



Cambridge City Council
Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee

Date: Thursday, 28 September 2023

Time: 5.30 pm

Venue: Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Market Square, Cambridge, CB2 3QJ [access the building via Peashill entrance]

Contact: democratic.services@cambridge.gov.uk, tel:01223 457000

Agenda

- 1 Apologies for Absence
- 2 Declarations of Interest
- 3 Minutes (Pages 3 - 8)
- 4 Public Questions

Decisions for the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure

- 5 Delegation Process for Decisions on Neighbourhood Plans in Cambridge (Pages 9 - 26)
- 6 Greater Cambridge Statement of Community Involvement (Pages 27 - 108)
- 7 Response to Consultation on Implementation of Plan-Making Reforms (Pages 109 - 142)
- 8 To Note Record of Urgent Decision Taken by the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure
- 8a South Newnham Neighbourhood Plan (Pages 143 - 144)

Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee Members: Nestor (Chair), Baigent (Vice-Chair), Bick, S. Davies, Divkovic, Porrer, Pounds and Swift

Alternates: Griffin, Glasberg, Lee and Payne

Executive Councillors: Thornburrow (Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure)

Information for the public

The public may record (e.g. film, audio, tweet, blog) meetings which are open to the public.

For full information about committee meetings, committee reports, councillors and the democratic process:

- Website: <http://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk>
- Email: democratic.services@cambridge.gov.uk
- Phone: 01223 457000

This Meeting will be live streamed to the Council's YouTube page. You can watch proceedings on the livestream or attend the meeting in person.

Those wishing to address the meeting will be able to do so virtually via Microsoft Teams, or by attending to speak in person. You must contact Democratic Services democratic.services@cambridge.gov.uk by 12 noon two working days before the meeting.

PLANNING AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

27 June 2023
5.30 - 6.20 pm

Present: Councillors Nestor (Chair), Baigent (Vice-Chair), Bick, S. Davies, Porrer, Swift and Thornburrow (Executive Councillor)

Officers Present:

Deputy Director of GCSP & 3C Building Control
Planning Policy Manager: Jonathan Dixon
Strategic Policy Manager: Caroline Hunt
Principal Policy Planner: Stuart Morris
Planning Policy Officer: Charlotte Morgan-Shelbourne
Committee Manager: Claire Tunnicliffe
Meeting Producer: James Goddard

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

23/19PnT Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Divkovic.

23/20PnT Declarations of Interest

Name	Item	Interest
Councillor Baigent	All	Personal: A Member of Cam Cycle

23/21PnT Minutes

Councillor Porrer advised she was employed by Anglia Ruskin University not Cambridge University as referenced in the minutes of 17 January 2023 (23/2/PnT). Councillor Thornburrow stated she was present at the meeting of the 17 January 2023, but this was not shown in the attendance list.

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 January, 21 March and 25 May were then approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**Committee Manager note: The electronic version of the minutes for the meeting 17 January 2023 have been corrected.*

23/22PnT Public Questions

There were no public questions.

23/23PnT Adopted Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Local Plans 2018: Five-year review of Strategic Policies**Matter for Decision**

The report referred to the five-year review of the adopted Local Plan (LP). The key purpose of the review was to assess whether there were any relevant changes in national policy that might have a bearing on the weight accorded to adopted policies in determining development proposals, prior to the adoption of the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan (GCLP).

Decision of the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure

- i. Agreed the Local Plan Five Year Review Covering Report and appendix regarding the Cambridge Local Plan 2018
- ii. Agreed that any subsequent material amendments be made by the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure, in consultation with Chair and Spokes
- iii. Agreed that any subsequent minor amendments and editing changes that do not materially affect the content be delegated to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure, in consultation with Chair and Spokes.

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 Policy Planning Manager.

In response to Members' questions the Planning Policy Manager and Strategic Policy Manager said the following:

- i. In providing a general overview of a change of use for buildings commented that there were several uses within Class E including retail and offices. In certain circumstances a change of use could be permitted without planning permission this included a change to residential use. However, if sufficient alterations were made to a building for a change of use then planning permission would be required.
- ii. An article 4 direction could be issued by the Local Authority to place a restriction on change of use that needed permission. The national guidance was clear as to when this could be used and had to be approved by the Secretary of State. There would be a cost to the Council to follow this process.
- iii. The outcome of the five year policy review was that most policies in both adopted plans (LP) remained consistent with national policy and, therefore, could be given full weight until replaced by policies in the GCLP. The small number of exceptions related to those policy areas identified as not fully addressing the requirements of updated national policy.
- iv. The introduction of Class E did change the way that some of the policies could be interpreted, such as policy 11 which outlined how to deal with a proposal for a new shop in the town centre, as an example. The decision maker could determine that it was still reasonable to impose a condition on a change of use; however, there were strict rules on what conditions could be applied. The flexibility of Class E was considered by central government to have benefits, so it had to be considered very carefully.
- v. The LP provided guidance that 70% retail ground floor frontage in key areas should be retained. This would be a material consideration for any such planning application, but class E provided certain flexibility to change uses without permission being needed.
- vi. It would be difficult to create new policies ahead of the GCLP. Supplementary planning documents (SPD) had to relate to the LP.
- vii. Producing new SPD's could create additional expenditure for developers without going through the plan making process.
- viii. Cambridge City Council would consider its city centre strategies which could be looked at outside of the remit of the LP.
- ix. Noted the comment that it was important to keep the vibrancy and active street frontages amongst the shopping areas that remaining retail premises needed to keep the foot fall; would an SPD do this.

- x. Careful thought would have to be given to consider if a new SPD would provide sufficient additional value to the decision-making process to warrant an additional SPD. Agreed to look at the case and would respond to the Committee outside of the meeting.
- xi. Agreed that local retail centres should be considered, it was important not to lose the purpose of the small retail hubs, should not apply just apply to the city centre.
- xii. Where planning permission was required the policies in the LP would be considered. Both policies for the city centre and for district and neighbourhood centres would also be taken into consideration. Therefore, there were opportunities to consider the impact on the change of use to the local environment and if these applications should be approved or not.
- xiii. Noted the comments that Class E did not allow a complete log on what all units were being used for in the city, due to those change of use which did not require planning permission. There was a certain amount of data which was retained from various avenues but was not as easily accessible as having a list of applications.

The Committee **unanimously** endorsed the Officer recommendations.

The Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Transport approved the recommendations. They went on to thank officers as a vast amount of time had gone into producing the document.

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

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor

23/24PnT Response to Huntingdonshire Local Plan Issues consultation

Matter for Decision

The report sought agreement of a proposed response to the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Issues Engagement Paper (Regulation 18) Consultation.

Decision of the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure

- i. Agreed the proposed joint response to the Huntingdonshire District Council Issues Engagement Paper (Regulation 18) Consultation.
- ii. Agreed that any subsequent material amendments be made by the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure in consultation with Chair and Spokes
- iii. Agreed that any subsequent minor amendments and editing changes that do not materially affect the content be delegated to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure, in consultation with Chair and Spokes

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 Principal Policy Planner.

In response to Members' questions the Planning Policy Officer said the following:

- i. Agreed that it was important to aim for the highest possible biodiversity standards and to work with neighbouring authorities to address water issues.
- ii. There would be opportunity for ongoing dialogue with Huntingdonshire District Council regarding the issues raised in the proposed response as its local plan process progressed.

The Deputy Director stated they supported the officers who were trying to maintain an open dialogue with neighbouring councils.

The Executive Councillor informed the Committee that Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) Councillors had been in contact with them due to the evidence that officers had collated, and the ambition shown in the Local Plan (LP), as they had similar aspirations. HDC Councillors would be encouraged to read the document and to engage with City Councillors to find out how they worked with officers to achieve such an outcome.

The Committee **unanimously** endorsed the Officer recommendations.

The Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Transport 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.

23/25PnT To Note Record of Urgent Decision Taken by the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure

23/25/PnTa ROD Response to Consultation on Anglian Water's Draft Water Resources Management Plan.

The decision was noted.

23/25/PnTb ROD Greater Cambridge Housing Trajectory and Five-Year Housing Land Supply

The decision was noted.

23/25/PnTc ROD Responses to Cambridge Water's Water.

The decision was noted.

23/25/PnTd ROD Response to Technical Consultation on the Infrastructure Levy (department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities).

The decision was noted.

23/25/PnTe ROD Adoption of Street Naming and Numbering Policy to cover all three councils.

Before the decision was noted the following comments were made:

- i. Officers should encourage developers to look/ use wayfinding for all new developments. The street numbering could be problematic and not obviously particularly for delivery drivers.
- ii. Wayfinding should be considered at the early stage of the design panel.

The Deputy Director welcomed the feedback and advised this would be taken into consideration.

The decision was then noted.

The meeting ended at 6.20 pm

CHAIR



NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING – DECISION MAKING FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS

To:

Councillor Katie Thornburrow, Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure
Planning & Transport Scrutiny Committee, 28/09/2023

Report by:

Stephen Kelly, Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development
Email: Stephen.Kelly@greatercambridgeplanning.org

Wards affected:

All

Not a Key Decision

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 There is currently no scheme of delegation for decisions relating to Neighbourhood Plans in Cambridge, which means that all decisions taken so far in relation to neighbourhood planning have been agreed by the Executive Councillor. The first Neighbourhood Plan in Cambridge (for South Newnham) is now progressing through the plan making process, and therefore now is an appropriate time to review and agree the decision-making arrangements for South Newnham Neighbourhood Plan and any future neighbourhood plans.
- 1.2 National regulations require local planning authorities to make decisions at key stages within the neighbourhood planning process, and that these decisions are made as soon as possible and / or within statutory time periods where these are imposed.
- 1.3 An effective scheme of delegation will help speed up the process and make decision-making more efficient. The scheme of delegation for decisions on any

neighbourhood plans in Cambridge (as set out in this report): takes account of the lessons learnt in South Cambridgeshire; is in accordance with national legislation and regulations; is in accordance with Cambridge City Council's constitution; and shares the responsibility across the Executive Councillor, the Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development, officers and full Council depending on the nature of the decision being made and taking account of any statutory timescales for decisions where they are imposed.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Executive Councillor is recommended to approve the scheme of delegation, as set out in this report, for decisions in relation to any neighbourhood plans within Cambridge City Council's administrative area.

3. Background

- 3.1 Neighbourhood plans were introduced by the Localism Act 2011 to provide a planning mechanism for local communities to use to guide the future development of their neighbourhoods. Neighbourhood planning legislation and regulations set out specific legal requirements that must be followed when preparing neighbourhood plans, with further detail set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).
- 3.2 Neighbourhood planning is optional. However, if a neighbourhood plan is prepared and ultimately made (adopted) by the local planning authority, once adopted it becomes part of the development plan for the neighbourhood area that it covers and planning decisions must be made in accordance with its policies unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.3 Neighbourhood plans must meet a number of legal requirements and Basic Conditions to successfully progress through the plan making process. The Basic Conditions, as set out in national legislation, are:
- having regard to national policies and advice,
 - contributing to the achievement of sustainable development,
 - being in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area,
 - does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations, and
 - prescribed conditions are met, including that the neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European wildlife site or a European offshore marine site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.
- 3.4 Neighbourhood plans can only be prepared by a qualifying body, which is defined in national legislation as being either a parish council or an organisation/body designated as a Neighbourhood Forum. Local planning authorities have a duty to

support any Neighbourhood Forums or Parish Councils preparing neighbourhood plans. The support offer from Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council is set out within the Greater Cambridge Statement of Community Involvement. NPPG states that for decisions on neighbourhood plans made by a local planning authority, that these are taken by the Council's Executive but the Executive may delegate powers to take those decisions to others within the Council.

4. Decisions on Neighbourhood Plans

- 4.1 National regulations require local planning authorities to make decisions at key stages within the neighbourhood planning process, and that these decisions are made as soon as possible and / or within statutory time periods where these are imposed.
- 4.2 There are seven stages in the neighbourhood plan making process where Cambridge City Council needs to decide upon and formalise its decision-making process:
- a. Neighbourhood Forum designation
 - b. Neighbourhood Area designation
 - c. Pre-submission consultation
 - d. Submission
 - e. Examination
 - f. Referendum
 - g. Making (adopting) the Neighbourhood Plan
- 4.3 Officers have been working with a number of local communities in the preparation of neighbourhood plans for their area. There are eight made (adopted) neighbourhood plans within South Cambridgeshire. Through supporting these neighbourhood plans, officers have gained an understanding and appreciation of the requirements for the different stages in the preparation of a neighbourhood plan and the statutory timescales that the local planning authority must comply with at various stages in the process. There is an agreed scheme of delegation for decisions on neighbourhood plans within South Cambridgeshire District Council's administrative area that has been developed over time as national legislation has evolved, and which is in accordance with South Cambridgeshire District Council's constitution. The South Cambridgeshire District Council scheme of delegation for decisions on neighbourhood plans works well by sharing the responsibility across the Lead Cabinet Member for Planning, the Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development, officers and full Council depending on the decision required to be made.
- 4.4 The scheme of delegation for decisions on neighbourhood plans within Cambridge (as set out in this report and recommended for approval to the Executive Councillor by officers) takes account of the lessons learnt in South Cambridgeshire, is in

accordance with national legislation and regulations, is in accordance with Cambridge City Council's constitution, and shares the responsibility across the Executive Councillor, the Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development, officers and full Council depending on the nature of the decision being made and taking account of any statutory timescales for decisions where they are imposed. Appendix A provides a summary of the responsibilities assigned to officers, the Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development, the Executive Councillor, and full Council at each stage in the process of preparing a neighbourhood plan.

- 4.5 The scheme of delegation (as set out in this report) reflects existing officer, Member and committee structures in relation to procedures and decisions for neighbourhood plan making. In the event that there are any changes to those structures such that responsibilities change, then those changes shall be applied to the scheme of delegation set out in this report.

Neighbourhood Forum designation

- 4.6 A neighbourhood forum is the group set up as the qualifying body to lead the neighbourhood planning process for a neighbourhood area where there is no parish council. A neighbourhood forum is defined in national legislation as being a group of at least 21 people from different sections within the community who live or work in the area, or are elected members for the area, and who have a written constitution. A neighbourhood forum must be designated before a neighbourhood plan can be prepared. The designation of a neighbourhood forum can be done alongside the designation of a neighbourhood area.
- 4.7 National regulations require that public consultation for at least 6 weeks must be carried out on any proposed neighbourhood forum. A local planning authority is required to make a decision on the designation of the neighbourhood forum within 13 weeks of the start of public consultation.
- 4.8 It is proposed that the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure makes the decision on the designation of the neighbourhood forum in the most efficient way, which will normally be an out-of-meeting decision (in consultation with the Chair and Spokes of Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee), taking account of the prescribed timescales for the public consultation and making the decision.
- 4.9 Officers will consider whether the application for designation of the neighbourhood forum is valid and meets national regulations. Officers will organise and carry out the public consultation, following national regulations and in accordance with the Greater Cambridge Statement of Community Involvement. Officers will publish the decision on the designation of the neighbourhood forum on the Council's website and notify those specified by national regulations.

- 4.10 National legislation sets out that a neighbourhood forum is designated for five years. South Newnham Neighbourhood Forum is the only neighbourhood forum designated in Cambridge at the moment. This neighbourhood forum was designated by the Executive Councillor at the Development Plan Scrutiny Committee in March 2017, and re-designated by the Executive Councillor through an out-of-meeting decision (in consultation with the Chair and Spokes) in July 2022.

Neighbourhood Area designation

- 4.11 A neighbourhood area defines the boundary of the neighbourhood plan. A neighbourhood area must be designated before a neighbourhood plan can be prepared. The designation of a neighbourhood area can be done alongside the designation of a neighbourhood forum.
- 4.12 National regulations require that public consultation for at least 6 weeks must be carried out on any proposed neighbourhood area that is not for the whole of a parish. A local planning authority is required to make a decision on the designation of the neighbourhood area within 13 weeks of the start of public consultation.
- 4.13 It is proposed that the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure makes the decision on the designation of the neighbourhood area in the most efficient way, which will normally be an out-of-meeting decision (in consultation with the Chair and Spokes of Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee), taking account of the prescribed timescales for the public consultation and making the decision.
- 4.14 Officers will consider whether the application for designation of the neighbourhood area is valid and meets national regulations. Officers will organise and carry out the public consultation, following national regulations and in accordance with the Greater Cambridge Statement of Community Involvement. Officers will publish the decision on the designation of the neighbourhood area on the Council's website and notify those specified by national regulations.
- 4.15 South Newnham Neighbourhood Area is the only neighbourhood area designated in Cambridge at the moment. This neighbourhood area was designated by the Executive Councillor at the Development Plan Scrutiny Committee in March 2017.

Pre-submission consultation

- 4.16 A Neighbourhood Forum (as the qualifying body) must carry out public consultation on its draft neighbourhood plan. National regulations require that the public consultation must be for at least 6 weeks and that those specified by the regulations must be notified. The local planning authority is one of the specified bodies, and therefore Cambridge City Council will have an opportunity to comment on any neighbourhood plans being prepared within Cambridge.

- 4.17 Officers will draft the response to such a consultation, primarily making comments on whether the neighbourhood plan meets the Basic Conditions, but also providing more detailed comments on the content and / or wording of specific policies where necessary. It is proposed that the response to such a consultation is delegated to the Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development, in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure, given that the response will need to be prepared and submitted within 6 weeks of the start of consultation.
- 4.18 South Newnham Neighbourhood Forum consulted on the pre-submission version of their neighbourhood plan in June-July 2023. The Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure through an out-of-meeting decision (in consultation with the Chair and Spokes of Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee) agreed the response to this consultation, as it was ahead of agreeing this scheme of delegation.

Submission

- 4.19 The Neighbourhood Forum (as the qualifying body) is required to submit the neighbourhood plan to Cambridge City Council, who then carry out the later stages of the plan making process. Once a neighbourhood plan has been submitted, national regulations require the local planning authority to carry out public consultation on the neighbourhood plan for at least 6 weeks and that those specified by the regulations are notified. The local planning authority is one of the specified bodies, and therefore Cambridge City Council will have an opportunity to comment on any neighbourhood plans being prepared within Cambridge.
- 4.20 Officers will consider whether the submitted neighbourhood plan and its supporting documents are legally compliant. This requires considering whether the Neighbourhood Plan has been submitted by a qualifying body, includes specific information, and is accompanied by specific supporting documents. Officers will organise and carry out the public consultation, following national regulations and in accordance with the Greater Cambridge Statement of Community Involvement. Officers will collate the comments received and share with the Examiner.
- 4.21 Officers will draft the response to such a consultation, primarily making comments on whether the neighbourhood plan meets the Basic Conditions, but also providing more detailed comments on the content and / or wording of specific policies where necessary. It is proposed that the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure makes the decision on the response to such a consultation in the most efficient way, which will normally be an out-of-meeting decision (in consultation with the Chair and Spokes of Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee), taking account of the prescribed timescales for the public consultation.

4.22 No neighbourhood plans in Cambridge have yet reached the submission stage.

Examination

4.23 A neighbourhood plan is examined by an independent Examiner, who is appointed by the local planning authority. Most neighbourhood plan examinations are carried out using a written representations process, with a few exceptions including the need for a hearing. Officers will seek an Examiner to undertake the examination of the neighbourhood plan, but the decision on the Examiner to appoint will be made by officers in consultation with the neighbourhood forum, in line with NPPG. Officers will liaise with the Examiner and the neighbourhood forum. Officers will publish on the Council's website any examination documents, including the Examiner's Report.

4.24 On receipt of an Examiner's Report, a local planning authority must decide whether:

- to accept the recommendations proposed by the Examiner,
- the neighbourhood plan (with any necessary modifications) meets the Basic Conditions, and
- to send the neighbourhood plan (with any necessary modifications) to referendum.

National regulations set out that the local planning authority has 5 weeks from receipt of the Examiner's Report to make its decision, unless an alternative date is agreed with the neighbourhood forum.

4.25 Where an Examiner recommends that the neighbourhood plan (with any necessary modifications) should proceed to referendum, it is proposed that the decision to take forward the neighbourhood plan is delegated to the Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development, in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure, given the prescribed timescale and the nature of the decision. However, if an Examiner recommends that the neighbourhood plan should not proceed to referendum, it is proposed that the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure makes the decision on the way forward for the neighbourhood plan in the most efficient way, which will normally be an out-of-meeting decision (in consultation with the Chair and Spokes of Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee) given the prescribed timescales.

4.26 No neighbourhood plans in Cambridge have yet reached the examination stage.

Referendum

4.27 Cambridge City Council is responsible for organising the referendum, which must be carried out in accordance with neighbourhood planning referendum regulations. National regulations set out that the referendum must be held within 56 working days from the decision made on the Examiner's Report.

