funding availability, £15,000 of specific informal open space contributions for improvements to Trumpington Rec Ground (King George V playing field), including landscaping, has been received.</p> <p><b>Recommended S106 funding:</b> £70,000 (informal open space)</p>

	Summary of proposal	Officer assessment
S6	<p><b>Accordia open space:</b> (Trumpington ward)</p> <p>Proposal from local residents for improvements/repairs to pathways, wooden structural features, fences, lawns, and other overgrown/neglected areas of open space on the Accordia estate.</p>	<p>S106 funds cannot be used for maintenance &amp; repairs, but particular proposals relating to the installation of drainage swales and biodiversity information boards seem to meet the selection criteria: these could cost around £5,000.</p> <p><b>Recommended S106 funding:</b> £5,000 (informal open space)</p>
<b>WEST/CENTRAL AREA</b>		
WC1	<p><b>Tree-planting in city centre parks:</b> (Market ward)</p> <p>Officer proposal S106 part-funding towards a wider high quality tree-planting scheme at Parker's Piece (estimated costs: £18k) or at Jesus Green/ Midsummer Common (estimated costs: £48k), which would also require other sources of S106 funding.</p>	<p>Would meet the S106 selection criteria. Cambridge is involved in an EU-funded project to boost tree-planting on public and private land. BUT there is only around £9,900 of open space S106 funds available from Market ward. Other sources of funding would need to be raised. The report recommends provisionally allocating all this available funding from Market ward to the Parker's Piece for two years (until June 2022) in order to strengthen the Council's ability to lever in the remaining amount needed. Other sources of funding would also need to be raised for the tree-planting proposals at Jesus Green / Midsummer Common.</p> <p><b>Recommended S106 funding:</b> Provisional allocation of £9,900</p>

## Summary of comments received from councillors on applications received in 2020 S106 funding round

Councillor	Comment
Cllr Baigent (Romsey)	<p>(Could I apply) for the provision of planters at the junctions of one-way streets off Mill Road to separate vehicles from cycles?</p> <p>Officer response: Sorry, this would not qualify for the informal open space S106 contributions.</p>
Cllr Bird (East Chesterton)	I'm very happy that East Chesterton has been considered for the funding for our projects. I know many residents will benefit....I'm also so pleased to see that the wheel-sport facility on Chesterton Rec (N1), is also being considered.
Cllr Lord (Trumpington)	Indications to date (from my perspective) are that there is a high level of local support for the (Trumpington Rec boundary landscaping land proposal, S5). On the other hand, I've heard nothing from constituents about the proposal for Accordia (S6).
Cllr Martinelli (Market)	(On behalf of Market ward councillors) We are all in favour of the tree-planting proposals in Market (WC1) and we would see this as a good first step to delivering a long-lasting improvement to Parker's Piece.
Cllr Porrer (Market)	<p>I agree with Cllr Martinelli's email and....support the tree funding bid (WC1). This....has been raised by residents in the communities around Parker's Piece and will help maintain and enhance this very important public space - the heavy usage during the pandemic has demonstrated its importance to local residents for now and in the future.</p> <p>I would also like to confirm my support, as Open Spaces opposition spokes, for the Five Trees proposal (N2): this was supported by both me and Cllr Bird at the time of submission and we hope that this can improve a piece of green space in a ward which badly needs this.</p>

<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Cllr Sargeant (West Chesterton)	<p>As public open space is short in West Chesterton, perhaps we should allocate any funds left to the rest of Jubilee Gardens along Chesterton Road.</p> <p>Officer response: £40,000 of S106 funding is already allocated to this project for improving access, seating, and landscaping of the embankment between Boathouse pub, Chesterton Road &amp; Jesus Lock footbridge. Officers consider that this will be sufficient. As part of the assessment of 2020 round proposals in Appendix C, it is envisaged that the informal open space S106 funding still available from West Chesterton would be put towards the wheel-sport facility (N1) at nearby Chesterton Rec Ground, which would benefit West Chesterton residents.</p>
Cllr Summerbell (Trumpington)	<p>I support the boundary landscaping proposal at Trumpington Recreation Ground (S5). I think it is a widely-requested initiative that will both add a visually pleasant and biodiverse addition to the area and secure the grounds.</p>
Cllr Tunnicliffe (West Chesterton)	<p>Ferry Path proposal (N5) is a good one. A way to fund it should be found. How about, if instead of digging up part of the footpath, there were planters all down the fence-side?</p> <p>Officer response: Even with the councillor's suggestion, this proposal for improvements to footpaths in a residential area would still not qualify for informal open space S106 funding. Alternative sources of funding are being explored.</p>
County Cllr Ashwood (Trumpington division)	<p>I (fully) support the Trumpington Rec Ground boundary landscaping proposal (S5)....Although steps have been taken to (mitigate the impact of development) in the new areas, the original heart of the 'village' has so far been overlooked....Residents of the older part of Trumpington have only the Rec Ground which....has been designed piecemeal....The proposed work would serve not only to prevent (illegal camping) incursions in future but would be a major addition to the flora &amp; fauna....A landscaped area ....would be a welcome addition to a much used green space in the heart of the community.</p>

