



Neighbourhood Planning: Support Offer to Local Communities preparing Neighbourhood Plans in Cambridge

Cambridge City Council

Draft June 2018

This document includes hyperlinks to a range of websites, and the hyperlinks can be accessed using the published version of this document, which is available to view via: <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/neighbourhood-planning> Every effort has been made to ensure that these hyperlinks are up-to-date, however as websites change these hyperlinks can become invalid.

This support offer has been adapted from that produced by South Cambridgeshire District Council for their local communities preparing neighbourhood plans.

Herefordshire Council has kindly given permission for us to provide links to their guidance on neighbourhood planning.

Huntingdonshire District Council has kindly allowed us to take inspiration and wording from their Neighbourhood Planning Guidance.

If you have any queries relating to this document, please contact us via policysurveys@cambridge.gov.uk or **01223 457200**

Introduction

As the local planning authority, Cambridge City Council has a duty to give advice and assistance when it considers appropriate, to local communities who wish to prepare a neighbourhood plan.

Where a community wants to take up the opportunities offered by neighbourhood planning, the legislation enables three types of organisations known as qualifying bodies to lead it. These are either a parish or town council; a neighbourhood forum; or a community organisation. For Cambridge this will be Neighbourhood Forums.

CCC wishes to support its local communities in developing their neighbourhood plans, and this offer document sets out the support that CCC will provide to all neighbourhood forums. This is CCC's current offer and it will be kept under review.

Any neighbourhood forum that would like support, advice or assistance that goes beyond that set out in this offer should contact CCC via policysurveys@cambridge.gov.uk or 01223 457200 to discuss their requirements.

This support offer is aligned with that produced by South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) for their local communities preparing neighbourhood plans.

On the SCDC website there are pages dedicated to neighbourhood planning which include a Planning Toolkit. This toolkit consists of a set of guidance notes to help parish councils in South Cambridgeshire District to prepare their plans. As Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council move towards a shared planning service these guidance notes will be adapted to be applicable for local communities in Cambridge. There are links in this support offer to these guidance notes to provide an indication of the guidance which will be available.

Step One: Getting Started

How will CCC support local communities in getting started?

- a) CCC will **provide advice on its website** as first port of call for enquiries about neighbourhood planning. There is also advice available on the SCDC website;
- b) CCC will **meet with any local community** considering preparing a neighbourhood plan to discuss:
 - the requirements of forming a neighbourhood forum and identifying the area within which their plan would apply – the neighbourhood area,
 - the requirements of preparing a plan,
 - any other options that might also be available to meet local objectives, and
 - if the community has the necessary information to decide what approach would be best for them.
- c) CCC with SCDC will also provide **a lending library of resources** that local communities may find useful to help decide on whether to prepare a neighbourhood plan e.g. examples of Neighbourhood Plans.

Guidance and Regulations

Neighbourhood Planning Regulations

- Original (April 2012): [Neighbourhood Planning \(General\) Regulations 2012](#)
- Amended (February 2015): [Neighbourhood Planning \(General\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2015](#)
- Amended (October 2016): [Neighbourhood Planning \(General\) and Development Management Procedure \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)

These regulations may occasionally change or new regulations introduced

National Guidance on Neighbourhood Planning

- [National Planning Practice Guidance](#)

Other Resources

[CCC Neighbourhood Planning webpages](#)

[SCDC Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit](#)

Is a Neighbourhood Plan the Right Tool for your Parish
Getting Started

Herefordshire Council: [Which is the right approach for your parish?](#)

Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) – [Notes on Neighbourhood Planning](#)

Locality - They have a website dedicated to neighbourhood planning <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/> and a [Neighbourhood Plan Roadmap Guide](#) which provides a good introduction to neighbourhood planning.

Planning Aid [their website is called [Forum for Neighbourhood Planning](#)] – they have published a suite of documents and resources to assist those developing a neighbourhood

plan.

Planning Advisory Service ([PAS](#)) – they have published a number of guides, tools and templates for neighbourhood planning.

Step Two: Getting started

Work on a neighbourhood plan can only commence formally when a neighbourhood area has been designated by the local planning authority. Where there is no parish council as is the case in Cambridge a prospective neighbourhood forum of at least 21 people must be formed to lead and co-ordinate the plan-making process. Prospective neighbourhood forums will need to be designated by the local planning authority.

It is common to apply for the neighbourhood area first, and then the neighbourhood forum but there is no legal reason why this cannot be applied for at the same time. However if there changes made to the proposed neighbourhood area as a result of the public consultation it may be necessary to review the membership of the forum.

Designating a Neighbourhood Area

How will CCC support local communities in designating a neighbourhood area?

- a) CCC will provide **maps of the area** being considered by the local community as a starting point to help in the consideration of a boundary for the neighbourhood area.
- b) CCC will discuss with communities wishing to prepare a neighbourhood plan the area within which their plan will apply. CCC will offer advice on **how to define the neighbourhood area**.
- c) CCC has an **application form** that should be completed and submitted for a Neighbourhood Area designation to be considered. When a local community is completing this application CCC can help by preparing a map to show the proposed area.

National Guidance on Neighbourhood Planning

- [National Planning Practice Guidance](#)
- [Designating a neighbourhood area](#)

Once a Neighbourhood Area application is submitted, CCC will:

- a) consider the application, including whether **it is valid**, as set out in the Regulations;
- b) carry out **public consultation** on the application usually for a six week period .