4.28 Officers will organise and carry out the referendum.

4.29 No neighbourhood plans in Cambridge have yet reached the referendum stage.

Making (adopting) the Neighbourhood Plan

4.30 If a neighbourhood plan is successful at referendum as a result of the majority of those voting being in favour of the neighbourhood plan being used when making decisions on planning applications, then the neighbourhood plan must be made (adopted) by the local planning authority unless by doing so would breach or otherwise be incompatible with EU or human rights obligations. National regulations set out that the neighbourhood plan must be made (adopted) within 8 weeks of a successful referendum.

4.31 As the neighbourhood plan will become part of Cambridge City Council's statutory development plan, it will need to be formally made (adopted) by full Council. It is proposed that the decision recommending that full Council makes (adopts) the neighbourhood plan is delegated to the Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development, in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure, given that the Council has limited options other than to make (adopt) the neighbourhood plan following a successful referendum and in light of the prescribed timetable for the making of a neighbourhood plan. It is proposed that the making (adoption) of the neighbourhood plan is carried out by full Council.

4.32 Following the full Council meeting, officers will publish on the Council's website a decision notice on the making (adoption) of the neighbourhood plan and notify those specified by national regulations.

4.33 No neighbourhood plans in Cambridge have yet been made (adopted) by Cambridge City Council.

5. Implications

a) Financial Implications

5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

b) Staffing Implications

5.2 There are no direct staffing implications arising from this report.

c) Equality and Poverty Implications

5.3 There are no direct equality and poverty implications arising from this report.

d) Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental Implications

5.4 There are no direct net zero carbon, climate change and environmental implications arising from this report.

e) Procurement Implications

5.5 There are no direct procurement implications arising from this report.

f) Community Safety Implications

5.6 There are no direct community safety implications arising from this report.

6. Consultation and communication considerations

6.1 The scheme of delegation (as set out in this report) has been considered by the Committee Services Team and 3C Legal Services, and is consistent with Cambridge City Council's Constitution and existing schemes of delegation.

7. Background papers

Background papers used in the preparation of this report:

- [Localism Act 2011](#)
- [The Neighbourhood Planning \(General\) Regulations 2012](#)
- [The Neighbourhood Planning \(Referendums\) Regulations 2012](#)
- [The Neighbourhood Planning \(Referendums\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2014](#)
- [The Neighbourhood Planning \(General\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2015](#)
- [The Neighbourhood Planning \(General\) and Development Management Procedure \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Neighbourhood Planning \(Referendums\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017](#)
- [The Neighbourhood Planning \(General\) and Development Management Procedure \(Amendment\) Regulations 2017](#)
- [National Planning Policy Framework \(July 2021\)](#)
- [National Planning Practice Guidance on Neighbourhood Planning](#)

8. Appendices

Appendix A: Responsibilities and Delegations for Neighbourhood Plans in Cambridge

9. Inspection of papers

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

Jenny Nuttycombe, Principal Planning Policy Officer, tel: 01954 713184 / 07563 421032,
email: jenny.nuttycombe@greatercambridgeplanning.org

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix A: Responsibilities and Delegations for Neighbourhood Plans in Cambridge

The responsibilities and delegations set out in this table reflect the scheme of delegation for decisions on any neighbourhood plans (as set out in the report) and existing officer, Member and committee structures in relation to procedures and decisions for neighbourhood plan making. In the event that there are any changes to those structures such that responsibilities change, then those changes shall be applied to the responsibilities and delegations set out in this table.

Stage	Officer Responsibility	Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development Responsibility	Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure Responsibility	Full Council Responsibility
Application received for Neighbourhood Forum designation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider whether application is valid and meets national regulations. Public consultation organised and carried out. 	Consulted on the decision for designation, ahead of agreement by the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure.	Makes decision on the designation in the most efficient way, which will normally be an out-of-meeting decision (in consultation with the Chair and Spokes of	n/a

Stage	Officer Responsibility	Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development Responsibility	Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure Responsibility	Full Council Responsibility
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication of decision on the Council's website. • Notify those specified by national regulations of the decision. 		Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee).	
Application received for Neighbourhood Area designation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider whether application is valid and meets national regulations. • Public consultation organised and carried out. 	Consulted on the decision for designation, ahead of agreement by the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure.	Makes decision on the designation in the most efficient way, which will normally be an out-of-meeting decision (in consultation with the Chair and Spokes of Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee).	n/a

Stage	Officer Responsibility	Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development Responsibility	Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure Responsibility	Full Council Responsibility
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication of decision on the Council's website. • Notify those specified by national regulations of the decision. 			
Consultation on pre-submission Neighbourhood Plan	Draft the response providing comments on the pre-submission neighbourhood plan.	Makes decision on the response providing comments on the pre-submission neighbourhood plan, in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building	Consulted on the response providing comments on the pre-submission neighbourhood plan, ahead of agreement by the Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development.	n/a

Stage	Officer Responsibility	Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development Responsibility	Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure Responsibility	Full Council Responsibility
		Control and Infrastructure.		
Submission of the Neighbourhood Plan to the local planning authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider whether the submitted neighbourhood plan and its supporting documents are legally compliant. • Public consultation organised and carried out. • Draft the response providing comments on the submission neighbourhood plan. 	Consulted on the response providing comments on the submission neighbourhood plan, ahead of agreement by the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure.	Makes decision on the response providing comments on the submission neighbourhood plan in the most efficient way, which will normally be an out-of-meeting decision (in consultation with the Chair and Spokes of Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee).	n/a

Stage	Officer Responsibility	Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development Responsibility	Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure Responsibility	Full Council Responsibility
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collate the comments received through the public consultation and share with the Examiner. 			
Examination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek an Examiner to undertake the examination of the neighbourhood plan. Makes a decision on the Examiner to appoint in consultation with the neighbourhood forum. 	For decisions where an Examiner has recommended that the neighbourhood plan (with any necessary modifications) can proceed to referendum: makes decision on whether to send the neighbourhood plan to referendum, in	For decisions where the Examiner has recommended that the neighbourhood plan does not proceed to referendum: makes decision on the way forward for the Neighbourhood Plan in the most efficient way, which will normally be an	n/a

Stage	Officer Responsibility	Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development Responsibility	Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure Responsibility	Full Council Responsibility
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with the Examiner and the neighbourhood forum. • Publish any examination documents, including the Examiner's Report, on the Council's website. 	consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure.	out-of-meeting decision (in consultation with the Chair and Spokes of Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee).	
Referendum	Organised and carried out by Electoral Services Team, with support from other officers.	n/a	n/a	n/a

Stage	Officer Responsibility	Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development Responsibility	Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure Responsibility	Full Council Responsibility
Making (adopting) the Neighbourhood Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication of decision notice on the Council's website. • Notify those specified by national regulations of the decision. 	Recommends to full Council the making (adoption) of the neighbourhood plan, in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure.	Consulted on the recommendation to full Council, ahead of being proposed by the Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development.	Makes (adopts) the neighbourhood plan, in accordance with the recommendation from the Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development.

This page is intentionally left blank

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



To:

Councillor Katie Thornburrow, Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure

Planning & Transport Scrutiny Committee, 28/09/2023

Report by:

Stephen Kelly, Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development

Email: stephen.kelly@greatercambridgeplanning.org

Wards affected:

All

Key Decision

1. Executive Summary

- 1 The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how the Council will engage on planning matters, and must be reviewed at least every five years. This report presents a reviewed and updated draft SCI and seeks agreement to carry out a public consultation prior to a final version being brought back to members for consideration and adoption. The review of the SCI has considered matters including digital opportunities, lessons learned for the Covid 19 pandemic, opportunities to enhance participation on planning applications including youth engagement and has reviewed the neighbourhood plan support offer.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended to agree:

1. the draft reviewed Statement of Community Involvement 2023 (attached at Appendix 1) and accompanying Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) (Appendix 2) to be subject to public consultation;
2. that the preparation of materials and the running of the consultation be delegated to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development
3. that any subsequent material amendments prior to consultation be made by the Lead Member for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure and that any subsequent minor amendments and editing changes that do not materially affect the content prior to consultation be delegated to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) introduced the requirement for local authorities to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement, and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) requires SCIs to be reviewed at least every five years from the date of adoption. The current Greater Cambridge SCI was adopted in 2019. A Short addenda to the document was made in 2020, setting out the approach of both Councils to provide services during the Covid 19 Pandemic. It is now over four years old and this review gives the opportunity to consult and consider responses and publish a new SCI before the five years expires.
- 3.2 The SCI sets out how to engage in the planning process in Greater Cambridge. The SCI describes how the public, businesses, interest groups and individuals within the local authority areas can get involved in influencing the local planning policy, the planning application process and neighbourhood planning, and help to shape where we live and work.
- 3.3 The draft SCI provides an introduction to the overall planning process, then moves into detail about how stakeholders can get involved in the preparation of plans including Local Plans (which includes Area Action Plans), supplementary planning documents and neighbourhood plans. A further section identifies the mechanisms by which stakeholders will be provided an opportunity to engage in the planning application process. An overview of the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan or Order is provided, followed by the broad support available to community groups that are preparing such documents.
- 3.4 In carrying out the review officers have in particular considered:
- Opportunities provide by digital technology including the lessons learned during the Covid 19 pandemic;
 - Learning from the Greater Cambridge Local Plan consultations, where we tried new methods of consultation;
 - Providing more information to guide pre-application engagement by developers, including a range of engagement methods which they can consider;
 - Highlighting the importance of reaching underrepresented groups, including young people;
 - A new section on planning obligations/developer contributions and how the Councils may seek views on the use of contributions on priority projects for infrastructure for example public art or children's play spaces;
 - Updates to our neighbourhood planning support offer reflecting experience gained, including refocusing our funding offer on SEA screening rather than a health check.

- 3.5 The SCI is drafted to reflect the requirements of planning regulations and provides examples where the Local Planning Authorities (LPA) may, if resources permit, use methods of engagement that move beyond the regulatory requirements. It is important that the SCI does not commit the LPAs to actions that cannot be resourced in all cases, as this could then call into jeopardy decisions and actions taken, give rise to disproportionate costs, or cause delays to the planning process. This does not, however, preclude the Council from choosing to use additional mechanisms to increase community engagement as and when it is considered appropriate to do so, with the local plan for example.
- 3.6 There is no mandatory requirement for consultation on a draft SCI however, in the spirit of ensuring meaningful engagement in the planning process, it is proposed that a consultation period is undertaken for six weeks. The draft document will be published on the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning website and we will notify stakeholders to seek their views. Comments received will be considered and reported to members when they are asked to adopt the final version of the SCI.

4. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

The revised draft SCI does not introduce additional costs, and also seeks to make good use of digital opportunities for consultation. The revised neighbourhood plan support offer for the SEA screening has been increased from £1,000 to £2,000 maximum, but the offer of up to £1000 for a health check has been removed.

(b) Staffing Implications

There are no specific staffing implications of this review. It is currently anticipated that completing the SCI review can be delivered within our existing staffing establishment. This will be kept under review alongside other work priorities.

(c) Equality and Poverty Implications

There are no specific implications of this review. The Greater Cambridge SCI has been informed by an equalities impact assessment. This has considered to have a positive effect on providing digital engagement and consultation through our website/s to groups who may have previously felt excluded whilst at the same time ensuring people who cannot or do not have access to digital communication means are not digitally excluded by use of suitable means of communication, for example, use of large print, audio or braille.

(d) Environmental Implications

There are no direct implications. The Greater Cambridge SCI review considers opportunities to use digital and electronic communication which may help in reducing the need to travel.

(e) Procurement Implications

None

(f) Community Safety Implications

There are no direct community safety implications arising from the report, although the positive engagement opportunities sought by the draft SCI may help with community wellbeing.

5. Consultation and communication considerations

The report seeks to agree the SCI for public consultation where comments will be invited and considered as part of the final version of the SCI.

6. Background papers

Background papers used in the preparation of this report:

[Statement of Community Involvement 2019](#)

7. Appendices

Appendix A: Greater Cambridge Statement of Community Involvement (Draft for Consultation) 2023

Appendix B – Draft Equality Impact Assessment for the Statement of Community Involvement 2023

8. Inspection of papers

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

Andrew Tyrer, Senior Planning Policy Officer

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning

Tel: 07745 740966

Email: Andrew.Tyrer@greatercambridgeplanning.org

Statement of Community Involvement

Draft for consultation Autumn 2023

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service

**Cambridge City Council Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee date:
28/09/2023**

South Cambridgeshire District Council Cabinet date: 28/09/2023

Version

Draft version for consultation Autumn 2023

Contents

Statement of our intention to engage with our communities	ii
1.0 Introduction	1
2.0 How can I get involved in the planning process?	6
3.0 Our methods for community engagement in planning policy	8
4.0 Methods for community engagement at the planning application stage	20
5.0 How can the community be involved in the allocation of planning obligation funds?	32
6.0 How the local community can prepare a neighbourhood plan or neighbourhood development order	34
7.0 Monitoring and Review	39
Appendix 1: Glossary	40
Appendix 2: Consultation Bodies for Plan-making	41
Appendix 3: Council offices where planning consultation documents will be made available for public inspection	45
Appendix 4: Statutory requirements for consulting on planning applications.....	46
Appendix 5: Consultation Bodies for a Planning Application	47

Statement of our intention to engage with our communities

Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Councils are committed to involving as many people and organisations as possible in the planning process. This includes groups and communities that are typically under-represented.

Planning affects the lives of everyone who lives, works, and visits Greater Cambridge. Therefore, it is essential that as many people as possible have a say in the decisions the councils make on new housing, workplaces, open spaces, and the measures we take to tackle climate and biodiversity issues.

We want to encourage you to read and respond to the consultation on the draft Statement of Community Involvement, the document which sets out how the Councils will engage on a wide range of planning matters over the next five years. Widening community participation in planning will always achieve the best outcomes and therefore this Statement of Community Involvement sets out how the councils will achieve this.

Through extensive public engagement during the Covid 19 pandemic, including interactive webinars on our emerging new Local Plan, through to the award winning work we are doing with youth engagement in local schools, we are always pushing ourselves and developers to do more engagement and to reach out to the widest possible audience. Whilst the SCI sets out the minimum levels of engagement the councils will undertake, it also sets out what we can, and frequently do, to go beyond this and how we try to engage in innovative ways alongside documents and websites that are written with as little jargon as possible.

This document also sets out how the Councils will support local communities and parish councils to develop their own neighbourhood plans which can set out local aspirations for new developments within their area.

We will strive to provide opportunities and make it as simple as possible for all individuals to become involved in the planning process, regardless of their circumstances. By involving communities from the earliest stage, they can help to make a difference and, crucially, feel a sense of understanding and ownership of local planning decisions.

Finally, we would encourage you, as residents and stakeholders (including parish councils, neighbourhood forums, groups and associations representing residents and businesses in the area), to use this Statement of Community Involvement and the protocols set out within it, to hold the Local Planning Authorities to account and ensure that all local people have opportunities to have their say. We recognise that consultation and engagement activities are ever evolving, and typically engagement is moving further towards digital means. We understand that whilst digital engagement

is convenient for some members of our community, this is not the case for everyone, and therefore we have been mindful about this as this SCI has been updated.

Whilst this is an SCI for the next five years, it will be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure it is up to date and reflects local and national priorities, practices, and policies.

Engaging with our communities in the planning process is very important. It enables us to hear their views and take those into consideration in making decisions that affect how land is used and developed in Greater Cambridge.

This Statement of Community Involvement goes much further than our current SCI. It ensures that the diversity of our residents and their views and aspirations are reflected in our emerging joint Local Plan as well as how development proposals are prepared, assessed and determined.

I commend this statement and look forward to working with our residents, businesses, developers and other stakeholders in using it effectively to create great places across Greater Cambridge.

Cllr. Dr. Tumi Hawkins, South Cambridgeshire District Councillor and Lead Cabinet Member for Planning Policy and Development Management

It is vitally important that everyone knows how to influence development in our area and make their voice heard. I am very pleased that we now have such a clear statement of how the Councils will ensure that residents, businesses, local organisations and visitors are properly consulted as we decide what to build, what to change, and how to create the best possible spaces within which we can live, work, learn, and play.

Elected members endeavour to continue to work closely with Planning Officers to make sure that we work in a transparent, trustworthy, and effective way, and the practices outlined in this important document demonstrate our ongoing commitment to serving the people of Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire.

I am very pleased to have this updated document setting out the Councils commitment and procedures for involving our communities - residents, businesses, local organisation and visitors - in the complicated process to build new buildings and create the best possible places.

It's through a concerted effort by everyone involved in planning that we can work towards improved transparency and arrive a place of mutual trust.

Councillor Katie Thornburrow, Cambridge City Councillor and Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure

1.0 Introduction

What is the Statement of Community Involvement?

- 1.1 This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how the Local Planning Authorities, Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council, will consult with local people, groups, businesses, partners, and other organisations in the planning process. This is important to improve understanding about how we prepare planning documents such as the Local Plan and guidance documents, consider planning applications, neighbourhood plans or neighbourhood development orders.
- 1.2 Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council have a shared planning service, the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service (GCSP). Planning officers within GCSP will be responsible for delivering all planning consultations, but Councillors within Cambridge City Council will ultimately have responsibility for consultations which effect the city of Cambridge, and Councillors within South Cambridgeshire District Council will oversee consultations that effect South Cambridgeshire. For consultations which affect both areas, both Councils will retain oversight.
- 1.3 Local Planning Authorities are currently required under [Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#) to prepare and review a SCI. This establishes the approach and standards of engagement we will make with our communities about planning matters or proposals. We aspire through the aims of the SCI to:
 - Ensure that engagement is managed **efficiently** by consulting at the earliest possible stages of the planning process, providing clear information about the proposals and by conducting early engagement with Councillors, stakeholders, community groups, applicants and individuals in a meaningful way.
 - Set clear and concise objectives of consultations in order to be **transparent** by keeping people informed, being clear on what we are asking for responses on, publishing outcomes, and setting realistic timelines for consultations and being open and clear about our decision making.
 - Be **proportionate** and **cost effective** in resource and promote best practice by exploring new and evolving methods of consultation and

communications including digital to engage more easily with local communities.

- Ensure consultation is **inclusive**, fair, equitable and supports our local communities in feeling heard through consultation methods that are consistent to all, including those people without access or find it difficult using digital communication.
- Be **accountable** in the decision-making process, by explaining how the responses to consultations will be considered, how people will be informed of outcomes or decisions, and ensure that the planning stages are robust, justified and consistent.

- 1.4 During the COVID-19 pandemic, both Councils had to reassess how they carried out public engagement whilst meeting social distancing requirements. In May 2019 and December 2020 GCSP published an addendum to its SCI which outlined the measures that the Councils were taking in response to the pandemic, including restricting face-to-face activities and holding events online. Whilst we are now able to meet face-to-face once again, the Councils learnt some key lessons on how to make good use of webinars and digital communication tools when carrying out public engagement exercises. This has the positive effect of making best-use of our resources whilst also making it more convenient for our communities to participate in engagement activities.
- 1.5 This document sets out the approach of the Councils to consulting and engaging with our communities through the different stages of the planning process. The sections of the document which follow explain the purpose of the SCI, how you can be involved in the process of preparing our planning policy documents, and how we will engage through different types planning applications. The document also provides guidance for how the local community can prepare neighbourhood plans or neighbourhood development orders, and how we will assist with this process.
- 1.6 The Appendices contain the glossary for words abbreviated throughout the document, the consultation bodies, the requirements for consulting on planning applications, and the Council's contact information.

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service Statement of Community Involvement

- 1.7 In 2018, Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council agreed to work in partnership to deliver shared services. This led to the

formation of the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service (GCSP), to deliver the range of services consistent with their responsibilities as the Local Planning Authority for the two areas.

- 1.8 It is important to recognise that although the Councils have prepared this joint SCI, Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council remain separate legal entities in relation to their designation as Local Planning Authorities.

Why is the Statement of Community Involvement being reviewed?

- 1.9 The [Town and Country Planning \(Local Plan\) \(England\) Regulations 2012 \(as amended\)](#) require Local Planning Authorities to review their SCI every five years. The current SCI was adopted in 2019, so is coming up to five years old and needs to be updated. This provides the opportunity to review the SCI to ensure it still provides the most efficient and effective approach to consultation and engagement and learns lessons from the wide range of engagement we have undertaken in recent years.
- 1.10 In 2020, the Government's consultation on the [White Paper Planning for the Future](#) proposed substantial reforms to streamline the planning system. This included proposed changes to the preparation of local plans and modernisation of planning, through improved engagement with people, by promoting the use of digital technology. At the time of writing this document, the Government are proposing reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. It is likely there will be further changes to the planning process and how we consult in the coming years, as well as where we capture information currently found in SCI's.
- 1.11 GCSP have already been working to explore digital opportunities to make information easily accessible and to make it easier to provide feedback. We have created [interactive maps](#) and [webinar videos](#) for our Local Plans. We are also seeking to continuously improve, for example we are part of the government's PropTech programme exploring improvements to digital engagement tools and transform community involvement in the planning process.