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**Item 7: S106 Funding round 2020: Play areas & open spaces -  
ADDENDUM**

1. Since the report was published, it has become clear that one of the recommendations (to fund the Trumpington Recreation Ground boundary landscaping proposal [S5]) using local S106 contributions) is not ready for consideration and needs to be withdrawn.
2. In the report, officers had recommended an environmental improvement for S106 funding as they recognise the real potential for improving the biodiversity (and residents' enjoyment) of Trumpington Recreation Ground.
3. On reflection, however, it is important to acknowledge that, within the local community, other reasons for the boundary landscaping proposal have been cited (including the prevention of unauthorised encampments on the site). Proposals can only be funded from S106 funding if they are focussed, first and foremost, on mitigating the impact of development.
4. There still could be an environmental enhancement at Trumpington Recreation Ground that could meet the S106 eligibility criteria. The unallocated informal open spaces generic S106 funds from Trumpington remain available.\* The way forward would be for officers to:
  - a. review and agree with the local councillors for Trumpington a proposal for Trumpington Recreation Ground, or, if not supported, an alternative open space location that is eligible for the unallocated informal open space S106 funding;
  - b. carry out public consultation on the proposed scheme later this autumn;
  - c. and report back to the Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee with a recommendation on the proposed scheme, once the findings of the consultation and any required supporting impact assessment(s) have been taken into account.

Alistair Wilson, Development Manager, Streets and Open Spaces

Tim Wetherfield, Urban Growth Development Manager, Corporate Strategy

25 September 2020

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\* The earliest 'use by' dates for these unallocated generic S106 funds are not until May 2024. There are also specific S106 funding for open space and landscaping improvements at Trumpington Recreation Ground, received last February.

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**CONSULTATION RESPONSE TO CAMBRIDGESHIRE AUTONOMOUS METRO  
(CAM) SUB STRATEGY**

**Decision of:** Cllr Lewis Herbert, Leader

**Reference:** 20/URGENCY/P&T/11

**Date of decision:** 16/07/20                      **Published  
on:** 17/07/20

**Decision Type:** Non Key

**Matter for  
Decision:** Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority are consulting upon the draft CAM Sub Strategy between 4<sup>th</sup> May and 17<sup>th</sup> July 2020 at 5pm. This is a secondary document of the Local Transport Plan for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough which was adopted in March 2020 and it describes the policy framework for the CAM. Further information and the Sub Strategy document can be found at the following link:  
<https://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/about-us/programmes/transport/cam-sub-strategy/>

Appendix 1 to this decision sets out the proposed joint response to the Combined Authority from Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council. The response is supportive of the potentially transformational role that an integrated public transport system such as the CAM could make, however it offers several areas where the Sub Strategy should be refined.

Appendix 1 includes a draft letter and more detailed responses to parts of the sub strategy (indicating which question in the CAM Sub Strategy questionnaire they relate to). The purpose of this decision is to agree these, so that they can be submitted before the deadline.

Note:

To ensure an aligned agreement between Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council, the Leader of South Cambridgeshire District Council is also taking an out of cycle decision at the same time.

<b>Why the decision had to be made (and any alternative options):</b>	The consultation provides an opportunity for Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council to make comments on the content of the CAM Sub Strategy.
<b>The Executive Councillor's decision(s):</b>	To confirm that the letter and questionnaire responses set out in Appendix 1 of this decision should be made to the Combined Authority on the CAM Sub Strategy.
<b>Reasons for the decision:</b>	To provide the views of Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council on the CAM Sub Strategy.
<b>Scrutiny consideration:</b>	The Chair and Spokesperson of Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee were consulted prior to the action being authorised.
<b>Report:</b>	<p>The proposed response is attached as Appendix 1 which can be viewed at the following link:</p> <p><a href="https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&amp;cat=13458">https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&amp;cat=13458</a></p>
<b>Conflicts of interest:</b>	None known
<b>Comments:</b>	No adverse comments were made.

## CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

### Record of Executive Decision

#### RECORD OF URGENT DECISION ON DRFT NEC AAP TOPIC PAPERS

<b>Decision of:</b>	<b>Councillor Thornburrow</b> Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Open Spaces	
<b>Reference:</b>	20/URGENCY/P&T/10	
<b>Date of decision:</b>	24/07/20	<b>Published:</b> 24/7/20
<b>Decision Type:</b>	Non Key	
<b>Matter for Decision:</b>	Approval of five Topics Papers as supporting evidence for Draft North East Cambridge Area Action Plan which is due to go out to consultation between 27th July 2020 and 5th October 2020	
<b>Why the decision had to be made (and any alternative options):</b>	This decision relates to specific delegations to the Executive Member for Planning Policy and Open Space agreed at the Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 30th June 2020.	
<b>The Executive Councillor's decision(s):</b>	Approved the following topic papers: Transport Topic Paper, Internalisation Topic Paper, NEC APP Heath Facilities and Wellbeing Topic Paper Environmental Health Topic Paper NEC APP Community Safety Topic Paper	
<b>Reasons for the decision:</b>	As detailed in the Member Consultation Paper which can be viewed at the link below: <a href="https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&amp;cat=13466">https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&amp;cat=13466</a>	
<b>Scrutiny consideration:</b>	The Chair and Spokesperson of Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee were consulted prior to the action being authorised.	
<b>Report:</b>	A copy of the Transport Topic Paper, Internalisation Topic Paper, NEC APP Heath Facilities and Wellbeing Topic Paper, Environmental Health Topic Paper and NEC APP Community Safety Topic Paper can be viewed at the link below:	

<https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sched=doc&cat=13466>

**Conflicts of interest:**

None

**Comments:**

The decision will be reported back to the Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee on 29 September 2020.

# Agenda Item 9b

## CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

### Record of Executive Decision

#### GREATER CAMBRIDGE AUTHORITIES MONITORING REPORT (AMR)

<b>Decision of:</b>	<b>Councillor Thornburrow</b> , Executive Councillor for Planning Policy		
<b>Reference:</b>	20/URGENCY/SR/16		
<b>Date of decision:</b>	19 August 2020	<b>Published on:</b>	26/08/20
<b>Decision Type:</b>	Non Key		
<b>Matter for Decision:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To agree the Greater Cambridge Authority Monitoring Report 2018-2019 for publication on the Councils' websites.</li><li>2. To delegate any further minor editing changes to the Greater Cambridge Authority Monitoring Report 2018-2019 to the Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development where they are technical matters.</li></ol>		
<b>Why the decision had to be made (and any alternative options):</b>	In January 2019, the Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Open Spaces agreed that would be produced which covers both South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge, and that these future Greater Cambridge Authority Monitoring Reports would be agreed for publication by the Executive Member for Planning Policy and Open Spaces at Cambridge City Council together with the Cabinet Member for Planning at South Cambridgeshire District Council via a decision outside of a meeting.		
<b>The Executive Councillor's decision(s):</b>	That the Executive Councillor for Planning Policy: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Agreed the Greater Cambridge Authority Monitoring Report (included as Appendix 1) for publication on the Councils' websites.</li><li>ii. Delegated any further minor editing changes to the Greater Cambridge Authority Monitoring Report to the Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development where they are technical matters.</li></ol>		
<b>Reasons for the decision:</b>	<p>Local planning authorities are required to publish information monitoring progress of the implementation of their Local Development Scheme and planning policies included in their development plan documents at least on an annual basis.</p> <p>The Annual Monitoring Report is also required to give details of what action the Council has taken relating to the duty to co-operate, details of any neighbourhood development orders or neighbourhood development plans made, and once the Council has an adopted Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule, information relating to the collection and spending of CIL monies.</p>		
<b>Scrutiny consideration:</b>	The Chair and Spokesperson of Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee were consulted prior to the action being authorised.		

<b>Report:</b>	The Greater Cambridge Authority Monitoring Report 2018-2019 attached as Appendix 1. <a href="https://mgappmh01.ccc.local/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=SD1545&amp;ID=1545&amp;RPID=66690121&amp;\$LO\$=1">https://mgappmh01.ccc.local/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=SD1545&amp;ID=1545&amp;RPID=66690121&amp;\$LO\$=1</a>
<b>Conflicts of interest:</b>	None known.
<b>Comments:</b>	No adverse comments were made.