In carrying out the review of the SCI, particular consideration and changes has been given to:

- Opportunities provided by digital technology including the lessons learned during the Covid 19 pandemic;

- Learning from the Greater Cambridge Local Plan consultations, where we tried new methods of consultation for example interactive online digital engagement;
- providing more information to guide pre-application engagement by developers, including a range of engagement methods which they can consider at the initial stages of them preparing a development proposal;
- Highlighting the importance of reaching under represented groups, including Black and ethnic minorities communities, people with disabilities and young people;
- A new section on planning obligations/developer contributions and how the Councils may seek views on the use of contributions on priority projects for infrastructure, for example public art or children’s play spaces;
- Updates to our neighbourhood planning support offer reflecting experience gained, including refocusing our funding offer on Strategic Environmental Assessment screening rather than a health check;
- Setting out how local communities can respond to significant infrastructure projects which are considered and determined by other bodies outside of the councils.

What is the purpose of planning?

1.12 The purpose of planning is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 of the NPPF 2021 sets out the three overarching objectives: economic, social and environmental that should be achieved and delivered through plan making and decision taking.

1.13 The Local Planning Authorities are responsible for making decisions to guide where sustainable development takes place and its functions, guided by national planning policy and the development plan. The key functions that GCSP has in the overall planning process are:

- **Planning policy** or **plan making** is the formulation of a statutory development plan which sets out the vision for the future of the area and provides a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social, and environmental priorities. The main policy documents for the area are the adopted Local Plans. Other documents include supplementary planning documents (SPDs) which may also be produced to provide more detail on the policies in the Local Plan. Neighbourhood plans, produced by local communities, also form part of the development plan. You can find more information on what documents form part of our current development plan on our [website](#).

- **Development Management** is about ensuring that the right type, mix and design of development is provided in sustainable locations through the granting or refusal of planning permission. Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire determine most applications in the area, but some, such as for minerals and waste, are dealt with by Cambridgeshire County Council. Some very large infrastructure proposals are determined at the national level, through Development Consent Orders.

1.14 This SCI sets out in later sections, further detail of the Local Planning Authorities functions in relation to preparing planning policy, determining planning applications, consideration of the design and conservation of the built and natural environment, planning obligations, the approach to compliance, and how local communities can be assisted in preparing neighbourhood plans or neighbourhood development orders. Each of the sections outline the approach to consultation and engagement and the time periods that will be applied to ensure an appropriate balance between effective participation and efficient plan and decision making.

2.0 How can I get involved in the planning process?

- 2.1 Since planning has a direct impact on the daily lives of residents and businesses, it is important that development proposals are transparent and that you have the opportunity to have a say in the planning decisions that are made on your behalf. The Local Planning Authorities want to ensure that you have the opportunity to engage in planning decisions at the earliest possible stages of the planning process.
- 2.2 Early involvement in the planning process gives you the best chance of influencing planning proposals including in plan making, planning application stages and neighbourhood plans. The SCI's intention is to inform you of the formal stages in the planning process, including when and how you can engage and participate. In addition to the formal stages of planning, you are also able to speak to your local ward or parish Councillors about a planning matter or proposal you might wish to comment on or influence.
- 2.3 We recognise that local knowledge is valuable in making better planning decisions. An understanding of our communities concerns and aspirations is key to successful engagement. We also want to understand the aspirations of developers, as they are mainly responsible for delivering the new spaces that we plan for. Developers also have a significant role to play in engagement, and we will encourage them to engage effectively with local communities. Early engagement with our local communities often achieves the best planning outcomes.
- 2.4 The SCI has been written to guide you through the plan making, development management and neighbourhood planning process and set out how you can get involved in each of these areas. There are also a number of other ways you can engage in the planning process at a local level.
- 2.5 We have set up a series of forums for Planning Officers, Councillors and members of the public meet to discuss planning matters. We also sometimes invite developers to present information about their sites. There are the new settlements at [Northstowe](#), [Waterbeach](#), and [Bourn Airfield and Cambourne](#). Community Forums are also held focusing on development areas on the edge of Cambridge for [Cambridge East](#), [North West and West Cambridge](#), and [North East Cambridge](#). We also hold a [Residents Association Forum](#). [Waterbeach](#) and [Bourn Airfield and Cambourne](#). Community Forums are also held focusing on development areas on the edge of Cambridge for [Cambridge East](#), [North West and West Cambridge](#), and [North East Cambridge](#). We also hold a [Residents Association Forum](#). [Bourn Airfield and Cambourne](#). Community Forums are also held focusing on development areas on the edge of Cambridge

for [Cambridge East](#), [North West and West Cambridge](#), and [North East Cambridge](#). We also hold a [Residents Association Forum](#). [Waterbeach](#) and [Bourn Airfield and Cambourne](#). Community Forums are also held focusing on development areas on the edge of Cambridge for [Cambridge East](#), [North West and West Cambridge](#), and [North East Cambridge](#). We also hold a [Residents Association Forum](#) for residents of the city of Cambridge.

- 2.6 We hold [Agent Forums](#) to update planning agents on changes to legislation and procedures within GCSP. We also regularly hold Parish Council Forums where we can discuss planning issues with Parish Councils.

3.0 Our methods for community engagement in planning policy

What is planning policy?

- 3.1 Planning policy involves preparing plans or requirements to provide a vision that will guide decisions about new development in an area. In England, planning policy is delivered through the creation of a development plan which provides a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social, and environmental priorities. Planning applications have to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise.
- 3.2 The development plan for an area is typically made up of a number of documents, including a local plan, neighbourhood plans, waste and mineral plans and area action plans. There is also a policies map. There are other planning policy documents which help to guide decisions about new development, but which are not part of the development plan, such as supplementary planning documents (SPDs).

Why should communities help to create planning policies?

- 3.3 The Councils believe it is vital that you can contribute to planning policies in order to help to create the vision which will shape your area. We are therefore committed to providing opportunities for comment, feedback and engagement when preparing different planning policy documents. Including different perspectives from our communities means that the quality and effectiveness of the planning documents will improve. Below, the different types of planning policy documents are explained and there is also guidance about how communities can influence each document.

Local Plans

- 3.4 A Local Plan is a plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. The Local Plan contains policies relating to the amount of development that should take place, the number of jobs and homes that need to be created, where development should take place, and how it should be designed. The Local Plan also identifies

the infrastructure that needs to accompany development, setting policy requirements of developers, for example the provision of affordable housing Policies can apply to the whole area, or they can be specific to individual sites.

- 3.5 In 2018, Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council adopted their Local Plans. Both [Cambridge City Council](#) and [South Cambridgeshire District Council](#) also have a number of documents which contribute to their wider development plan. You can find more information on what documents form part of our current development plan on GCPS's [website](#).
- 3.6 The Councils are currently preparing a joint Local Plan to cover the areas of Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire. When adopted this will replace the adopted Local Plans of the individual Councils.
- 3.7 The [First Proposals consultation](#) on our emerging Local Plan sets out the vision to make Greater Cambridge a place where a big decrease in our climate impacts comes with a big increase in the quality of everyday life for all our communities. The Plan aims to create thriving neighbourhoods with the variety of jobs and homes we need, increase nature, wildlife and green spaces, and safeguard our unique heritage and landscapes.
- 3.8 We are also preparing a North East Cambridge Area Action Plan, which would also have the status of a local plan but cover the specific area around Cambridge North Railway Station and Cambridge Science Park.
- 3.9 A timetable for preparing and reviewing our Local Plan documents is set out in the [Local Development Scheme](#) (LDS). This is regularly updated and explains the stage that the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan and North East Cambridge Area Action Plan has reached and how people can comment on the Plan's policies.

Supplementary planning documents

- 3.10 Local plans can be supported by supplementary planning documents (SPDs). These documents provide guidance to support the implementation of planning policies and can include documents such as design codes for specific sites. The key difference for SPDs compared to local plans is that they do not undergo public examination by a Planning Inspector and are not automatically subject to a sustainability appraisal. SPDs are capable of being a material consideration which means they should be taken into account in decisions but are not part of the development plan.

- 3.11 It should be noted that where documents are being produced by an individual Council rather than jointly, the measures in this SCI will be applied by the individual Council. An example might be if a design code is produced to supplement one of the current adopted individual Council Local Plans.

Neighbourhood plans

- 3.12 Neighbourhood plans are a tool that local communities use to shape development in the places they live and work. Once adopted or 'made', neighbourhood plans become part of the development plan which means they become a material consideration when planning applications are decided. With neighbourhood plans, the community carries out the work, such as researching maps, conducting surveys, and drafting policies. This is often conducted by a parish council, or if it is an unparished area, a neighbourhood forum needs to be established which then acts as the qualifying body to prepare the neighbourhood plan.
- 3.13 Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council both have a duty to support communities who are preparing neighbourhood plans. This support could include advising on potential plan policies, supplying maps, or helping to set up a forum. We have also prepared a [Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit](#).
- 3.14 By August 2023, there were eight 'made' neighbourhood plans in Greater Cambridge with 15 further areas formally designated indicating their intention to prepare a neighbourhood plan. You can find details of neighbourhood plans being prepared by parish councils and neighbourhood forums and their current status on our [website](#).
- 3.15 Both Councils can also assist communities with the preparation and delivery of neighbourhood development orders (NDOs) which grant planning permission for buildings specific sites or for alterations across areas.
- 3.16 Once a neighbourhood plan is prepared and has undergone an independent examination and a successful referendum it falls to the Local Planning Authority to 'adopt' as a made plan. The Council that covers the area(s) of the neighbourhood plan can consider whether it should be adopted, for example a plan within South Cambridgeshire would be the responsibility of SCDC, and a plan in Cambridge City would be for CCC.

How will the Local Planning Authorities consult on Local Plan documents?

- 3.17 Each Local Planning Authority must fulfil a number of public consultations, in line with national government regulations shown in Table 1. However, we want to reflect the aims of this SCI and aspire to go beyond the Government's expectations for public engagement. For example, as part of the First Consultations for the emerging Local Plan, Planning Officers engaged with members of the public at pop-up events, met with groups who are traditionally under represented in planning consultations, and held webinars online to increase outreach. GCSP also tried to make our online consultations accessible by avoiding the use of planning jargon. GCSP will continue to consider innovative ways of carrying out public engagement for the next stages of the Local Plan.
- 3.18 Local Planning Authorities provide you with the opportunity to have your say on planning policy and aim to provide an efficient, transparent, proportionate, inclusive, accessible, accountable, and coherent approach to consultation.
- 3.19 In preparing a local plan document, Local Planning Authorities will engage with relevant stakeholders and gather evidence. For each consultation, Planning Officers will review each submitted comment, evaluate it against evidence, and consider whether the policy needs to be altered. Planning Officers will then prepare a consultation statement setting out how engagement has been undertaken, explaining how GCSP has considered the issues and how the feedback has been incorporated.
- 3.20 As part of the Examination process there could be further consultations, for example the main modifications to the Plan. Any additional consultations will be for six weeks unless it falls over a public holiday period where it may be extended.
- 3.21 The statutory process for preparing these documents is set out in the [Town and Country Planning Local Planning England Regulations \(2012\)](#) (as amended). There are two key stages of consultation during local plan preparation, Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 set out in Table 1.

Table 1: Local Plan preparation

Local Plan stage	Consultation duration
Public participation (Regulation 18)	One or more public consultations, on issues and options or draft policies. Consultations will be undertaken for a minimum of a six week period. All representations must be received within the consultation period.

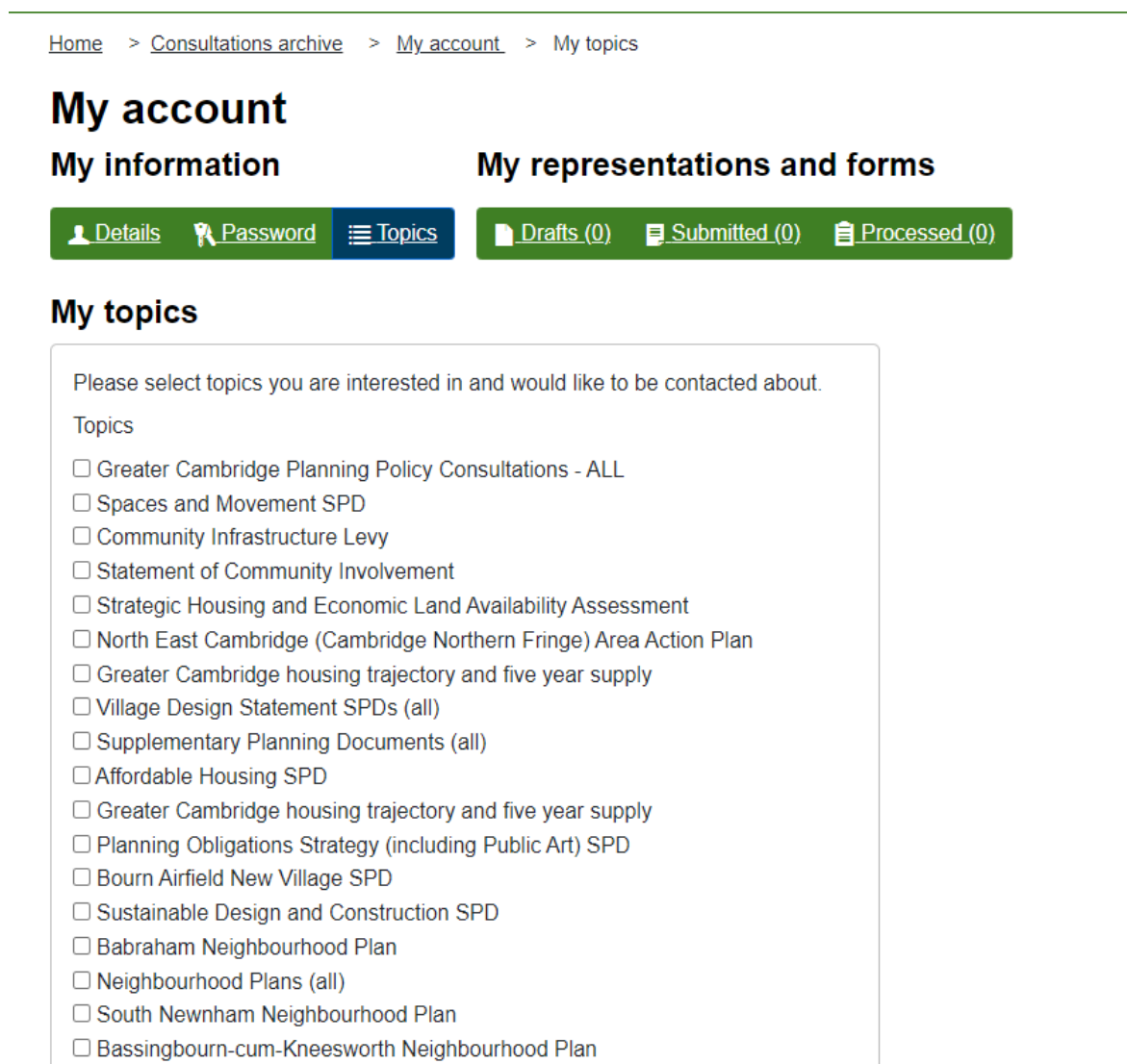
Pre-submission publication (Regulation 19)	Consultation will be undertaken for a minimum of a six week period. All representations must be received within the consultation period.
--	--

- 3.22 There are four main methods for consulting at Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 stages that the Councils will apply. These are:
- Inviting representations through a notice on the Councils websites, and advertising through other methods such as social media, news releases, Council publications or press adverts
 - Consultations with specific consultation bodies and appropriate general consultation bodies and other relevant stakeholders (see Appendix 2)
 - Consultation documents will be available to view on the Councils websites, and at our Council offices (see Appendix 3 for details)
 - Public consultation events if appropriate to the nature of the consultation (this may include in person and/or online events).
- 3.23 Following the consultation stages, the Council submits the Local Plan to the Secretary of State together with the representations received at the Regulation 19 stage. The submitted document and the representations received, will be considered by a Planning Inspector at an independent examination. The Council will notify the specific and general consultation bodies who were invited to make representations at earlier stages, and all those who have requested to be notified, of this stage.
- 3.24 Individuals and organisations that have made representations may be invited by the Inspector to submit a written statement during the examination. Individuals and organisations that made an objection to the document and have requested to speak at the examination will be contacted by the Inspector to be informed of the procedure for being heard.
- 3.25 Following the receipt of the Inspector’s Report the Councils will notify all those who have requested to be notified, as soon as it is reasonably practicable. The report will also be made available on the Councils website and at Council offices defined in Appendix 3.
- 3.26 If the Inspector has concluded that the Plan is sound the Council will adopt the plan and will publish an adoption statement on their website and make it available to view at Council offices as defined in Appendix 3. The Council will then again contact all those who have requested to be notified as soon as it is reasonably practical.

Who does Local Planning Authorities involve in Plan-making?

- 3.27 Regulations specify a number of organisations that Local Planning Authorities must consult when preparing planning policy documents. These bodies are set out in Appendix 2. They include specific consultation bodies and various types of general consultation bodies. Specific consultation bodies include utility companies, government agencies, Local Planning Authorities and parish councils. General consultation bodies are voluntary bodies active in the area and those bodies which represent different interests and include neighbourhood forums.
- 3.28 The Council is required to co-operate with neighbouring Local Planning Authorities and other prescribed bodies on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries under the statutory 'duty to co-operate'. The Councils are committed to cooperating with the [Local Nature Partnership](#) (LNP) (Natural Cambridgeshire) and have regard to their activities which are relevant to local plan making. The LNP acts as an independent voice for the natural environment in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and part of its role is to coordinate partners to deliver projects and activity that will meet the Partnership's vision and aims. The bodies identified under the statutory duty to co-operate are defined in Appendix 2.
- 3.29 Individuals and organisations can opt-in to receive notifications in relation to future public consultations. To opt-in, users must register onto the GCSP consultation database. Once logged into the [consultation database](#), the 'My Information' tab allows the user to choose the 'Topics' to receive future mailings about. These can be updated by the registered user as preferred. If you make comments on a planning policy document, we will also offer you the opportunity to opt-in to these updates, which will keep you informed about future stages of the plan making process. Figure 1 below shows the layout of the webpage with a preview of the list of topics to receive mailings about.

Figure 1: Layout of the consultation database screen



3.30 If you do not have an email address or do not have access to the internet but would like to opt-in to receiving future mailings in relation to public consultations or notifications on one or more of our planning policy documents, please contact us by telephone or write to us using the details in Appendix 3.

How can representations be submitted?

3.31 During the consultation periods our preferred method is to receive comments through our website. This is the easiest way to submit comments, and it helps us process your comments efficiently. Representations can also be sent to us by email, or post using the address in Appendix 3. If you are having difficulty commenting, or need information in a different format, please email us at localplan@greatercambridgeplanning.org, call us on 01954 713694.

- 3.32 Representations received, including names of who they were submitted by, will be published on the Councils websites. You can view the latest versions of our privacy notice on our website.
- 3.33 The online consultation system allows any individual, business, organisation, or group to register their details and submit comments during consultation periods.
- 3.34 The privacy notice for planning policy consultations and notifications sets out how your personal data will be used and by whom, if you opt-in to any of our 'topics' or submit representations. The consultation database will be maintained by the Local Planning Authorities and will follow the latest legal requirements on data protection, currently the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018.
- 3.35 The councils will not accept or publish comments that contravene its compliance with the Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010.

How will GCSP include a wider range of perspectives?

- 3.36 GCSP will meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, which aims to promote equality, eliminate discrimination and encourage good relations between different groups associated with age, disability, gender and gender reassignment, race, religion and other protected characteristics. It is recognised that some parts of the community in the area are under represented such as Gypsy and Traveller communities, the young and elderly, and it is important to include them in planning consultations. The Councils will work closely with relevant organisations that have experience in finding the best way to engage with these groups.
- 3.37 It is GCSP's aim to explore how innovative forms of public engagement can be further developed and refined in future consultations. In 2022 South Cambridgeshire District Council established the 'Young People Task & Finish Group' to explore how to improve youth engagement in South Cambridgeshire. A [report](#) set out the opportunities to create or develop effective youth engagement along with recommendations relating to the SCI that GCSP will use to improve planning consultation with young people.
- 3.38 The Councils want to ensure local communities are well informed about planning matters within the Greater Cambridge area. To achieve this, the Councils will continue to promote the use of electronic methods of consultation

including our website and social media to make involvement easier, quicker and more cost effective. The Councils are keen to explore new methods of communication and engagement with local communities, recognising that e-communications can be a highly effective way of publicising information about the planning service to the widest possible number of people and organisations.

- 3.39 GCSP aims to include a wide range of perspectives within the Plan-making process and will continue to explore different measures to improve levels of participation. Examples of where GCSP has tried to widen participation include:
- Creating accessible documents that meet the requirements set out in our [GCSP accessibility statement](#)
 - Used social media and videos to publicise consultations
 - Created bespoke consultation websites to support engagement
 - Held events at a wide range of venues and locations, for example providing drop in events, attending established events like coffee mornings, or providing information at railways stations
 - Held interactive webinars to discuss consultation issues and responded to questions, and used interactive tools to allow attendees to participate
 - Engaged directly with groups who are under-represented in planning consultations, such as sixth-form students, and Gypsy and Travellers communities.

Preparation of supplementary planning documents

- 3.40 SPDs can be prepared to add greater detail and guidance to planning policies or allocations. A SPD cannot create new or amend planning policy. SPDs could relate to an area or they may be topic-based, such as affordable housing or design guidance.
- 3.41 Prior to the formal stage of consultation, Local Planning Authorities will engage with relevant stakeholders and gather evidence. They will prepare a consultation statement setting out how this has been done, and how issues that have been raised have been considered in finalising the SPD.
- 3.42 The Local Planning Authorities will consider all comments that are made at formal consultation stage and make any appropriate changes to the SPD before it is adopted. Upon adoption the SPD will be published together with an adoption statement, made available to view on the Councils website, and at the Council's main offices (see Appendix 3). Local Planning Authorities will also send a copy of the adoption statement to all those who requested to be notified.
- 3.43 The statutory process for preparing these documents is set out in the Town and Country Planning Local Planning England Regulations (2012) (as amended).

There is one public consultation stage during SPD preparation, Regulation 12 and Regulation 13 that should be consulted on for a minimum of four weeks.

3.44 There are four methods for consulting at Regulation 12 and Regulation 13 stages that will be followed. These are:

- Inviting representations through a notice on the Councils websites, and advertising through other methods such as social media, news releases, Council publications or press adverts
- Consultations with specific consultation bodies and appropriate general consultation bodies and other relevant stakeholders (see Appendix 2)
- Consultation documents will be available to view on the Councils websites, and at our Council offices (see Appendix 3)
- Public consultation events if appropriate to the nature of the consultation (this may include in person and / or online events).

Preparation of neighbourhood plans

3.45 The statutory process for preparing these documents is set out in the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 and subsequent amendments. Table 2 below sets out the key stages of consultation during neighbourhood plan preparations that are undertaken by the Local Planning Authorities. More information regarding the neighbourhood planning process can be found on our website and Section 5 of this document sets out how Local Planning Authorities will assist parish councils and neighbourhood forums during the NP process.

Table 2: Neighbourhood Plan Preparation

Neighbourhood plan stage	Consultation duration
Regulation 5, 6 and 7 Neighbourhood Area Designation: The qualifying body applies to the Local Planning Authority for a neighbourhood area to be designated.	No consultation is required where the whole of a parish is proposed. A minimum period of 6 weeks consultation for all other proposed neighbourhood plan areas
Regulation 9, 10 and 11: Designation of a neighbourhood forum	Not less than 6 weeks from the date on which the application is first publicised
Regulation 15 and 16 Submission: Where a draft NP is submitted to the Local Planning Authority and the plan meets the requirements in the legislation, the Local Planning Authority must publicise the NP.	Minimum of 6 weeks

Neighbourhood plan stage	Consultation duration
Regulation 18 Independent Examination: Post receipt of the Examiners Report the local planning authority may decide to make a decision which differs from that recommended by the examiner. If this is the case the local planning authority must carry out a targeted consultation inviting representations.	Within 6 weeks of the local planning authority first inviting representations

3.46 The main methods for consulting on neighbourhood plans at the Regulation 5, 6 and 7, 9, 10 and 11 stages that must be followed are:

- Inviting representations through a notice on the Councils websites, and advertising through other methods such as social media, news releases, Council publications or press adverts
- Consultations with specific consultation bodies and appropriate general consultation bodies and other relevant stakeholders (see Appendix 2)
- The relevant qualifying body will be asked to assist the Local Planning Authority in publicising the consultation by placing information about it in any local newsletters or on their website
- If requested by the relevant qualifying body the Local Planning Authority will also notify local contacts in the proposed neighbourhood area. The contact details of these local groups to be provided by the qualifying body
- Posters prepared by the Council to be shown at key locations in the neighbourhood plan area during the particular stages: creation of a forum, designation of area, and consultation on submission
- Consultation documents will be available to view on the Council's websites, and at the relevant Council offices (see Appendix 3), additionally at the qualifying body's office or publicly accessible venue within the neighbourhood area during normal office hours.

3.47 The main methods for consulting on neighbourhood plans at the Regulation 15 and 16 stages that must be followed are:

- Inviting representations through a notice on the Councils websites, and advertising through other methods such as social media, news releases, Council publications or press adverts
- Notify any consultation body referred to in the consultation statement submitted alongside the draft neighbourhood plan. These bodies are referred to in [Paragraph 1 of Schedule 1 in the Neighbourhood Planning \(General\) Regulations 2012](#). The qualifying body will have considered which of these to notify depending on whose interests the qualifying body considers may be affected by proposals in the draft neighbourhood plan

- Emails to anyone that has 'opted-in' to be notified of consultations on the specific document being prepared
- Consultation documents will be available to view on the Councils websites, and at the relevant Council offices (see Appendix 3), additionally at the qualifying body's office or publicly accessible venue within the neighbourhood area during normal office hours.

3.48 The main methods for consulting on neighbourhood plans at the Regulation 18 stage that must be followed are:

- Emails sent by the Local Planning Authority inviting representations from
 - the qualifying body
 - anyone whose representation was submitted to the examiner and any consultation body that was previously consulted.

4.0 Methods for community engagement at the planning application stage

- 4.1 A planning application is a means by which someone applies for permission from the Local Planning Authority to develop land. Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council are responsible for most planning decisions that are made in their respective areas, with some exceptions such as minerals and waste which is dealt with by the Council. We receive a wide range of planning applications for formal determination. The Local Planning Authorities assess and determine planning applications against national planning policies and local policies, including the local plan. Applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2 GCSP makes all applications and decisions available to view online through our [planning applications page](#) (see Figure 2). On the same website, a [weekly list](#) of validated and determined planning applications is made available for parish councils, neighbourhood forums and any other interested parties to be kept informed of planning decisions in their areas. There are four key stages to the planning application process set out in Table 3.

Figure 2: Layout of the Search Function on the Planning Applications Page

The screenshot shows the 'Greater Cambridge Shared Planning' website. The header includes the logo and the text 'Greater Cambridge Shared Planning: a strategic partnership between Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Councils'. Below the header is a navigation bar with links for 'Search', 'My Profile', 'Login', 'Register', and 'Apply Online'. The main content area features a heading 'The online planning register allows you to search, view, track and comment on planning applications.' followed by a link to 'User Guide | Terms and conditions'. The search section is titled 'Planning – Simple Search' and includes instructions: 'Search for Planning Applications, Appeals and Tree Works Applications by keyword, application reference (e.g. 11/0945/FUL or S/4480/17/OL), postcode or by a single line of an address.' The search interface has tabs for 'Simple', 'Advanced', 'Weekly/Monthly Lists', 'Property', and 'Map'. Under the 'Simple' tab, there are sub-tabs for 'Applications', 'Appeals', and 'Enforcements'. The 'Applications' sub-tab is active. Below the sub-tabs are two dropdown menus: 'Local Authority: All' and 'Status: All'. A text input field is labeled 'Enter a keyword, reference number, postcode or single line of an address.' and has a 'Search' button next to it. The 'on idox solution' logo is visible in the bottom right corner.

Table 3: Planning Application Process

Stage of process	Explanation
Pre-application	An applicant or developer prepares the development proposal. Early engagement with the Local Planning Authority, relevant stakeholders and the community is strongly encouraged, especially for larger and more complex proposals.
Planning application	An application is submitted to the Local Planning Authority who will consult on the planning application
Decision making	A decision is made by either a planning committee of elected Councillors or delegated to a Planning Officer
Appeals	The applicant has a right to appeal where they disagree with the decision of the Local Planning Authority to refuse permission

4.3 The statutory requirements for consulting on planning applications are set out in Appendix 4.

Pre-application advice and consultation

4.4 Both Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Council encourage applicants or developers to carry out early engagement with the Local Planning Authority and the local community before submitting a planning application. These discussions enable Planning Officers to provide advice to the applicant and in no way predetermine the outcome of the application. Early discussion of a proposal in the form of a pre-application with the council verifies the information required to be submitted with the application and reduces the likelihood of submitting invalid applications. It provides an opportunity for Planning Officers to provide an initial view on a proposal, identifying issues and opportunities an early stage. This enables more efficient use of resources, as problems can be addressed earlier on in the process.

4.5 There are also significant benefits to involving communities and stakeholders at the pre-application stage, including:

- Helping the applicant to understand how planning policies and other requirements may affect their proposal
- Addressing issues early on is likely to result in higher quality proposals that reflect the aspirations of communities. This could lead to less objections, meaning the applications are likely to move through the application process more quickly.

4.6 Whilst some pre-application discussions can be confidential for commercial reasons, developers are strongly encouraged to undertake community

engagement at this stage of the planning process, particularly where development is likely to have significant impacts on local communities or where the site is particularly sensitive.

- 4.7 An example of good engagement between developer and community at the pre-application stage occurred during a recent application for a mix of residential properties and commercial spaces in Devonshire Gardens, Cambridge. Socius and Railpen were the developers for the scheme and held substantial consultation with the local community, with over 3,000 local residents responding to the proposals. The final site will incorporate new public space and a community pavilion which will be shaped by a local design competition following planning permission. Similarly, the Hartree developers at North East Cambridge held a People City Planet Festival where over 400 people attended the two day event at Shirley Community Primary School to find out more about the proposals for the site, listen to talks and participate in interactive workshops, and provide feedback on the proposals.
- 4.8 The [Localism Act 2011](#) introduced a duty for developers to consult local communities before submitting planning applications for certain developments. For development proposals that fall outside of the requirements of the Localism Act, the Local Planning Authority encourage pre-application consultation with local communities and key stakeholders. This allows those likely to be affected by the development to raise potential issues and to make suggestions.
- 4.9 Further information about the pre-application process or how to request a Duty Planning Officer service where members of the public can obtain advice and guidance on householder applications, can be found on GCSP's [website](#).

Planning performance agreements

- 4.10 GCSP offers the opportunity for applicants or developers to enter into a planning performance agreement (PPA), which sits alongside the pre-application advice service. A PPA is a project management tool that allows all parties to agree timescales, actions and resources for handling planning applications. PPAs are usually agreed at the pre-application stage and relate to the whole development process, from pre-application planning advice and community engagement to application progress meetings right through to the post decision stage, including the discharge of conditions and site monitoring. PPAs can be used for any type of application but are most effective for major and complex planning applications. You can find more information on PPAs on our [website](#).

Pre-application advice for Listed Buildings

- 4.11 GCSP offers separate pre-application advice to the owners of Listed Buildings and their agents. This advice enables the applicant to discuss their proposals with a Conservation Officer and to receive either verbal or written advice as to the suitability of what they hope to do. For bigger schemes, owners of higher graded listed buildings, Grade II* and Grade I, are also recommended to contact Historic England who also offer a pre-application service.

Design panels

- 4.12 Design review panels are a well-established and effective way of offering multi-disciplinary, independent advice from a panel of experts who help to inform the planning process and give greater confidence in the decision making of innovative and quality design of the built environment. Panels involve a group of experts such as architects, heritage professionals, and urban designers, who meet to analyse prospective applications to improve the quality of Greater Cambridge's built environment. It is possible for applicants to book an appointment with design panels and a fee needs to be paid to obtain the expert's advice.
- 4.13 There are currently three design panels which are used at the pre-application stage to improve the quality and accessibility of proposals. The panels consist of members from different disciplines and offer critical design advice to applications. The [Cambridgeshire Quality Panel](#) is led by Cambridgeshire County Council for schemes that are going to the Joint Development Control Committee. The panel helps to raise the quality of development by identifying where designs can be improved to achieve the best possible outcomes, in accordance with the adopted Local Plans. The Disability Panel is led by GCSP and considers applications that go to the South Cambridgeshire District Council's Planning Committee and Cambridge City Council's Planning Committee. There is also the [Greater Cambridge Design Review Panel](#) which is led by GCSP and offers independent advice and considers applications that go to the same two committees. The panel reviews major or significant planning applications and pre-applications for sites within the Greater Cambridge area, that fall outside of the remit of the Cambridgeshire Quality Panel. The Greater Cambridge Design Review Plan may also review any policies, guidance and documents that relate to these sites. The panel reviews major or significant planning and pre-applications for sites within the Greater Cambridge area, that fall outside of the remit of the Cambridgeshire Quality Panel. The Greater Cambridge Design Review Pan may also review any policies, guidance and documents that relate to these sites.

Youth engagement service

- 4.14 There are many under represented groups across Greater Cambridge that we aspire to engage with, including young people. Engagement with young people can ensure that the final design of developments considers the specific interests of children and young people who are often under represented in public consultations, particularly in relation to delivering play areas and public spaces that are child friendly and fit for purpose.
- 4.15 GCSP provides an award-winning [youth engagement service](#). It aims to address the long standing issue of young people being under represented in decision making about the built environment. The service aims to enhance planning outcomes by giving young people opportunities to be involved in our work whilst increasing diversity and inclusion.
- 4.16 The service does this by holding workshops in schools that involve Planning Officers and developers who together deliver activities to help young people learn more about their local built environment. Often, the workshops are shaped around a specific planning proposal, which is then used as a gateway to discuss broader issues, such as the history of development in their areas. The students often participate in activities such as designing play areas, public open spaces, and street furniture. In some instances, benches and art installations designed by the participants have been incorporated into the design of a planning proposal and been implemented in the development.

Other forms of pre-application engagement

- 4.17 The most effective way to achieve good planning outcomes is for early community engagement in the planning application process. The Local Planning Authorities therefore expect developers to engage with local people in a meaningful way that, so that proposals are refined as they progress through the planning process. There are a number of ways to do this, including innovative methods:
- **Urban Rooms:** This is a [space](#) where members of the public are able to come together to discuss and engage with planning issues and are encouraged to express their views about proposed developments. They are sometimes transportable spaces, facilitating meaningful discussions with groups representing the local community. Urban Rooms and other such spaces should be well publicised and easily accessible to the community in order to enable effective community participation. The responses and dialogue at these events could be used to explore

refinements to proposals to achieve wider community support. Developers are encouraged to use feedback loops to explain how they have incorporated community feedback.

- **Co-design:** This process involves developers identifying residents of the scheme and working with them to design their new homes. [Marmalade Lane](#) in Orchard Park, Cambridge was produced by residents, Cambridge City Council, and the developer TOWN, and is an example of community collaboration at the pre-application stage.
- **Online tools:** Developers could use innovative online [engagement tools](#) that enable local people to easily identify areas which are of social value, and spaces that need improvement. The information gathered could be used to inform the content of development proposals.

The Planning Application Process

- 4.18 The [Town and Country Planning \(Development Management Procedure\) Order 2015](#) (as amended) requires that at any time before a decision is made on a planning application, stakeholders and the local community should have the opportunity to comment on any aspect of the proposal. The level and extent of consultation will vary depending on the size, scale, location, and nature of the proposed development. Planning applications, supporting information and key dates are available for public inspection on the [GCSP website](#).
- 4.19 Comments, known as representations, that are received during the consultation period will be considered in decisions made by and on behalf of the Councils. Representations must be submitted in writing, electronically via email or through the [consultation system](#). Late representations may be considered up to the point of determination of the application, however it is highly recommended that they are received during the consultation period indicated. They can only be taken into account if they relate to material planning considerations. You can find more information on this on the [government's website](#) on the planning system. Representations will be added to the application file and made publicly available online alongside the planning application documents. These will be published in accordance with the Council's Privacy Notice.
- 4.20 When a planning application is registered by the Local Planning Authority, there is a statutory period during which anyone can comment on the proposal, as set out in Table 4. It is the Local Planning Authorities responsibility to publicise planning applications. The approach to notification of planning applications will be to:

- Publish details of planning applications online on [Public Access](#), including which applications have been registered, digital copies of Plans and supporting information. Our websites include a search function to help find specific planning applications.
- Undertake appropriate notification as shown in Table 4. In some instances, the Local Planning Authority can go beyond the minimum statutory requirements where the development would potentially have a wider impact and may make use of additional methods of communication, for example through articles in the Councils' magazines. Such wider consultation is carried out at the discretion of the Planning Officer.
- Parish councils in South Cambridgeshire as well as neighbourhood forums in the city of Cambridge are consulted on all appropriate planning applications as statutory consultees.
- Consult with both statutory and non-statutory consultees. All consultees have 21 days (30 days for applications accompanied by an Environmental Statement) from the issue of the consultation notice to make representations (extended as appropriate where the period extends over public or bank holidays). It is highly recommended that representations are submitted prior to the published consultation deadline. The list of statutory and non-statutory consultees related to planning application consultations is set out in Appendix 5.

4.21 Where neighbour notification letters/emails are sent out, Neighbour notification letters/emails are sent to directly adjoining properties of the application site. The Planning Officer may sometimes determine that neighbour notification letters and emails should be sent beyond this where a development could potentially have an impact on a wider area.

4.22 In addition, Cambridge City Council operates a [Development Control Forum](#) where petitioners to an application can present their views to Councillors, Planning Officers and the applicant before a planning application is determined. The aim of the Forum is to allow early discussion of the planning issues raised by petitioners and to seek to resolve concerns. The Forum does not determine the outcome of the planning application.

4.23 It is at the discretion of the Local Planning Authority whether further publicity and public consultation is necessary when an application has been amended. In deciding if it is necessary, the Local Planning Authority will consider the criteria set out in [Planning Practice Guidance \(PPG\)](#) published by the Government. In most cases a period of 14 days is considered an appropriate period to allow for further comment.

- 4.24 Table 4 sets out how the Councils will publicise planning applications made under planning legislation. Each type of planning application will be the subject of a different method of publicity which will broadly reflect the scale and impact of the proposal on its surroundings.
- 4.25 Where an application falls within a Conservation Area a site notice may be required and the Local Planning Authority will advise. Certain classes of permitted development will require a Prior Notification application. In these cases, an application must be made to the Local Planning Authority who has to make its determination within the statutory period set out in the GDPO from the date of receiving the application. The time period can vary depending on the type and complexity of the proposal and in some cases in agreement with the applicant and Local Planning Authority. Prior notification applications will be publicised online and may in some instances include a site notice and neighbour consultation letter, depending on the type and nature of the development proposal. Further details about prior notification can be found at :-[Prior approval - Consent types - Planning Portal](#)
- 4.26 There is no statutory requirement to consult on the following types of applications:
- Certificates of Lawfulness of proposed use or development
 - Certificates of Lawfulness of existing use or development
 - Approval of details/Discharge of Conditions
 - Non material amendments.

Table 4: Minimum publicity for planning applications

Type of application required for	Minimum methods of publicity
Major Development	Site notice or neighbour notification letter/email, press notice in local newspaper, website, parish council notification letter/email, neighbourhood forum letter/email notification.
Minor Development	Site notice or neighbour notification letter/email, website, parish council notification letter/email, neighbourhood forum letter/email notification.
Householder Applications	Site notice or neighbour notification letter/email, website, parish council notification letter/email, neighbourhood forum letter/email notification.
Applications subject to EIA which are accompanied by an Environmental Statement	Site notice or neighbour notification letter/email, press notice in local newspaper for a minimum of 30 days, website, parish council notification letter/email, neighbourhood forum letter/email notification.
Applications which do not accord with the development plan for the area	Site notice, press notice in local newspaper for a minimum of 30 days, website, parish council notification letter/email, neighbourhood forum letter/email notification.
Applications affecting a Public Right of Way	Site notice, press notice in local newspaper for a minimum of 30 days, website, parish council notification letter/email, neighbourhood forum letter/email notification.
Listed Building applications and applications affecting the setting of a Listed Building	Site notice or neighbour notification letter/email, press notice in local newspaper, website, parish council notification letter/email, neighbourhood forum letter/email notification.
Brownfield Land Register (Part 2)	Site notice, website, parish council notification letter/email, neighbourhood forum letter/email notification.
Works to protected trees	Site notice responsible for by applicant, site notice or neighbour notification letter/email is discretionary (to be determined on a case by case basis by the Local Planning Authority) but the landowner must be notified, website, parish council notification letter/email is discretionary (to be determined on a case by case basis by the Local Planning Authority) and neighbourhood forum letter/email notification is also discretionary (to be determined on a case by case basis by the Local Planning Authority).
Applications relating to an advertisement	Site notice and/or neighbour notification letter/email, website, parish council notification letter/email, neighbourhood forum letter/email notification.
Hazardous Substances Consent	Site notice and/or neighbour notification letter/email, press notice in local newspaper, website, parish council notification letter/email, neighbourhood forum letter/email notification.