Agenda Item 10a

**CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL**  
Record of Executive Decision

<b>HIGHWAYS ENGLAND A428 SUPPLEMENTARY CONSULTATION RESPONSE</b>
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<b>Decision of:</b>	<b>Councillor Massey.</b> Executive Councillor for Transport and Community Safety		
<b>Reference:</b>	20/URGENCY/P&T/13		
<b>Date of decision:</b>	29.7.20	<b>Recorded on:</b>	29.7.20
<b>Decision Type:</b>	Non Key Decision		
<b>Matter for Decision:</b>	To ensure that the Council responds within the consultation period, the Executive Member is now seeking to finalise the attached joint response with respect to those paragraphs which relate to Cambridge City Council outside of the committee cycle		
<b>Why the decision had to be made (and any alternative options):</b>	The A428 does not pass through Cambridge; however the scheme has potential transport impacts on the city. Highways England has identified the Council as a relevant local authority, and has asked it to comment on the scheme as part of the public consultation process.		
<b>The Executive Councillor's decision(s):</b>	To support the principle of the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet improvements subject to the relevant points raised in the joint response and behalf of the City and South Cambridgeshire Councils.		
<b>Reasons for the decision:</b>	As set out in the briefing note <a href="https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=SD1535&amp;ID=1535&amp;RPID=66262935">https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=SD1535&amp;ID=1535&amp;RPID=66262935</a>		
<b>Scrutiny consideration:</b>	The Chair and Spokesperson of the Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee were consulted prior to the action being authorised.		
<b>Report:</b>	A report detailing the joint response is attached <a href="https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=SD1535&amp;ID=1535&amp;RPID=66262935">https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=SD1535&amp;ID=1535&amp;RPID=66262935</a>		
<b>Conflicts of interest:</b>	<b>None known</b>		
<b>Comments:</b>	None		

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## CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

### Record of Executive Decision

<b>RECORD OF URGENT DECISION ON CITY CENTRE PARKING FEES AUGUST 2020</b>
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**Decision of:** **Councillor Nicky Massey**, Executive Councillor for Transport and Community Safety

**Reference:** 20/URGENCY/P&T/12

**Date of decision:** 21/07/20  
**Published on:** 21/7/2020

**Decision Type:** Key

**Matter for Decision:** Executive Councillor for Transport and Community Safety is recommended to :

- Approve the creation of a single tariff of £1 per hour Monday to Sunday 24/7 at city Council owned multi-storey and surface car parks for up to three months until the 31<sup>st</sup> October with the ability to review on a monthly basis to determine need and efficacy of the arrangements.
- Retain the provision of free parking permits for public and voluntary sector key workers to be reviewed at the end of August
- Remove the provision of a City Centre Worker permit at the discounted rate, as all parking will be at the £1/hour rate
- Reinstate the enforcement of parking fees in City

Council owned surface car parks from the end of August.

**Why the decision had to be made (and any alternative options):**

The decision needs to be made urgently to support city centre recovery and the next planning and transport scrutiny committee is not until September.

If the decision is not made now the return of customers to the city centre (within public health guidelines) and business income likely to be impacted resulting in further delay to economic recovery.

**The Executive Councillor's decision(s):**

- Approved the creation of a single tariff of £1 per hour Monday to Sunday 24/7 at city Council owned multi-storey and surface car parks for up to three months until the 31<sup>st</sup> October with the ability to review on a monthly basis to determine need and efficacy of the arrangements.
- Agreed to retain the provision of free parking permits for public and voluntary sector key workers to be reviewed at the end of August
- Removed the provision of a City Centre Worker permit at the discounted rate, as all parking will be at the £1/hour rate
- Agreed to reinstate the enforcement of parking fees in City Council owned surface car parks from the end of August.

**Reasons for the decision:**

As detailed in the Officers report.

**Scrutiny consideration:**

The Chair and Spokesperson of Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee were consulted prior to the action being authorised.

**Report:**

Can be viewed at the link below:  
<https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=SD1544&ID=1544&RPID=66673284>

**Conflicts of interest:**

None

**Comments:** Adverse comments were made by the Opposition Spokes, Councillor Bick.

The decision will be reported back to the Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee in the autumn cycle (29 September 2020)

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