Decision Making process

- 4.27 Decisions on planning applications are made by Planning Committee and Planning Officers under delegated powers. Delegated powers enable Planning Officers to determine applications without needing a decision from the Planning Committee. This is set out in the [Schemes of Delegation](#). Applications that are likely to be considered by the Planning Committee include applications for Major developments and applications relating to the demolition of a listed building or a Building of Local Interest.
- 4.28 The Councils are involved in three planning committees. There are two separate Planning Committees for the respective Local Planning Authorities. There is also the Joint Development Control Committee which addresses specific areas on the edge of the city, which comprises members appointed by the city and district council. This Committee considers planning applications for major and ancillary developments on the fringes of Cambridge.
- 4.29 Agendas and reports for Planning Committee are publicly available at least five working days before the meeting and are also published online. The committee meetings are minuted and published online. Members of the public may speak at a Planning Committee provided they have previously made written representations on the proposed development. Both Councils have further guidance and information regarding speaking at Committee Meetings and can be viewed on the City [website](#) and South Cambridgeshire [website](#), and on the joint committee [website](#).
- 4.30 Once an application has been determined, a copy of the planning decision notice will be sent to the applicant. As part of [The Town and Country Planning \(Development Management Procedure\) \(England\) Order 2015](#), Local Planning Authorities are required to send notification of the decision to all third parties who have made representations, in accordance with the Local Planning Authorities statutory requirements. The Local Planning Authority will also make the decision available to view online through [Public Access](#) along with the reports that have been considered in the reaching of the decision. On the same website, a [weekly list](#) of validated and determined planning applications is made available for parish councils, neighbourhood forums and any other interested parties to be kept informed of planning decisions in their areas.

Planning Appeals

- 4.31 An applicant may appeal to the Planning Inspectorate against a refusal or contest any of the conditions imposed to the granting of permissions or the non-

determination of an application. Only the applicant has the right to appeal. The Local Planning Authority will support the appeals process by adding appeal documentation to the online planning file online on [Public Access](#). The Councils will inform all parties that were originally consulted on the application or made representations on the proposal of the appeal. A planning appeal will then be considered by the Planning Inspectorate, who will make the final decision on the proposal. The Local Planning Authority has no statutory requirement to notify neighbours or interested parties of the appeal decision. This will be made available on the Planning Inspectorate [website](#).

- 4.32 There are three procedures that an appeal can follow, written representations which usually relate to householder applications, advertisement consent and minor commercial (shop front) applications as well as a public hearing or a public inquiry. The Planning Inspectorate publish a [Planning appeals: procedural guide](#) where you can find more information about how appeals work and opportunities to participate.

Compliance

- 4.33 Planning compliance (formerly referred to as enforcement) describes the processes involved in ensuring that people comply with planning law and requirements of a planning permission. The majority of cases arise through referrals from the public, Councillors and Planning Officers. Many investigations are confidential, so the process involves little public consultation. Where a breach of planning control is reported, an Officer will investigate and assess the complaint, gather evidence, and establish what, if any, the most appropriate course of action should be.
- 4.34 Many investigations result in the submission of a planning application in an attempt to regularise a breach. When this is the case, the community can become more involved in the same way as with any other planning application. If the breach cannot be regularised, the Local Planning Authority will consider formal enforcement action. The Local Planning Authority will ensure that the complainant is informed of the outcome of the Council's investigation. Further information about the compliance process can be found on the [Councils websites](#), including the [GCSP's Compliance Policy](#).

National Infrastructure Planning

- 4.35 Introduced by the Planning Act 2008 to streamline the decision making for major infrastructure projects, National Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs), are large scale infrastructure projects, which fall into one of the following categories:

- Energy Generation
- Transport Projects
- Water and Waste
- Pipelines

4.36 These projects can include new roads, railway lines, power stations, reservoirs and waste water treatment plants. NSIPs require a development consent order (DCO) and this process for granting planning permission is determined by the Planning Inspectorate. It is different from the usual planning application process. There are 6 stages to the process:

- Pre-application
- Acceptance
- Pre-examination
- Examination
- Recommendation and Decision
- Post Decision

4.37 Before submitting a major infrastructure project an applicant, for example, a developer or Government Department has a duty to carry out consultation on their proposals. The applicant must prepare a Statement of Community Consultation (SOCC) which sets out how the applicant proposes to consult the local community. It is a key opportunity for the Local Authority, using local knowledge, to inform how the consultation should be conducted. It is also at this stage the applicant will formally consult the statutory consultees, local authorities, affected parties and the local community of the proposal.

4.38 If you wish to participate in the examination of an application for development consent, you first need to register with the Planning Inspectorate by making a Relevant Representation about an application. More information can be found on the [Planning Inspectorate](#) website.

5.0 How can the community be involved in the allocation of planning obligation funds?

- 5.1 In certain circumstances a planning application will need to be supported by the provision of on site and/or off site infrastructure or financial contributions to make it acceptable in planning terms. An applicant will be required to enter into a planning obligation also known as S106 Agreement. Guidance on S106 Agreements is available on the Councils [Youtube](#). This is a legal agreement between the applicant or the landowner of the application site and the Councils. They normally deal with how a development will be carried out or the provision of new or improved infrastructure, community services or facilities.
- 5.2 Major or strategic developments generally have more complex obligations attached, but obligations may also be applied to small scale developments to achieve, for example, provision of affordable housing or sustainable travel measures.
- 5.3 Through consultations at pre-application stage and as part of the consideration of planning applications, the local community, key partners and stakeholders may give their views on the content of any likely planning obligations. This may be considered in line with previously identified projects and the priorities of both Councils. These will also be taken into consideration when the Council determines the planning application and any required obligations, in accordance with [Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy \(CIL\) Regulations](#) and in compliance with the three 'CIL' tests.
- 5.4 In some instances, the Councils will seek the views of local communities where developer contributions need to be spent on specific off-site infrastructure projects (for example public art or the refurbishment of a children's play space). These types of projects are usually overseen by other Council service areas where information on the scope of the project, funds available and geographically where the funds can be spent is set out on the relevant council website.

Biodiversity

- 5.5 The GCSP Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document was adopted in February 2022. It provides clear guidance on how developments should consider biodiversity at the start of the planning process to make sure Biodiversity Net Gain is integrated, increased and enhances development proposals. This is in line with the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan and the Environment Act 2021, which requires new development to provide

biodiversity net gain. The Councils will seek to require developers to deliver 20% BNG and under the scheme developers who are unable to meet BNG on site in the South Cambridgeshire area will be able to secure biodiversity off site from the Lower Farm BNG scheme in Fulbourn. Habitats will be secured for at least 30 years via obligations and/or conservation covenant and can be delivered on-site, off-site or via statutory biodiversity credits.

6.0 How the local community can prepare a neighbourhood plan or neighbourhood development order

- 6.1 The [Localism Act 2011](#) introduced the opportunity for local communities to prepare neighbourhood plans and neighbourhood development orders (NDOs). These may be prepared by parish councils or designated neighbourhood forums and form part of the statutory plan for the area which can be used in deciding local planning applications.
- 6.2 Neighbourhood plans set out policies for the development and use of land in a local area or neighbourhood. A neighbourhood plan helps set out a community's vision and can allocate sites for development of housing, employment and community uses. The neighbourhood plan cannot propose less growth than the Local Plan, prevent development from ever taking place in an area and is required to be in general conformity with strategic policies in the Local Plan. Once adopted a neighbourhood plan forms part of the development plan for the area and has the same status as a Local Plan.
- 6.3 Neighbourhood development orders (NDOs) grant planning permission for specific developments within a designated neighbourhood area and remove the requirement to submit a planning application for this type of development.
- 6.4 Whilst the neighbourhood plan making process itself is community led, Local Planning Authorities have a statutory duty to help local communities as set out in the [Neighbourhood Planning \(General Regulations\) 2015 regulations](#). Local Planning Authorities offer assistance through the [Support Offer](#) and [Toolkit](#) that provide guidance on how Local Planning Authorities will support and assist parish councils and neighbourhood forums that are preparing a neighbourhood plan. Neighbourhood plans are required to undergo independent examination and are subject to a referendum of the local community before they can be 'made'.
- 6.5 The SCI broadly sets out how the Local Planning Authorities carry out this duty to advise and assist parish councils and neighbourhood forums at each of the key stages. The amount of support provided will be subject to both the Local Planning Authorities resource availability and the needs of the parish council or neighbourhood forum. Further detailed guidance has been prepared by the Local Planning Authorities and is available on the [neighbourhood planning page](#) of the GCSP website.

Broad overview of how the Local Planning Authorities will provide advice and support for neighbourhood planning

Step One: Getting started

- 6.6 Planning Officers will provide advice online through the GCSP website and will respond to email or telephone enquiries about neighbourhood planning. Officers will meet with parish councils in South Cambridgeshire or neighbourhood forums in Cambridge City who may be interested in preparing a neighbourhood plan to:
- identify the area within which their plan would apply
 - the requirements of preparing a plan
 - any other alternative methods for groups to meet their local objectives
 - whether the parish council or neighbourhood forum has the necessary information to decide which approach works best.

Step Two: Designating a neighbourhood area or forum

- 6.7 For parish councils in South Cambridgeshire, an application form for a new neighbourhood area is to be completed and submitted by the parish council. For groups seeking to create a neighbourhood forum within Cambridge City, an application form for creating a neighbourhood forum is to be completed and submitted as well as the application for a new neighbourhood area.
- 6.8 Where consultation is required for a neighbourhood area this will be for a minimum of six weeks undertaken by the Local Planning Authority. The publicity for public consultation will correspond with the timescales and methods set out in Table 2. The Local Planning Authority can assist by preparing a map to show the proposed neighbourhood area.

Step Three: Preparing the plan and evidence base

- 6.9 Once the neighbourhood area is designated, the Local Planning Authority will meet with the parish council or neighbourhood forum to advise on:
- The adopted local plan, emerging policy and guidance documents;
 - What support the Local Planning Authority can give during plan-making process
 - Regulatory and legal requirements, including the requirement to meet the [Basic Conditions](#)
 - Sources of grants and technical support packages
 - Effective methods of public engagement

- Mapping support
- Sources of information including providing links to a library of resources
- The use of a planning consultant who specialises in neighbourhood planning.

6.10 During the preparation of the NP, the Local Planning Authority will:

- Provide information about where to find data for the evidence base
- Share information on contacts for key consultees
- Highlight the key allocations and designations on the local plan policies map that will impact the neighbourhood plan area
- Provide constructive comments on emerging draft policies in the NP against the [Basic Conditions](#)
- Provide guidance in the [neighbourhood planning toolkit](#) which includes how to prepare a NP and the evidence base and specialist advice on planning issues that may need to be included in the NP, such as local housing needs.

Step Four: Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

6.11 There is a statutory requirement for neighbourhood plans to carry out an [Strategic Environmental Assessment](#) and [Habitat Regulations Assessment](#) to ensure:

- The emerging NP provides a high level of protection of the environment (SEA)
- The emerging NP protects and improves Europe's most important habitats and species (HRA).

6.12 A neighbourhood development order may also require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to ensure that the full knowledge of any significant effects on the environment are known. Other European directives or future regulations may apply in particular circumstances of a draft neighbourhood plan or neighbourhood development order and the Local Planning Authority will be able to advise at this stage.

6.13 For neighbourhood plans in both Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire, the Local Planning Authority will organise and pay for the SEA and HRA screening of the neighbourhood plan up to a maximum cost of £2,000 including VAT. If the cost is higher than this or a repeat screening is required, the excess will need to be funded by the parish council or neighbourhood forum. The Local Planning Authority will also advise on third party technical support packages for any Neighbourhood Plan that requires a full SEA or HRA, particularly those

offered by [Locality](#) as part of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities funding.

Step Five: Pre-submission consultation and preparing the plan for submission

6.14 The Local Planning Authority will advise the parish council or neighbourhood forum of how to apply for technical support packages that include a health check of the draft neighbourhood plan. This health check is carried out before they submit the neighbourhood plan and supporting documents to the Local Planning Authority.

6.15 The [health check](#) review considers whether the draft neighbourhood plan meets the [Basic Conditions](#) and the independent examiner will provide guidance on any amendments required to ensure the conditions are met prior to submission of the neighbourhood plan.

Step Six: Submission of the NP for Public Examination

6.16 The final stages of preparing the neighbourhood plan are undertaken with the Local Planning Authority as the lead rather than the parish council or neighbourhood forum. The Local Planning Authority will keep the parish council or neighbourhood forum informed of progress and liaise with them to resolve any issues as the plan goes through the examination and referendum stages of the process. This will include liaising with the parish council or neighbourhood forum regarding:

- The appointment of an examiner
- Arrangements for any public hearing that might be necessary
- Changes proposed in the Examiner's Report to ensure the neighbourhood plan meets the [Basic Condition](#) tests
- Any changes required to the neighbourhood plan.

Step Seven: Public referendum and adoption

6.17 Subject to a successful outcome of the Public Examination, the Local Planning Authority will then inform the parish council or neighbourhood forum of the Council's decision to proceed to referendum and subsequent timescales. The organising of the public referendum and publicity regarding its outcome will be undertaken by the elections team at the Council, rather than by the Local Planning Authority.

6.18 Subject to a successful referendum, the neighbourhood plan will then be made by the Council as part of the statutory Development Plan for the area.

7.0 Monitoring and Review

- 7.1 The SCI is based on current national planning policy and legislation. As per the [Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#) (as amended), the Local Planning Authorities are committed to reviewing the SCI at least every five years from the time of adoption to ensure that it is up to date and reflects current legislation and best practice.
- 7.2 Should significant changes be made to national legislation which no longer apply to elements of the SCI, the Local Planning Authorities will endeavour to update the SCI as soon as possible.
- 7.3 Each year the GCSP produces a joint Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) which is a statutory requirement for all Local Planning Authorities. The AMR monitors and reviews the performance of planning policies set out in the adopted Local Plans and Area Action Plans and provides a general overview of the social, economic, and environmental trends taking place across Greater Cambridge. The AMR also assesses the Councils progress in producing the Local Plan and Area Action Plans against the timetable set out in the [Local Development Scheme](#) (LDS). You can find more information on the AMR on our [website](#).
- 7.4 GCSP continues to review the outcomes of our consultations and reflect on the lessons learnt during the process. As part of the First Proposals for the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan, we published a [report](#) alongside the full record of comments and feedback from the [First Conversations](#) and [Call for Sites](#) consultation. The report sets out the methodology followed in collecting and presenting the datasets and a quantitative analysis of the data. It also provides an overview of the outreach of the First Conversations consultation and the ways we engaged with our communities and statutory consultees.

Appendix 1: Glossary

Abbreviation	Term	Definition
AMR	Authority Monitoring Report	The AMR describes progress against the Local Development Scheme and monitors the impact of planning policies included in the Development Plan documents. Authority Monitoring Reports were formerly known as Annual Monitoring Reports.
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment	Process of evaluating the likely environmental impacts of a proposed scheme or development, taking into account positive and negative impacts related social, economic, cultural and human health.
GSCP	Greater Cambridge Shared Planning	The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service, formed in 2018, is a partnership between Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Councils, which provides planning service to both councils.
LNP	Local Nature Partnerships	Are coalitions of organisations, businesses and people from a range of sectors, who aim to improve local natural environments.
LPA	Local Planning Authority	They are responsible for planning functions of an area. Usually through the planning service of a Borough, District or Unitary Council
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework	Sets out the Government's planning policies in England and provides a framework in which local plans can be produced
SCI	Statement of Community Involvement	Sets out how and when stakeholders, partners, the community and others will be consulted and the requirements to be met in producing for example any new local development plan documents or supplementary planning documents.
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document	Provides additional details to help implementation of policies set out in development plan documents.
S106	Section 106 Planning Agreement	This is a legal agreement between the applicant or land owner of the application site and the Councils. The agreement deals with how a development will be carried out or the provision of funds for new or improved infrastructure, community services or facilities to support growth and development.

Appendix 2: Consultation Bodies for Plan-making

The [Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#) (as amended) specify a number of organisations that local planning authorities should consider consulting when preparing planning policy documents. These are known as Specific Consultation Bodies and General Consultation Bodies.

The Regulations allow the councils to select 'such of' the Specific and General Consultation Bodies that may have an interest and/or the Local Planning Authority consider appropriate to the consultation document being prepared.

The organisations the Councils will consult will be drawn from the list in this Appendix and will depend upon the nature of the consultation being undertaken, bearing in mind:

1. The area covered by the document - certain organisations may only operate in parts of Cambridge and/or South Cambridgeshire
2. The subject matter of the document - an SPD may address a specific topic which may only be of interest to some organisations.

The consultation bodies outlined in this Appendix are common to both Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. Where there are differences between the councils, these have been identified below.

Specific Consultation Bodies

The Specific Consultation Bodies are defined in the [Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012 \(as amended\)](#), Part 1 as the following:

- The Coal Authority(b) (The Coal Authority has advised South Cambridgeshire District Council it does not wish to be consulted)
- The Environment Agency
- The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (now known as Historic England)
- The Marine Management Organisation(e)
- Natural England
- Network Rail Infrastructure Limited (company number 2904587) (Network Rail Office of Rail Regulation)
- The Highways Agency (now known as Highways England)

- Relevant authority any part of whose area is in or adjoins the local planning authority's area:
 - a) A local planning authority

Table 5: Local Planning Authorities who will be consulted

Local Planning Authority	Council who will be consulting
Bedford Borough Council	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Braintree District Council	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cambridge City Council	South Cambridgeshire District Council
East Cambridgeshire District Council	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Fenland District Council	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Huntingdonshire District Council	South Cambridgeshire District Council
North Hertfordshire District Council	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Peterborough City Council	South Cambridgeshire District Council
South Cambridgeshire District Council	Cambridge City Council
Uttlesford District Council	South Cambridgeshire District Council
West Suffolk Council	South Cambridgeshire District Council

- b) A county council referred to in section 16(1) of the Act

Table 6: County Councils who will be consulted

County Council	Council who will be consulting
Cambridgeshire County Council	Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council
Essex County Council	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Hertfordshire County Council	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Suffolk County Council	South Cambridgeshire District Council

- c) A parish council

South Cambridgeshire District Council will consult with parish councils within South Cambridgeshire; and parish councils which adjoin South Cambridgeshire.

Cambridge City Council will consult parish councils within South Cambridgeshire which adjoin the City.

- d) A local policing body (Cambridgeshire Constabulary)
- any person—
 - (i) to whom the electronic communications code applies by virtue of a direction given under section 106(3)(a) of the Communications Act 2003, and
 - (ii) who owns or controls electronic communications apparatus situated in any part of the local planning authority's area,

- If it exercises functions in any part of the local planning authority's area—
 - (i) a Primary Care Trust established under section 18 of the National Health Service Act 2006(g) or continued in existence by virtue of that section; (formerly known as Clinical Commissioning Groups, now known as Integrated Care Boards (ICBS))
 - (ii) a person to whom a licence has been granted under section 6(1)(b) or (c) of the Electricity Act 1989(h)
 - (iii) a person to whom a licence has been granted under section 7(2) of the Gas Act 1986(a)
 - (iv) a sewerage undertaker
 - (v) a water undertaker
- The Homes and Communities Agency (now known as Homes England); and
- where the Local Planning Authority are a London borough council, the Mayor of London (not applicable to Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire).

General Consultation Bodies

The General Consultation Bodies are defined in the [Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012 \(as amended\)](#), Part 1 as the following:

- a) voluntary bodies some or all of whose activities benefit any part of the local planning authority's area
- b) bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups in the local planning authority's area
- c) bodies which represent the interests of different religious groups in the local planning authority's area
- d) bodies which represent the interests of disabled persons in the local planning authority's area
- e) bodies which represent the interests of persons carrying on business in the local planning authority's area

The Local Planning Authorities must also ensure they meet the requirements of the [Equality Act 2010](#). To ensure the views of harder to reach groups are represented, the Local Planning Authorities will work closely with relevant organisations that have experience in a particular matter to find the best way of consulting and liaising with these groups.

The Local Planning Authorities will also consult with other consultation bodies which they consider to be appropriate to planning and who do not fall into the above categories. These may include:

- Residents' Associations

- Developers and agents
- Landowners
- Special interest groups.

Duty to Co-operate Bodies

The Duty to Cooperate Bodies are defined in [Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012, Part 2, Regulation 4](#) as follows:

- The Environment Agency
- The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (known as Historic England)
- Natural England
- the Mayor of London (not applicable to Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire)
- The Civil Aviation Authority
- The Homes and Communities Agency (now known as Homes England)
- Each Integrated Care Board established under section 14D of the National Health Service Act 2006 (formerly known as Clinical Commissioning Groups)
- The National Health Service Commissioning Board
- The Office of Rail Regulation (known as the Office of Rail and Road)
- Transport for London (not applicable to Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire)
- Each Integrated Transport Authority
- Each highway authority within the meaning of section 1 of the Highways Act 1980 (including the Secretary of State, where the Secretary of State is the highways authority)
- The Marine Management Organisation.

In addition, [Planning Practice Guidance](#), Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 9-006-20160519 states:

“Local Enterprise Partnerships and Local Nature Partnerships are not subject to the requirements of the duty. But local planning authorities and the public bodies that are subject to the duty must cooperate with Local Enterprise Partnerships and Local Nature Partnerships and have regard to their activities when they are preparing their local plans, so long as those activities are relevant to local plan-making.”

The [Local Nature Partnership](#) for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is Natural Cambridgeshire. The role of Natural Cambridgeshire is to act as an independent, objective voice for the Natural Environment in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, acting as a conduit to local and central government and other stakeholders. The main focus for the Natural Cambridgeshire Board will be to provide strategic leadership, coordinating partners to deliver projects and activity that will meet the Partnership’s vision and aims. More information regarding Natural Cambridgeshire is available on their [website](#).

Appendix 3: Council offices where planning consultation documents will be made available for public inspection

It should be noted that where documents are being produced by an individual Council rather than jointly, documents will only be made available for public inspection at the relevant Council office.

Table 7: Addresses for Councils

Council	Address
Cambridge City Council	Customer Service Centre Mandela House 4 Regent Street Cambridge CB2 1BY
South Cambridgeshire District Council	South Cambridgeshire Hall Cambourne Business Park Cambourne Cambridge CB23 6EA

The opening times for both offices can be found on the Councils websites and by calling the telephone numbers below. Both Councils operate an appointments system.

Table 8: Contact details for Councils

Council	Contact telephone number	Webpage
Cambridge City Council	01223 457000	Council offices - Cambridge City Council
South Cambridgeshire District Council	01954 713000	Council Offices - South Cambridgeshire District Council

Appendix 4: Statutory requirements for consulting on planning applications

The Local Planning Authorities are required to undertake a formal period of public consultation, prior to deciding a planning application. This is prescribed in:

- The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order [2015](#)
- The Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) (Amendment) Order [2017](#)
- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Regulations [1990](#)
- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Amendment) (England) Regulations [2004](#)
- [The Town and Country Planning \(General Permitted Development\) \(England\) Order \(as amended\)](#)

Appendix 5: Consultation Bodies for a Planning Application

Statutory Consultees that Cambridge City Council or South Cambridgeshire District Council may consult (those consulted will vary depending on the type of application)

- Ancient Monument Society
- Anglian Water Services Ltd
- British Gas
- British Telecommunications plc
- Cambridge Water Company
- Cambridgeshire County Council
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority
- Canal and River Trust
- Coal Authority
- Control of Major-Accident Hazards Competent Authority
- Crown Estates Commissioners
- Council for British Archaeology
- Department of Energy Security and Net Zero
- Designated Neighbourhood Forums
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
- Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
- Environment Agency (EA)
- Forestry Commission
- Health and Safety Executive
- Highways England
- Historic England
- Marine Management Organisation
- Mobile Operators Associations
- National Grid Transco
- Natural England
- Network Rail
- Parish Councils
- Rail Infrastructure Managers
- Rail Network Operators
- Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings
- Sport England
- Theatres Trust
- The Gardens Trust
- The Georgian Group
- Twentieth Century Society

- Victorian Society

Examples of Non-Statutory Consultees that the Councils may consult (those consulted will vary depending on the type of application)

- Cambridge Business Improvement District
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care Board
- Internal council service areas (such as Housing and Environmental Health) (as relevant)
- Adjoining Parish Councils and Local Authorities (as relevant)
- Civil Aviation Authority
- Emergency Services and Multi-Agency Emergency Planning
- Ministry of Defence
- Office of Nuclear Regulation
- Residents' Associations
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
- Police and Crime Commissioner
- Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire

If you wish to join our consultation database, please send your contact details to the email addresses shown below or if you would like to write to us, send your details to our offices shown below:

Table 9: Email Address for GCSP

Email address
planning@greatercambridgeplanning.org

Table 10 Postal Addresses for Councils

Council	Postal address
Cambridge City Council	Application Support, Cambridge City Council, PO Box 700, Cambridge, CB1 0JH
South Cambridgeshire District Council	Planning Department, South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, CB23 6EA

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA): Statement of Community Involvement

Introduction – Please read


The Public Sector Equality Duty, introduced under the Equality Act 2010, requires all public bodies, including local authorities, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not

Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) allow the Council to:

- Show that we are meeting this legal duty by demonstrating due regard for the provisions of the Public Sector Equality Duty
- Identify possible negative impacts on individuals and groups with protected characteristics, plan mitigating action and seek to maximise opportunities to advance equality within our activities.

EqIAs provide a methodical approach to the assessment of impacts across the [nine protected characteristics](#) and should be completed during the development and review of all Council policies, strategies, procedures, projects or functions. Where there is any doubt, the completion of an EqIA is always recommended.

Throughout the course of this form, please hover over the  symbol for guidance in relation to specific questions. When the form is completed, please send an electronic copy to equality.schemes@scambs.gov.uk. If you require any additional support completing the form, please email the above address.

Equality Impact Assessment Complete Form

Section 1: Identifying Details

- 1.1** Officer completing EqIA:
Ciaran Davis, Planning Policy Officer
- 1.2** Team and Service:
Planning Policy, Strategy and Economy - Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service
- 1.3** Title of proposal:
Statement of Community Involvement
- 1.4** EqIA completion date:
13.09.2023
- 1.5** Proposal implementation date:
Consultation anticipated for October – November 2023, formal adoption of the SCI anticipated for Spring 2024.
- 1.6** Who will be responsible for implementing this proposal:
Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Councils through the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning service

Section 2: Proposal to be Assessed

- 2.1** Type of proposal:
Policy

2.2 Is the proposal:
An update

2.3 State the date of any previous equality impact assessment completed in relation to this proposal (if applicable):
June/July 2019

2.4 What are the headline aims of the proposal and the objectives that will help to accomplish these aims? (Approximately 250 words)

The review of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council will engage the public in the planning process. The SCI describes how the public, businesses, stakeholders and interest groups within the local authority areas can engage in the creation/influence local planning policy and the planning application process which shapes where we live and work. This is essential to help improve understanding and openness of the planning process.

There is a legal requirement on Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to undertake public consultation on local plans, neighbourhood plans and planning applications. It is important that this is undertaken in a cost-effective, efficient and proportionate manner. This SCI is an important document as it will establish a minimum standard of consultation and publicity on planning matters for both Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Councils.

The SCI has been split into three main sections which cover the following roles and responsibilities of the planning service:

- Planning Policy including the production of planning policy documents including the Local Plan

- Development Management including how the councils consider and publicise planning applications, and
- Neighbourhood planning setting out how the councils will assist groups who are preparing neighbourhood plans

The Councils are committed to treating everyone fairly and justly, and wants to ensure that everyone gets an opportunity to be involved in the planning process. We recognise that consultation and engagement activities are constantly evolving and this SCI will be revisited at regular intervals to ensure it is fully up-to date and reflects local and national priorities, practices and policies.

2.5 Which of South Cambridgeshire District Council's business plan priorities does this proposal link to?

- Helping Businesses to grow - ✓
- Building homes that are truly affordable to live in -
- Being green to our core - ✓
- A modern and caring council - ✓

2.6 Which of South Cambridgeshire District Council's equality objectives (as detailed in SCDC's Equality Scheme) does this proposal link to or help to achieve?

- Identify, prioritise and deliver actions that will narrow the gap in outcomes between disadvantaged groups and the wider community- ✓
- SCDC is an employer that values difference and recognises the strength that a diverse workforce brings -
- Protected characteristic groups have a voice and are represented in forming the future shape of the district - ✓

2.7 Which of Cambridge City Council’s equality objectives (as detailed in CCC’s Equality Scheme) does this proposal link to or help to achieve?

- To further increase our understanding of the needs of Cambridge’s growing and increasingly diverse communities so that we can target our services effectively - ✓
- To continue to work to improve access to and take-up of Council services from all residents and communities - ✓
- To work towards a situation where all residents have equal access to public activities and spaces in Cambridge and are able to participate fully in the community - ✓

2.8 Which groups or individuals will the proposal affect:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|
| • Service Users ✓ | • Councillors ✓ |
| • External Stakeholders ✓ | • Other ✓ |
| • Employees ✓ | |

If other, please specify – all residents and visitors to the Greater Cambridge area.

2.9 How will these groups or individuals be affected? (you will be asked to provide more detail on the specific impacts on different protected characteristic groups later on in the form) (approximately 250 words)

The SCI sets out how the public will have an opportunity to engage in the planning process in Greater Cambridge. The SCI describes how the public, businesses, interest groups and individuals within the local authority areas can get involved in the creation of local planning policy and the planning application process aiming at shaping where we live and work. Therefore the SCI has the potential to affect a large and wide cross section of the community, including:

- Residents across Greater Cambridge
- Local Parish Councils and designated Neighbourhood Forums

- District and City Council Members
- Cambridgeshire County Council
- Adjacent Local Authorities
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority
- Delivery partners, including land owners, developers, infrastructure providers, transport providers
- Community organisations
- Statutory, general and wider consultation bodies
- Local businesses

2.10 How many people will this proposal affect? (Approximately)

Land use planning and associated development have a fundamental effect on peoples live who live within Greater Cambridge.


The Planning Service's Authority Monitoring Report will include data on any consultations that have been undertaken during the relevant monitoring period, and will use the following indicators:

- Number of people participating in consultation
- Number of people using the councils' online website to make representations


2.11 If any part of the proposal is being undertaken by external partners, please specify how SCDC will ensure that they will meet equality standards?
(Approximately 250 words)

No external partners will deliver this policy but there is guidance on how developers should engage with local communities through the planning process.

Section 3: Evidence and Data

- 3.1** Describe any research (this could include consultation) and analysis you have undertaken to understand how [protected characteristic groups](#) are likely to be affected? Please list any key sources that you used to obtain this Information. 
- (Approximately 250 words)

The Officers who are responsible for producing the SCI have examined census data, case studies of best practise at other councils, reports from professional bodies such as the Royal Institute of Town Planning, and researched Civil Service information about correct terminology. The data sources are embedded within the SCI document as hyperlinks. As part of the Consultation, GCSP is keen to hear from people who do fall within protected characteristic groups to understand how they can better engage with the Planning Service.

- 3.2** Describe any research (this could include consultation) and analysis you have undertaken to understand any effects on any other groups of people not mentioned in the nine [protected characteristic groups](#) (for example people who live in rural areas, who live in areas of high growth, or from low income backgrounds). 
- (Approximately 250 words)

The Officers who are responsible for producing the SCI have examined census data, case studies of best practise at other councils, reports from professional bodies such as the Royal Institute of Town Planning, and researched Civil Service information about correct terminology. The data

sources are embedded within the SCI document as hyperlinks. As part of the Consultation, GCSP is keen to hear from people who do not fall within protected characteristic groups to understand how they can better engage with the Planning Service.

- 3.3** If you have not undertaken any consultation, please detail why not, or when consultation is planned to take place. [📖](#)
(Approximately 250 words)

Subject to formal approval, consultation on the Statement of Community Involvement will take place in 2023.

Section 4: Impact of proposal on those with protected characteristics

4.1 [Age:](#)

- 4.1.1** Has your research identified that the proposal will have an impact on this protected characteristic?

Yes

If you have selected no – please move forward to question 4.2 Disability

If you have selected yes – please continue below (4.1.2)

- 4.1.2** Describe the impacts of the proposal on this protected characteristic group identified through your research, including

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. [📖](#)
- approximately 250 words per impact

Positive, medium impact.

It is anecdotally recognised that it can sometimes be more difficult to engage with younger age groups. Where possible and appropriate, relevant organisations and individuals will be identified to reach as wide an age range as possible during specific consultation and engagement activities. This could include external organisations such as Cambridge City Council’s Community Development Team) as well as the GCSP Youth Engagement Project. Evidence suggests that some older people and those from lower income households are also less likely to have access to the internet. South Cambridgeshire District Council has a Digital Inclusion Strategy in order to support people who are excluded from using the internet gain access and skills they need to use it. Where documents or information is required they can be accessed or be viewed at accessible council offices. Planning applications are publicised by site notices and letters to neighbouring/adjacent properties or land.

4.1.3 Please complete the table below to detail actions that need to take place to minimise the negative and maximise the positive impacts raised in the previous question:

Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale for completion	How will the actions be monitored?
Monitoring of the number of consultation responses to both planning applications and planning policy documents	Greater Cambridge Shared Planning service	Authority Annual Monitoring Report to be endorsed by Members, usually in December each year.	Monitor and identify levels of public participation over a medium/long time period and identify opportunities to increase this where there is a significant decrease in engagement

Update the EqiA once the consultation is complete	Greater Cambridge Shared Planning service	Spring 2024	Team Leaders and the Equalities Officers at both councillors will ensure that the SCI actions are implemented so that both Councils are compliant with public sector equality duty.
---	---	-------------	---

4.2 Disability:


4.2.1 Has your research identified that the proposal will have an impact on this protected characteristic?

Yes

If you have selected no – please move forward to question 4.3 Gender Reassignment

If you have selected yes – please continue below (4.2.2)

4.2.2 Describe the impacts of the proposal on this protected characteristic group identified through your research, including

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. 
- approximately 250 words per impact

Positive, medium impact

The SCI identifies a range of external groups and organisations that may be consulted on planning matters, whilst the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning service has a Disability Panel operating within Cambridge City helping to feedback on impacts new developments have on people with a range of

disabilities. Forums or meeting are held at fully accessible public buildings e.g. council offices.

Evidence suggests that disabled people are more likely than non disabled people to be digitally excluded as IT equipment sometimes is not adapted to their individual needs. The consultation document can be made available on request in large copy print, audio cassette or Braille and officers are willing to meet individuals and talk issues through. This approach would also apply, as necessary, to subsequent consultation documents that are prepared in the plan making process. In respect of planning applications, information can be made available in a range of formats if required.

4.2.3 Please complete the table below to detail actions that need to take place to minimise the negative and maximise the positive impacts raised in the previous question:

Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale for completion	How will the actions be monitored?
Monitoring of the number of consultation responses to both planning applications and planning policy documents	Greater Cambridge Shared Planning service	Authority Annual Monitoring Report to be endorsed by Members, usually in December each year.	Monitor and identify levels of public participation over a medium/long time period and identify opportunities to increase this where there is a significant decrease in engagement
Update the EqiA once the	Greater Cambridge	Spring 2024	Team Leaders and the Equalities Officers at both councillors will

consultation is complete	Shared Planning service		ensure that the SCI actions are implemented so that both Councils are compliant with public sector equality duty.
--------------------------	-------------------------	--	---

4.3 Gender Reassignment:

4.3.1 Has your research identified that the proposal will have an impact on this protected characteristic?

No

If you have selected no – please move forward to question 4.4 Marriage and Civil Partnership

If you have selected yes – please continue below (4.3.2)

4.3.2 Describe the impacts of the proposal on this protected characteristic group identified through your research, including

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. 📖
- approximately 250 words per impact

4.3.3 Please complete the table below to detail actions that need to take place to minimise the negative and maximise the positive impacts raised in the previous question:

Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale for completion	How will the actions be monitored?
--------	---------------------	--------------------------	------------------------------------

--	--	--	--

4.4 Marriage and Civil Partnership:

4.4.1 Has your research identified that the proposal will have an impact on this protected characteristic?

No

If you have selected no – please move forward to question 4.5

Pregnancy and Maternity

If you have selected yes – please continue below (4.4.2)

4.4.2 Describe the impacts of the proposal on this protected characteristic group identified through your research, including

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. 📖
- approximately 250 words per impact

4.4.3 Please complete the table below to detail actions that need to take place to minimise the negative and maximise the positive impacts raised in the previous question:

Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale for completion	How will the actions be monitored?


4.5 Pregnancy and Maternity:

4.5.1 Has your research identified that the proposal will have an impact on this protected characteristic?

Yes

**If you have selected no – please move forward to question 4.6 Race
If you have selected yes – please continue below (4.5.2)**

4.5.2 Describe the impacts of the proposal on this protected characteristic group identified through your research, including

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. 
- approximately 250 words per impact

Positive, low

Where people are required to care for children, it may be difficult for them to engage in consultation events and meetings. A number of the planning policy consultation events take place within and outside of usual working hours to try and ensure people are able to engage in the process and several take place online which can be more convenient for people to attend or watch back at an alternative time. Planning applications are available for public inspection online and can be accessed at any time of the day.

4.5.3 Please complete the table below to detail actions that need to take place to minimise the negative and maximise the positive impacts raised in the previous question:

Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale for completion	How will the actions be monitored?

Monitoring of the number of consultation responses to both planning applications and planning policy documents	Greater Cambridge Shared Planning service	Authority Annual Monitoring Report to be endorsed by Members, usually in December each year.	Monitor and identify levels of public participation over a medium/long time period and identify opportunities to increase this where there is a significant decrease in engagement
Update the EqiA once the consultation is complete	Greater Cambridge Shared Planning service	Spring 2024	Team Leaders and the Equalities Officers at both councillors will ensure that the SCI actions are implemented so that both Councils are compliant with public sector equality duty.

4.6 Race:

4.6.1 Has your research identified that the proposal will have an impact on this protected characteristic?

Yes

If you have selected no – please move forward to question 4.7 Religion or Belief

If you have selected yes – please continue below (4.6.2)

4.6.2 Describe the impacts of the proposal on this protected characteristic group identified through your research, including

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. 📖
- approximately 250 words per impact

Positive, low

Under represented groups such as Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities are noted in the SCI as a known hard to reach group, and the SCI notes that in certain circumstances, the councils will consider targeted engagement with specific hard to reach groups/communities as we have done previously as part of the Local Plan process.

4.6.3 Please complete the table below to detail actions that need to take place to minimise the negative and maximise the positive impacts raised in the previous question:

Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale for completion	How will the actions be monitored?
Monitoring of the number of consultation responses to both planning applications and planning policy documents	Greater Cambridge Shared Planning service	Authority Annual Monitoring Report to be endorsed by Members, usually in December each year.	Monitor and identify levels of public participation over a medium/long time period and identify opportunities to increase this where there is a significant decrease in engagement
Update the EqiA once the consultation is complete	Greater Cambridge Shared Planning service	Spring 2024	Team Leaders and the Equalities Officers at both councillors will ensure that the SCI

			actions are implemented so that both Councils are compliant with public sector equality duty.
--	--	--	---

4.7 Religion or Belief:


4.7.1 Has your research identified that the proposal will have an impact on this protected characteristic?

No

If you have selected no – please move forward to question 4.8 Sex

If you have selected yes – please continue below (4.7.2)

4.7.2 Describe the impacts of the proposal on this protected characteristic group identified through your research, including

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. 
- approximately 250 words per impact

4.7.3 Please complete the table below to detail actions that need to take place to minimise the negative and maximise the positive impacts raised in the previous question:

Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale for completion	How will the actions be monitored?

4.8 Sex:

4.8.1 Has your research identified that the proposal will have an impact on this protected characteristic?

Yes

If you have selected no – please move forward to question 4.9 (Sexual Orientation)

If you have selected yes – please continue below (4.8.2)

4.8.2 Describe the impacts of the proposal on this protected characteristic group identified through your research, including

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. 📖
- approximately 250 words per impact

Low, positive

Through undertaking public engagement and encouraging public participation on a range of planning matters, it is anticipated that a range of people will respond to consultations on both planning policy and planning applications. The Councils have a duty to take into account all comments and responses received, regardless of sex/gender. There are also opportunities for people to engage in Neighbourhood Planning.

4.8.3 Please complete the table below to detail actions that need to take place to minimise the negative and maximise the positive impacts raised in the previous question:

4.9

Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale for completion	How will the actions be monitored?
Update the EqiA once the consultation is complete	Greater Cambridge Shared Planning service	Spring 2024	Team Leaders and the Equalities Officers at both councillors will ensure that the SCI actions are implemented so that both Councils are compliant with public sector equality duty.

Sexual Orientation:


4.9.1 Has your research identified that the proposal will have an impact on this protected characteristic?

No

If you have selected no – please move forward to question 4.10 (Other)

If you have selected yes – please continue below (4.9.2)

4.9.2 Describe the impacts of the proposal on this protected characteristic group identified through your research, including

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. 
- approximately 250 words per impact

4.9.3 Please complete the table below to detail actions that need to take place to minimise the negative and maximise the positive impacts raised in the previous question:

Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale for completion	How will the actions be monitored?

4.10 Other: (e.g. rurality, growth, socio-economic status etc.).

4.10.1 Has your research identified that the proposal will have an impact on this protected characteristic?

Yes

If you have selected no – please move forward to question 5.1

If you have selected yes – please continue below (4.10.2)

4.10.2 Describe the impacts of the proposal on this protected characteristic group identified through your research, including

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. 📖
- approximately 250 words per impact

Positive, medium

It can be difficult to contact some low income groups if they have limited access to the internet and transport, and the SCI sets out that where additional mechanisms are required to improve levels of engagement on planning matters that bespoke methods may be used. This will be considered in detail taking into account the subject matters and geographic scope of each new stage of plan making, and in respect of planning applications.

Evidence suggests that some older people are also less likely to have access to the internet. The Councils have a Digital Inclusion Strategy and Digital Access Strategy

in order to support people who are excluded from using the internet gain access and skills they need to use it. Planning policy documents and planning applications are made available to be viewed at Council Offices.

Rural access to high speed internet is also an issue within the district and part of the council's Business Plan is to work with partners to improve broadband and mobile phone coverage across the district. To assist with viewing planning documents online, the councils' will generally split large documents, such as a Design and Access Statement, when they exceed 50 pages or 10MB in file size to assist users with downloading and viewing large files.

4.10.3 Please complete the table below to detail actions that need to take place to minimise the negative and maximise the positive impacts raised in the previous question:

Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale for completion	How will the actions be monitored?
Monitoring of the number of consultation responses to both planning applications and planning policy documents	Greater Cambridge Shared Planning service	Authority Annual Monitoring Report to be endorsed by Members, usually in December each year.	Monitor and identify levels of public participation over a medium/long time period and identify opportunities to increase this where there is a significant decrease in engagement
Update the EqiA once the consultation is complete	Greater Cambridge Shared Planning service	Spring 2024	Team Leaders and the Equalities Officers at both councillors will ensure that the SCI

			actions are implemented so that both Councils are compliant with public sector equality duty.
--	--	--	---

Section 5: Summary

- 5.1** Briefly summarise the key findings of the EqIA and any significant equality considerations that should be taken into account when deciding whether or not to proceed with the proposal (this section can be included within the 'equality implications' section of any committee reports). (Approximately 250 words)

The EQIA demonstrates that the Statement of Community Involvement will potentially have positive impacts for a number of groups. GCSP is keen to carry out consultation on this document to incorporate the views of the public to see how we can enhance these positive impacts and reduce any potentially negative impacts. GCSP is also committed to monitoring the efficacy of this document to ensure that it actually delivers the positive benefits set out in this EQIA, and we are willing to work with Equality Officers at both Councils to achieve these aims.

- 5.2** Confirm the recommendation of the officer completing the EqIA (delete as appropriate):
- Approved (No major change): Your analysis demonstrates that the policy is robust, and the evidence shows no potential for discrimination and that you have taken all appropriate opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations between groups.

- 5.3** Signature of individual completing EqIA:

Ciaran Davis

5.4 Date of completion:
13.09.2023

Section 6: Sign Off

6.1 Approving officer EqIA review outcome: (delete as appropriate):

- Approved (No major change): Your analysis demonstrates that the policy is robust, and the evidence shows no potential for discrimination and that you have taken all appropriate opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations between groups.

6.2 Do you give permission to publish this EqIA on SCDC website (delete as appropriate)? If no, please state reason
Yes

6.3 When will this proposal next be reviewed and who will this be?
Spring 2024, post public consultation on the draft Statement of Community Involvement

6.4 Approving officer signature:
Helen Crowther / Kate Yerbury / Emma Pearson

6.5 Date of approval:
13/09/2023

Please send a copy to Equality.Schemes@scambs.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

Item

Response to The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' Consultation on Plan-making reforms: Implementation.

Non Key Decision

To:

Councillor Katie Thornburrow, Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure

Planning & Transport Scrutiny Committee 28 September 2023

Report by:

Stephen Kelly, Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development
Tel: 01223 457009 Email: stephen.kelly@greatercambridgeplanning.org

Wards affected: All

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks to agree a joint response from both Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire councils to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities' Consultation on Plan-making reforms: Implementation. This is related to wider changes to the planning system coming through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. The consultation proposes changes to how local plans are prepared, including the contents of plans, how they would be consulted on, and the process that needs to be undertaken.
- 1.2 The proposed response is supportive of many elements of the consultation, as changes are needed to help Councils get plans in place. Making best use of digital tools, templates and ways to make plans accessible reflect what the Council are trying to achieve with the Greater Cambridge Local Plan. Whilst the new system seeks to frontload engagement, more could be done to engage on specific draft plan proposals earlier in the process. Completion of plan making within

30 months may still remain challenging. The draft consultation response also highlights uncertainties and areas which need more clarification.

2. Recommendations

2.1. The Executive Councillor is recommended to:

- i. Agree the joint response to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities' Consultation on Plan-making reforms: Implementation included in Appendix 1 of this report.
- ii. Agree that any subsequent material amendments be made by the Executive Member for Planning and Transport, in consultation with Chair and Spokes
- iii. Agree that any subsequent minor amendments and editing changes that do not materially affect the content be delegated to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Transport, in consultation with Chair and Spokes.

3. Background

3.1 The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, expected to receive royal ascent this year, will result significant reforms to the planning system. In February 2023 the Department for Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities (DLUHC) carried out a wide ranging consultation on revisions to national planning policy. Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council submitted a joint response. This latest consultation builds on the previous one, and focuses on implementation of changes to the approach to preparation of Local Plans.

3.2 The proposals seek to streamline plan making, so that the formal stages of a plan review can be completed within three years. Prior to the start of the three year period, Local Planning Authorities would consult and engage with stakeholders to establish what issues the plan needs to consider and the vision for the area. Once they have given notice that they have formally started plan production, the process

involves two public consultations, the first to test the emerging plan and the second on draft plan itself, and three Gateway reviews designed to allow independent review of an authority's plan making process to reduce risk further down the line. In summary the plan making steps would be as follow:

- The first Gateway review considers if the process has been started correctly, and an effective Project Initiation Document is in place.
- The first public consultation seeks feedback on the vision and the strategic options to meet that vision.
- The second Gateway review considers plan making progress and the preparation of evidence.
- The second consultation consults on the draft plan itself.
- The third Gateway review, undertaken by independent planning inspectors, would review the soundness of the process and whether it has met legal requirements and confirm if it is ready to submit for examination.

3.3 After completing all these stages, the plan would be submitted for examination by independent planning inspectors. Examinations under the current planning system can be lengthy. Under these proposals examinations would be restricted to six months, with potential for three months add on for modifications. There is potential for a single six month pause within the examination to rectify issues, such as an evidence gap, if justified.

3.4 Other significant proposed changes include:

- Replacing Local Development Schemes with a simpler process of publishing a live plan making timetable;
- Replacing Statements of Community Involvement with a Local Plan Project Initiation Document;
- Use of digital planning, standard templates and other tools to speed up processes;
- Local Plans structured around a vision for the area, with local policies supplementing national development management policies needing to demonstrate how they will help deliver that vision;

- Streamlined monitoring, with a reduced list of annual indicators, and a more comprehensive output only every five years;
- Streamlined approach to plan evidence, linked directly to soundness;
- 5 year land housing supply protected for 5 years after adoption of a new plan.

3.5 Supplementary Planning Documents will no longer be part of the new system. The consultation proposes that current ones remain live until Councils adopt their first plan under the new system. It will be possible to prepare Supplementary Plans, but these will be reserved largely for providing guidance for specific sites should the need for guidance to be prepared arise, or for adopting District Design Codes. These would form part of the development plan and follow a similar process to neighbourhood plans.

3.6 The consultation envisages that the first plans under the new system will start in autumn 2024. Plans seeking to be adopted under the current system will need to be submitted by 30 June 2025 and adopted by 31 December 2026.

3.7 The consultation includes 43 questions seeking views and ideas on the proposals and how they would be implemented.

4. Response to the Consultation

4.1 A draft response to the consultation questions can be found at Appendix 1 to this report. It is proposed that the response is joint with South Cambridgeshire District Council.

4.2 There are many positive proposals within the consultation. Plan making is currently complex and resource intensive. Exploring opportunities to simplify the process, allowing more councils to get plans in place has benefits for meeting development needs and enabling communities to engage in the future of their area.

- 4.3 The use of digital plans, standard templates, and use of new technologies to assist plan making all reflect measures the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service has been seeking to explore through the Greater Cambridge Local Plan. The draft response highlights the learning that we could share with DLUHC.
- 4.4 Introduction of formal gateways is a useful step with potential to reduce risk of plans being found unsound at later stages. Most Councils seek to do these sorts of interim stocktake reviews on their plan making journey, but the formalised approach could make them more effective.
- 4.5 Consultation in this new system would be front loaded, with an emphasis on engagement and participation prior to the three year plan period. However, the draft plan itself is proposed to be only subject to consultation at the second and final formal consultation stage. We suggest that building more detail into the first formal plan consultation stage could allow more engagement on actual proposed sites and proposals prior to drafting the plan itself, similar to preferred options consultations which we use now.
- 4.6 Completion of plan making within 30 months may still remain challenging. The series of steps to standardise processes, make evidence base requirements proportionate, and limit the length of examinations have the potential to speed up plan making, but the true impact won't be known until the system is implemented. The biggest challenges to plan making timetables often come from external factors, as we have experienced with our own plans.
- 4.7 The draft consultation response highlights uncertainties and areas which need more clarification. If the system is not absolutely clear and robust it could result in legal challenges and that clarity being provided by case law. It is vital that regulations and guidance can be interpreted clearly.

5. Implications

a) Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from the report as it is to approve a consultation response. However the final approach to system of plan making could have implications for budgets. If proposals are successful then they could reduce the cost of making plans, but this is not possible to confirm until the changes are finalised, and the full local implications understood. Greater Cambridge will remain a complex area within which to prepare plans.

b) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications arising from the report.

c) Equality and Poverty Implications

There are no equalities issues associated with this report to approve a consultation response. One of the consultation questions seeks views on equalities implications, and the proposed response highlights issues including the need for systems to avoid digital exclusion.

d) Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental Implications

There are no direct implications. However, the outcome of the consultation and changes to the planning system could have environmental and other implications. The consultation highlights that responding to climate change remains a key role for local plans.

e) Procurement Implications

There are no procurement implications as a result of this report.

f) Community Safety Implications

There are no specific community safety implications of this policy review. The Greater Cambridge Local Plan review has already

commenced. The Local Plan provides an opportunity to address aspects of community safety that can be influenced by the physical environment.

6. Consultation and communication considerations

There are no specific consultation and communication implications of this response to a government consultation.

7. Background papers

Background papers used in the preparation of this report include:

The consultation webpage: [Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: consultation on implementation of plan-making reforms - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/levelling-up-and-regeneration-bill-consultation-on-implementation-of-plan-making-reforms)

8. Appendices

Appendix A Draft response to Consultation on Plan-making reforms: implementation

9. Inspection of papers

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

Jonathan Dixon - Planning Policy Manager
Telephone: 07514 925952
jonathan.dixon@greatercambridgeplanning.org

This page is intentionally left blank

APPENDIX A Draft Response to consultation on plan-making implementation

[Plan-making reforms: consultation on implementation - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/plan-making-reforms-consultation-on-implementation)

Chapter 1: Plan content

Question 1: Do you agree with the core principles for plan content? Do you think there are other principles that could be included?

The principles and goals set out regarding the approach to new style local plans look appropriate, and would provide a clear structure focusing on where plans can add value.

One of the principles referred to is that plans will need to “set out a detailed approach to monitoring”. We agree the need for effective monitoring; we would stress the need for the approach to monitoring to be proportionate including making best use of automated data approaches, enabling effective evaluation of policies whilst minimising the burden of collecting monitoring data.

Question 2: Do you agree that plans should contain a vision, and with our proposed principles preparing the vision? Do you think there are other principles that could be included?

Plans should include a vision. Our adopted and emerging local plans seek to provide a vision and objectives that the plan is seeking to achieve, shaped by engagement with communities. It is agreed that such visions should form a golden thread through the local plan.

There are specific aspects of the vision which are not clear. It refers to more specific visions than currently and setting measurable outcomes underpinned by the

evidence base. Does that include quantum of development and strategy, and potentially strategic sites? There is reference to a key diagram that sets out the vision spatially for the area - at what point in the process is that anticipated?

It is agreed that the local plan should link with other plans and strategies operating in an area, but it would not be practicable for it to be seen as the 'parent' document.

Local development management policies

Question 3: Do you agree with the proposed framework for local development management policies?

The principle of local development management policies having appropriate justification, and where possible linked to implementation of the vision, is entirely appropriate. It will be important that evidence requirements are robust but proportionate to speed up plan making. The scope of national development management policies has yet to be published. It remains important that local authorities have flexibility to plan for the needs, opportunities and particular characteristics of their areas.

Templating and digital efficiencies

Question 4: Would templates make it easier for local planning authorities to prepare local plans? Which parts of the local plan would benefit from consistency?

We would support the principle of using templates to prepare local plans, although there still needs to be flexibility to reflect local circumstances and promote innovation. The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service have been exploring digital innovation through preparation of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan. This includes looking into policy templates compatible with digital data standards and that

link effectively with digital mapping. This includes creating templates for local development management policies and for site allocation policies. We are also looking at representation templates through our DLUHC Digital Innovation project. We would be pleased to work with DLUHC to share our experience.

Question 5: Do you think templates for new style minerals and waste plans would need to differ from local plans? If so, how?

Minerals and Water plans have to deal with different issues, so template variations are likely to be necessary.

Chapter 2: The new 30-month plan timeframe

Question 6: Do you agree with the proposal to set out in policy that planning authorities should adopt their plan, at the latest, 30 months after the plan preparation process begins?

In our response to the previous consultation we highlighted that a 30 month programme may be possible in many areas, but in complex areas with a large range of complex and often competing issues, where there is a strong desire to achieve high quality consultation and engagement, deadlines should not be imposed in a way which undermine the quality of plan making or penalise those areas where LPAs are committed to plan making but have to address these challenges.

The consultation proposes a number of steps which have the potential to speed up plan making. A 30 month period for the formal plan stages may be possible, but it will depend on how successfully they are implemented. It also depends on issues like having sufficient skilled staff available, a problem which has been acknowledged by government. There are going to be factors which influence when key milestones can happen, such as pre-election periods, which could reduce flexibility to perfectly meet the timeline. Some of the periods set out are optimistic, such as one month from end of examination to adoption.

The system will need to acknowledge variables occurring or issues arising which are beyond the ability of the plan making authority to control. For example where development relies on external infrastructure provision outside the council's control. There are likely to be situations where despite the best efforts of all parties it is not practicable.

The proposed approach is that evidence gathering takes place once the 30 month period has started and following the visioning stage. However, some evidence may be necessary to help inform the development of the vision and much of the evidence base takes time to prepare and could usefully start earlier in the process. Allowing flexibility for some evidence preparation in the earlier stages would be helpful.

The scoping and early participation stage

Question 7: Do you agree that a Project Initiation Document will help define the scope of the plan and be a useful tool throughout the plan making process?

Having a Project Initiation Document (PID) is good practice in project planning, so would be a helpful addition to the process. Most authorities would already produce this kind of information, either as part of issue and options reports or consultation statements at the early stages of plan making, but there is merit in creating a standard approach to where it can be found.

The PID would have an important role, setting out the approach to consultation for the plan, in effect taking on the role of statements of community involvement which provide a baseline for the approach and the Statement of Consultation which documents plan specific issues and the on-going process. We note that requirements to produce a Statement of Community Involvement is to be removed. Having a single place where a planning authority sets out its approach to public consultation still has merit.

At paragraph 50 the consultation document states, ‘Planning authorities will need to “notify” and “invite” views on what the plan should contain and feedback on key issues that should be addressed.’ Most authorities have interpreted the current similar regulations by carrying out an issues and options consultation, which can be an extensive exercise focused around potential policy areas, considering alternatives, taking a year or more to draft, consult, and consider results. Guidance needs to be much clearer about how this stage should be undertaken if many of the goals set out are to be achieved.

Chapter 3: Digital plans

Question 8: What information produced during plan-making do you think would most benefit from data standardisation, and/or being openly published?

The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning service are seeking to be a front runner in digital planning. We are currently part of the DLUHC Proptech Round 3, carrying out a project exploring efficiencies in consultation and processing feedback, using the opportunities provided by the Greater Cambridge Local Plan project.

We are already developing standardised policy templates to enable a digital plan approach linked to GIS data. Through our Proptech project we are exploring proformas and data standards for receiving representations. We already publish in full all comments and material received through consultations, but there are opportunities to make this more efficient and effective to speed up plan making.

There are opportunities for data standard approaches to some evidence, and for monitoring outcomes. Examples include Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessments, where most authorities uses templates to receive and collate site based information. The Environmental Outcomes Report process also provides an opportunity for standard templates.

Some of the references to 'digital' approaches in the document are not very clearly defined. Wide use of the word without being specific could lead to little change. It needs to be clearer how the proposals relate to accessibility standards that guide how webpages must be presented. On mapping, more could be done on the relationship between proposals maps and OS data and licencing to make it easier for councils to publish and share mapping data. Further opportunities to support user self service, where the councils publish data in a data format, should be explored.

Listening, understanding and removing barriers

Question 9: Do you recognise and agree that these are some of the challenges faced as part of plan preparation which could benefit from digitalisation? Are there any others you would like to add and tell us about?

Greater Cambridge has a very active plan making programme and we do recognise many of the challenges and problems listed in the consultation. Our last local plan examinations took four years to complete. Digitalisation can play an important role in speeding up the process.

One challenge not listed is the volume and variety of formats of information received through consultations. Whilst we provide online portals for submissions, we still receive thousands of emails and attachments in a variety of formats. The majority of this comes from planning agents. Processing this volume adds a huge amount of time and cost to the plan making process. Validation requirements reduce this variation in the area of planning applications. Standard formats that can be efficiently processed should be a requirement, whilst also providing appropriate measures to avoid digital exclusion and engage with under-represented groups. If standard templates are to be established, DLUHC will also need to consider how authorities respond if they have not been followed. There is nothing in current regulations where we can turn back comments provided in unsuitable formats. Clarity/guidance on what representations should contain at each consultation stage would assist in reducing overproduction of evidence or repetition of submissions, which would benefit both authorities and representors.

In relation to digital mapping the complexity of OS licence agreements can hinder the sharing of information in digital formats, and it should be improved.

We support the move towards digital plans and the flexibility they give to users of the plan to navigate quickly and easily. However, the intention behind the comment that “plans are static and PDF-based meaning they go out of date quickly” (paragraph 71) is not clear. A Local Plan is the version adopted following examination and can't change until the next formal review.

Learning and building on best practice, innovations and investment

Question 10: Do you agree with the opportunities identified? Can you tell us about other examples of digital innovation or best practice that should also be considered?

We agree with the opportunities identified, and are seeking to apply them to preparation of plans in Greater Cambridge. There should also be more done to enable accessible and free access to data from other public bodies, such as Defra, Environment Agency, Natural England and others.

There are other examples that could be listed: Webinars, how to videos, FAQ's, audio points to guide any element (better inclusion).

It also needs to be clear who will update and maintain these many digital products. The availability of hardware and software, high quality networks, and IT support will vary around the country. This variation will need to be considered when designing systems. Training for local authorities will also need to be provided.

Question 11: What innovations or changes would you like to see prioritised to deliver efficiencies in how plans are prepared and used, both now and in the future?

Many of the options suggested have the potential to assist and to speed up the plan making process. New system toolkits and other advice would be a helpful early publication.

More could be done to support authorities and simplify the process of publishing open data, for example in GIS formats, where there are still complex OS licencing issues to address.

It's not clear whether consideration has been given to how this relates to neighbourhood plans. There may be opportunities to provide further digital tools to support plan making. This could also mean neighbourhood plans are more digitally available and can be integrated more effectively with the wider development plan.

Chapter 4: The local plan timetable

Question 12: Do you agree with our proposals on the milestones to be reported on in the local plan timetable and minerals and waste timetable, and our proposals surrounding when timetables must be updated?

Publishing and keeping up to date a plan making timetable is an important role for plan makers. The current requirements around a Local Development Scheme do add a degree of complexity which can make providing simple information a complex process. Changes to add flexibility and simplify the process could therefore be helpful. A timetable template would also be a useful addition. Clarity on when the timetable should first be published would be helpful.

Question 13: Are there any key milestones that you think should automatically trigger a review of the local plan timetable and/or minerals and waste plan timetable?

A review and potentially an update after each milestone reached would be a sensible approach.

Chapter 5: Evidence and the tests of soundness

Question 14: Do you think this direction of travel for national policy and guidance set out in this chapter would provide more clarity on what evidence is expected? Are there other changes you would like to see?

In our response to the consultation on national planning policy changes in spring 2023, we highlighted that the Greater Cambridge area is under significant development pressure, and its plans are heavily scrutinised including by promoters of high value sites. The volume and complexity of evidence needed for plan making is therefore very high, creating significant costs for the authorities and extending the plan making period. More should be done to make the plan making process proportionate and to help authorities deliver plans. There still also needs to be flexibility to prepare evidence based on local circumstances, and this may need to start prior to the 30 month period especially if relevant to development of the vision.

We welcome efforts to make the plan making process more proportionate. The success will depend on many factors, including how the new process plays out in high pressure areas like Greater Cambridge. The direction of travel in para 89 contains some useful approaches, subject to seeing the full intention when the NPPF review is consulted on.

Details of the approach to Environmental Outcomes Reports is required alongside these proposals to understand in full the proposed evidence burden for plan-making.

Standardisation of key evidence and data

Question 15: Do you support the standardisation of evidence requirements for certain topics? What evidence topics do you think would be particularly important or beneficial to standardise and/or have more readily available baseline data?

Technical processes like Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessments would benefit from guidance and a proportionate methodology. Carbon Impact Assessment was referenced in the Spring consultation, and if this is a requirement a clear and implementable methodology will be essential.

There are parts of plan-making, particularly in relation to built form and creating a vision for an area which are unique to local conditions and should not be standardised. There is a danger if standardisation is taken too far it will undermine the delivery of plans based around a local vision. During preparation of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan we have explored the unique characteristics of the Cambridge economy, which has necessitated a bespoke approach to evidence, including on housing need associated with forecast economic growth. If standardisation is taken too far it could undermine the ability to reflect local circumstances.

Freezing of data or evidence

Question 16: Do you support the freezing of data or evidence at certain points of the process? If so which approach(es) do you favour?

A challenge of plan making is that new evidence and sites are submitted to each consultation, including at the submission stage. We also often receive requests to consider new information between consultations. A clear approach providing a window for evidence to be submitted would provide clarity and certainty for all involved.

An evidence freeze at an appropriate point would also be helpful. For example, a call for sites process is a useful stage of plan making, allowing interested parties to highlight sites for consideration. Submissions take a significant time to process and assess, but this can be compounded with changes, and additional sites being submitted very late in the process.

It will also be necessary to freeze the evidence regarding need for jobs and homes at an appropriate point.

Regulations

Question 17: Do you support this proposal to require local planning authorities to submit only supporting documents that are related to the soundness of the plan?

Our experience in Greater Cambridge is that only submitting documents linked to demonstrating soundness is already normal practice. The list can still be extensive and wide ranging. For example a topic paper may reference several external sources of evidence to justify a policy. There should also be flexibility to respond to local circumstances.

Chapter 6: Gateway

Question 18: Do you agree that these should be the overarching purposes of gateway assessments? Are there other purposes we should consider alongside those set out above?

The principle of gateways is a useful addition to the process. They offer an early check regarding compliance of the plan with requirements, potentially giving greater certainty that the plan is capable of successfully passing examination, and potentially reducing the risk to local authorities of carrying out abortive work.

The overarching purposes (ensuring the plan sets off in the right direction, ensuring compliance with legal and procedural requirements and (wherever possible) supporting early resolution of potential soundness issues, and monitoring and track progress) are all appropriate goals.

The goals do not include seeking to offer advice to improve a process of support to a local planning authority in its plan making. It would be hoped that the process may be productive in a way that if an issue is identified causing concern or preventing progress, constructive advice is provided to assist the LPA to overcome it.

Key expectations

Question 19: Do you agree with these proposals around the frequency and timing of gateways and who is responsible?

Having a proportionate review at each stage would seem appropriate, although their true impact on timetabling, resource needs, and effectiveness is likely to come out of the pilot testing process. It's also going to be key that organisations required to carry out the reviews are resourced appropriately, or there is a risk that plans are delayed.

Having the third gateway undertaken by the Planning Inspectorate would be appropriate, effectively checking legal compliance prior to the start of an examination could avoid examinations needing to be paused shortly after they had commenced which has happened in some areas. It is agreed that other organisations, such as the Planning Advisory service, could have a significant role in the earlier gateways, as long as their advice is fully consistent with the expectations of planning inspectors. On complex issues there may still need to be input from the inspectorate at the earlier review stages.

Process and scope

Gateway 1, 2 and 3

Question 20: Do you agree with our proposals for the gateway assessment process, and the scope of the key topics? Are there any other topics we should consider?

The scope of Gateway 1 is extremely broad. Many of the issues referenced will be choices of the Local Planning Authority, for example around scope for local development management policies. Care will need to be taken to avoid reports stepping into decisions that should be made locally, and stay focused on whether a process is sound and won't lead to issues at later stages. It refers to including a headline position on delivering new homes based on the standard method and recent Housing Delivery Test (HDT) results and, where possible, describing the high-level options available to deliver development needs in the area. In Greater Cambridge our evidence concludes that in order to support the particularly strong economic growth, housing need is higher than the standard method. Where there are local circumstances that suggest housing need that departs from the standard method, it is important that there is early engagement given the implications for vision and spatial strategy.

Gateway 2 refers to compliance with Neighbourhood Priorities Statements, but doesn't mention Neighbourhood Plans. If a community chooses to do a full Neighbourhood Plan instead of Priority Statement they should also be taken into account.

Gateway 3 is effectively a legal and procedural soundness check prior to examination, and the consultation proposes a logical scope. We assume this would be after the council had considered representations and agreed the plan it wished to submit, such that a council decision may be to submit the plan subject to the successful outcome of the gateway 3 process.

Funding

Question 21: Do you agree with our proposal to charge planning authorities for gateway assessments?

The context for this question is government providing funding to support addressing planning backlogs, skills gaps, and additional burdens related to biodiversity net gain. Any additional costs have potential to impact on Local Planning Authorities ability to fund plan making and delivery. If not funded directly by government, costs would need to be proportionate.

Reflecting our response to the previous question, the Gateway 1 and 2 reviews need to be proportionate if it is not to be overly costly. There should still be scope for a planning authority to ask for additional support beyond the core elements if they choose to do so.

Chapter 7: Plan examination

Speeding up examinations

Question 22: Do you agree with our proposals to speed up plan examinations? Are there additional changes that we should be considering to enable faster examinations?

Taking steps to rationalise the examination process is important. Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Council's adopted local plans involved a four year examination. This had significant impacts in terms of resources, delayed site delivery and led to issues regarding five year housing land supply.

Reviewing the Matters, Issues and Questions process is appropriate. Parties currently submit significant amounts of additional evidence during the examination accompanying their matter statements which could have been submitted as part of representations on the submission plan.

Related to this point, the proposal to provide the opportunity for third parties to submit a short statement in writing which can be considered by the Inspector, where they do not wish to attend a hearing, will need to be carefully controlled if it is not to be an opportunity to submit further evidence that was capable of being submitted in original representations. Consideration will need to be given to how the right appear will be managed within a six month programme in areas where there is a lot of interest.

Modification consultations are proposed to be reduced to three weeks. This would create challenges for Local Planning Authorities if issues were significant enough to warrant consideration of a response through a committee process. From our experience other parties like Parish Councils need time to take decisions through meetings, and in some cases have found six week periods challenging. If the period were to be set at three weeks inspectors should seek to give sufficient warning when this is coming up so Councils can give notice to interest parties.

Measures which are to be implemented will need to be very clear in legislation and guidance to avoid the risk of legal challenge.

Examination pause

Question 23: Do you agree that six months is an adequate time for the pause period, and with the government's expectations around how this would operate?

It would depend on the nature of the pause and the scale and nature of the work needed in that period. For example, if the requirements to address an issue was to identify additional sites, it would require those sites to be selected and agreed by members. Public consultation may also be appropriate, but it's not clear if that would be part of the 6 month period, or addressed by the modifications process which itself has the potential to add additional time. Clear agreement of what work is needed

and clear understanding of all parties would be vital, and therefore the suggestion of a hearing before the pause to establish this would be a useful step, allowing dialogue on the matter.

There may also be circumstances where a partial inspectors report should be issued, where it could resolve issues related to housing supply for example.

Chapter 8: Community engagement and consultation

Planning and monitoring the engagement approach

Question 24: Do you agree with our proposal that planning authorities should set out their overall approach to engagement as part of their Project Initiation Document? What should this contain?

Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council have sought to deliver high quality and engaging public consultations, drawing on opportunities provided by digital media, but also a range of other methods to avoid digital exclusion.

Our digital engagement has often been quoted as good practice, and our learning through recent consultations may be helpful to DLUHC when development new tools.

The consultation document proposes to replace the role of Statements of Community Involvement (SCI) with a section within the Project Initiation Document. We have taken this sort of approach in our Local Plan Statement of Consultation, which elaborates on how we will meet our commitments in the SCI and provides specific details for each plan making stage. It is then used to document the outcome of each consultation, and success of the measures which were taken in terms of their reach.

The problems with SCI's the consultation highlights are fair, but its role in providing a one stop document setting out how Council's will undertake planning consultation

and what communities should expect should not be ignored. It is not clear how the other parts of an SCI are to be dealt with if they are to be no longer required, in particular the approach to planning applications.

A focus on early participation

Question 25: Do you support our proposal to require planning authorities to notify relevant persons and/or bodies and invite participation, prior to commencement of the 30 month process?

The start of our plan making processes has always involved consultation with communities on the issues that the plan needs to address, and we think this should continue.

Greater clarity is needed on what 'baseline information' is anticipated by paragraph 144.

There is some inconsistency in terms used in this section of the consultation. The question refers to consulting 'relevant persons and/or bodies'. This might include 'communities', and 'statutory bodies'. There is also reference to mirroring the current regulation 18 requirement of inviting participation from 'residents and businesses within the local authority area'. Meeting this broader requirement does not seem consistent with the potential options suggested in paragraphs 145 and 146 of the consultation, which imply a more focused approach and potentially a more limited list of stakeholders. The purpose and scope needs to be clear if it is to provide clarity.

The main roles of this stage are described as inviting views on the issues the plan needs to address, in order to help shape the plan's vision before it is drafted, as well as testing how the community wish to be engaged. The scale and resources needed to run such a consultation should not be underestimated. Paragraph 145 implies it may be possible to launch a consultation four months before the first gateway to meet the notification requirement, and that it would be possible to run a consultation,

processing the results, and using them to prepare the gateway one report, all within that period. This would not be practicable. The reality is likely to be that running a comprehensive consultation, processing the results, and using it to shape the PID could take 6 months to a year.

Question 26: Should early participation inform the Project Initiation Document? What sorts of approaches might help to facilitate positive early participation in plan-preparation?

Early participation can help inform the Project Initiation Document. We have tried a range of measures in Greater Cambridge, from social media, webinars, youth engagement, and a Big Debate attended by around 300 people. Local Planning Authorities should be able to shape the consultation process to reflect their local area and vision for the plan.

A more standardised approach to consultation

Question 27: Do you agree with our proposal to define more clearly what the role and purpose of the two mandatory consultation windows should be?

Defining more clearly has the potential to provide clarity for all parties, but the consultation proposals do not yet achieve that goal.

The consultation describes the purpose of the first formal consultation as ‘To ensure that communities can meaningfully influence the plan, we expect that questions asked at this consultation will focus on validating the vision for the area and test the broad options for the plan, including the key spatial choices.’ This remains open to interpretation. What does it mean by the broad options? Does it include establishing the development needs and what should be planned for? Is this focusing on key strategy choices? How does it relate to current requirements to test ‘reasonable alternatives’? Will this be informed by the requirements of the Environmental Outcomes Report regulations?

Currently many Local Planning Authorities will publish preferred options and / or draft plans at the regulation 18 stage, in order to shape the detail of the plan prior to the proposed submission stage where making changes is more difficult. We consider that the plan making approach should include more detail in the first formal consultation regarding the council's emerging choices around development needs, development strategy, sites and policies, otherwise they would only be available at the final consultation stage. This is particularly relevant to location of development, whether there could be exceptional circumstances justifying Green Belt release, and key strategic sites, as well as smaller sites where it is also important for local communities to have the opportunity to influence the plan before it gets to the proposed submission stage.

The second stage of the consultation is referred to as enabling comment on the draft plan. Given it is a consultation on the plan itself, more information is needed on why the consultation describes that, 'key to its success will be ensuring that questions are well-structured and targeted'. Is it envisaging a set of questions accompanying the draft plan rather than a form asking for support or object, and changes which are sought? Given these representations will form the basis of the examination this sort of clarity will be needed, and reference to a model template would seem more appropriate.

Question 28: Do you agree with our proposal to use templates to guide the form in which representations are submitted?

Yes. The Greater Cambridge Planning Service secured funding through the DLUHC Proptech Round 3 to explore opportunities to make carrying out consultation and processing feedback more efficient and effective, building on our experience gained through the production of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan. We are exploring issues including templates and processing of digital evidence submissions. We would be happy to work with DLUHC on this specific issue.

Chapter 9: Requirement to assist with certain plan-making

Table 2 Proposed prescribed public bodies

Question 29: Do you have any comments on the proposed list of prescribed public bodies?

National Highways should be specifically listed.

At the moment authorities have to maintain databases of contacts. There are opportunities for efficiency improvements here, for example a single consultation portal where an authority could highlight it is consulting and notification is automatically given to all of these bodies.

Proposed approach

Question 30: Do you agree with the proposed approach? If not, please comment on whether the alternative approach or another approach is preferable and why.

If a 30 month plan making process is going to be practicable for a Local Planning Authority then the timely and sufficiently resourced engagement of all the organisations listed in the consultation will be required. It's not entirely clear what formally notifying will do if that doesn't happen. It should also be clarified that as they are required to assist they will not be charging local authorities. It would be helpful to clarify if this could be combined with the notification of the start of plan making as required at least 4 months ahead of the start of the formal process, which in areas where there are complex issues could be much earlier.

Chapter 10: Monitoring of plans

Table 3 Monitoring of plans

Question 31: Do you agree with the proposed requirements for monitoring?

The adopted plans in Greater Cambridge have a large number of detailed indicators, which were added during the examination as required by the planning inspector. Monitoring indicators related to SEA outcomes also adds to the list. This takes place alongside production of detailed housing trajectory evidence to defend a five year housing supply. Producing Authority Monitoring Reports annually is a useful exercise but it needs to be proportionate. Identification of a number of key standard indicators would be helpful, which would be supplemented by a selection of key local indicators related specifically to delivery of the local vision.

The proposals need further thought around their practicalities. Paragraph 171 says that the minimum requirements (i.e. the yearly monitoring of the standard metrics) should take place annually and be published on the anniversary of plan adoption. This suggests that each local authority will be reporting at a different time in the year, depending on when the plan is adopted. Therefore how will you be able to compare nationally? The monitoring of completions is done on a set yearly basis, and authorities are used to returning their housing completions figures for April-March years every September in the Housing Flows Reconciliation Form. It would make more sense to have everyone reporting on the same monitoring years at the same time. Otherwise each time an authority adopts a new plan, it would have to change its monitoring year.

Paragraph 172 says that the vision set out by each authority will be underpinned by evidence and based on measurable outcomes that authorities can monitor and report against. This raises questions about what will be in a vision that can be so specific and measurable, as such issues would normally be addressed in policy.

Question 32: Do you agree with the proposed metrics? Do you think there are any other metrics which planning authorities should be required to report on?

The core metrics referenced seem a reasonable set that could be supplemented locally as necessary. Some of the references in the consultation lack clarity, and will need to be clearly defined if they are to be collected on a comparable basis nationally.

For example, only some of the indicators are clear whether they relate to permissions or completions, and there appears to be a mix of both e.g. you have net additional dwellings completed and net affordable dwellings completed, but then homes permitted on brownfield land - why is this not also completions? And then for Gypsy and Traveller site provision and employment floorspace it doesn't say either permitted or completed.

Chapter 11: Supplementary plans

Preparation procedure

Question 33: Do you agree with the suggested factors which could be taken into consideration when assessing whether two or more sites are 'nearby' to each other? Are there any other factors that would indicate whether two or more sites are 'nearby' to each other?

The criteria for assessing whether sites are near seem reasonable, and need a degree of flexibility to reflect local circumstances.

Supplementary Planning Documents will no longer be prepared in the new system. Clarity regarding how the sorts of issues that were routinely dealt with by these would be helpful. The consultation in Figure 6 provides two options for existing SPDs that the content could either be fully or partially absorbed into a new local plan, or it could remain as 'local guidance' in full or partially. There have been many court

cases on the weight that can be given to local guidance in light of the legislation requirements around supplementary planning documents. It should be made clear whether the reference to 'local guidance' relates only to adopted SPDs or whether it is intended that new local guidance could be prepared alongside local plans under the new system. If so, Government guidance will need to be clear how local guidance should be approached and any weight that it can be given in decisions and ensure that it would not run the risk of challenge that it should have been prepared as a supplementary plan, as has happened with informal guidance that the courts have concluded should be prepared as SPDs.

Question 34: What preparation procedures would be helpful, or unhelpful, to prescribe for supplementary plans? e.g. Design: design review and engagement event; large sites: masterplan engagement, etc.

The procedures need not be overly prescriptive, as it should be for the local planning authority to determine the level of engagement reflecting the proposals and local circumstances.

Consultation

Question 35: Do you agree that a single formal stage of consultation is considered sufficient for a supplementary plan? If not, in what circumstances would more formal consultation stages be required?

A single formal consultation stage is appropriate. This of course does not prevent an authority carrying out informal consultation and engagement leading up to this if they consider it appropriate to the proposals being developed.

Examination

Question 36: Should government set thresholds to guide the decision that authorities make about the choice of supplementary plan examination routes? If so, what thresholds would be most helpful? For example, minimum size of development planned for, which could be quantitative both in terms of land use and spatial coverage; level of interaction of proposal with sensitive designations, such as environmental or heritage.

A clear threshold would have the benefit of providing clarity to all parties, particularly for large, complex regeneration sites. This could depend on the relationship with the requirements for Environmental Outcomes Reports which are yet to be known.

Question 37: Do you agree that the approach set out above provides a proportionate basis for the independent examination of supplementary plans? If not, what policy or regulatory measures would ensure this?

It does provide a proportionate basis, but clarity and examples will be needed, otherwise the interpretation will be clarified through the courts. This includes how being in broad conformity with the local plan will be considered.

Chapter 12: Minerals and waste plans

Question 38: Are there any unique challenges facing the preparation of minerals and waste plans which we should consider in developing the approach to implement the new plan-making system?

No comment, as we are not a minerals and waste planning authority.

Chapter 13: Community Land Auctions

How will Community Land Auction arrangements align with other systems of developer contributions?

Question 39: Do you have any views on how we envisage the Community Land Auctions process would operate?

No comment.

Question 40: To what extent should financial considerations be taken into account by local planning authorities in Community Land Auction pilots, when deciding to allocate sites in the local plan, and how should this be balanced against other factors?

Financial considerations could be a consideration in the sense that they will enable delivery of infrastructure, but it is crucial that they do not undermine delivery of sustainable development and the wider aims of the planning system. It should not undermine other requirements such as the responsibilities under the Climate Change Act.

Chapter 14: Approach to roll out and transition

Proposals around protection from speculative development

Question 41: Which of these options should be implemented, and why? Are there any alternative options that we should be considering?

This is a specific question around the waves authorities will be grouped into, and whether this should be fixed or provide flexibility. Given that there may be circumstances arising within an area that need a bespoke approach, flexibility would be the preferred approach. It would not be reasonable to stop a council from producing a plan if they wish to do so because they are not listed as being part of a wave.

Chapter 15: Saving existing plans and planning documents

Question 42: Do you agree with our proposals for saving existing plans and planning documents? If not, why?

Yes. It is important adopted local plans remain in force until replaced by new style local plans. Supplementary Planning Documents are not mentioned but should also remain live.

Equalities impacts

Question 43: 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?

There is a strong focus on digital, and the use of standard templates. This could support making information accessible, though making information follow a standard for screen readers for example. Avoiding digital exclusion must also be an important consideration when preparing plans and carrying out consultations.

Cambridge City Council

Record of Executive Decision

South Newnham Neighbourhood Plan – Response to consultation on the pre-submission plan

Decision of: Councillor Thornburrow, Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure

Reference: 23/Urgency/P&T/14

Date of decision: 13/07/23

Date Published on website:

Decision Type: Non-Key

Matter for Decision: To agree the response to the pre-submission consultation on the South Newnham Neighbourhood Plan.

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

The South Newnham Neighbourhood Forum is preparing a neighbourhood plan for their area. The Council has a duty to support neighbourhood forums in preparing their plan. Officers have considered the contents of the South Newnham Neighbourhood Plan against the basic conditions tests, including general conformity with national planning policy and the policies of the adopted Local Plan.

An alternative option would be for the Council not to respond to the pre-submission consultation, but the Council has a duty to support neighbourhood forums in their plan-making. If no response is made the neighbourhood forum would not be made aware of the Council's views and suggested amendments to help ensure that the neighbourhood plan will be successful at examination.

The Executive Councillor's decision: Agreed the response to the pre-submission consultation on the South Newnham Neighbourhood Plan as set out in Appendix A.

Reason for the decision: The Council has a duty to support neighbourhood forums in preparing neighbourhood plans and is keen to support these local communities so that their plan is successful at examination.

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

Report: The response from Cambridge City Council to the pre-submission consultation on the South Newnham Neighbourhood Plan is attached as Appendix A.

The Plan can be found on the www.newnhamforum.co.uk website under the heading “Neighbourhood Plan”, which includes the draft Plan itself, together with the Evidence Base and Street Appraisals which are supporting documents.

Conflict of interest: None.

Comments: No adverse comments were made by the Chair or Opposition Spokes.