Other Resources

CCC Neighbourhood Area Application Form – this application form is available from the Policy Team at CCC. It should be completed and submitted to CCC for any Neighbourhood Area to be designated.

[SCDC Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit:](#)

Getting a Neighbourhood Area Designated

Timescales

Public consultation and decision made by CCC within the timescales set out in Regulations.

Designating a Neighbourhood Forum

A designated neighbourhood forum is the group empowered to lead the neighbourhood planning process in a neighbourhood area where there is no town or parish council.

How will CCC support local communities in designating a neighbourhood forum?

- a) CCC will discuss with local communities considering preparing a neighbourhood plan the process for setting up of the neighbourhood forum.
 - Ensuring the **membership of the forum** reflects the character and diversity of the local population with people from different places in the area and different sections of the community
 - Advise on **legal status** of the neighbourhood forum
- b) CCC has an **application form** that should be completed and submitted for a Neighbourhood Forum designation to be considered.

National Guidance on Neighbourhood Planning

- [National Planning Practice Guidance](#)
[Who leads neighbourhood planning in an area](#)

Once a Neighbourhood Forum application is submitted, CCC will:

- a) consider the application, including whether it is **valid**, as set out in the Regulations;
- b) carry out **public consultation** on the application usually for a 6 week period or as set out in the regulations.

Other Resources

CCC Neighbourhood Forum Application Form – this application form is available from the Policy Team at CCC. It should be completed and submitted to CCC for any Neighbourhood Forum to be designated.

Locality :

[How to establish a neighbourhood planning forum](#)

Timescales

Public consultation and decision made by CCC within the timescales set out in Regulations

Step Three: Early Stage of Plan Development

How will CCC support local communities in the early stage of plan development?

- a) Once the Neighbourhood Area is designated, CCC will offer to meet with the Neighbourhood Forum to:
- explain this **support offer** which is available to all Neighbourhood Plan groups;
 - inform the neighbourhood forum about the range of **online guidance available and future workshops**;
 - make the neighbourhood forum aware of the grants and technical support packages available from **Locality** which could assist them in their plan making;
 - Recommend **the neighbourhood forum appoints a planning consultant** who specialises in neighbourhood planning to help them in the technical process of preparing a neighbourhood plan, which in most cases go beyond the level of support that CCC can provide.

Other Resources

Locality:

[Applying for grants and technical support](#)

- b) CCC will not provide direct financial grants to local communities to prepare their neighbourhood plan.

Other Resources

[SCDC Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit:](#)

Getting Started

Herefordshire Council: [Getting started](#)

Locality:

- [Support and Grants](#)
- [Project Planner](#)

Planning Aid:

- [How to Resource Your Neighbourhood plan](#)
- [How to Project Plan](#)

- c) CCC will **attend meetings** with the neighbourhood forum or the neighbourhood plan working group.

CCC will aim to respond positively to all requests. However, please be aware that this will be subject to resources and may need to be managed if requests coincide with peaks of neighbourhood plan activity or other work of the Planning Policy Team, and potentially support may be provided via a third party. In these instances, attendance at meetings will be subject to discussion and agreement with the neighbourhood forum. Resources to support

neighbourhood planning will be kept under review.

d) CCC will also **provide advice and guidance on how to meet the basic conditions** as set out in the Regulations, including:

- highlighting the strategic policies in the adopted Cambridge Local Plan that the neighbourhood plan must be in general conformity with;
- highlighting the main national policies and advice that will need to be considered;
- considering how the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
- providing advice on undertaking a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to ensure compatibility with EU obligations, including identifying who needs to be consulted. If a full SEA is triggered this could require a substantial amount of work in order to address any issues.

Guidance and Regulations

Information on the basic conditions is set out in:

[National Planning Practice Guidance](#)

These regulations may occasionally change or new regulations introduced

Other Resources:

[SCDC Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit:](#)

What are the Basic Conditions and How to Meet Them

- e) CCC with SCDC will **provide a range of online guidance** on how to do different tasks in neighbourhood planning such as:
- methods of community engagement; and
 - how to achieve effective public consultations.
- f) CCC with SCDC will provide a **lending library of resources** that local communities may find useful to help decide on whether to prepare a neighbourhood plan e.g. examples of neighbourhood plans.
- g) CCC will provide advice on the **legal requirements** for neighbourhood planning as set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Localism Act 2011).

Timescales

Please keep in touch with CCC so that we know when you may need help and when you are reaching stages where CCC has a formal role, so we can respond to requests for help in a timely way.

CCC has a duty to support a neighbourhood forum and can help keep up the momentum of your plan making.

Step Four: Building the Evidence Base

How will CCC support local communities build the evidence base?

- a) CCC will provide information about where a neighbourhood forum can find data for the **evidence base they will need to support their neighbourhood plan**, including signposting to the evidence base and supporting studies underpinning the emerging Local Plan. Evidence should be focused on that needed to support the neighbourhood plan objectives.

Other Resources

[SCDC Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit:](#)

Sources of Evidence and Information

[Locality technical support package](#)

- **Evidence Base and Policy Development (EBPD)**

- b) CCC along with SCDC will provide a range of guidance on how to do different tasks in neighbourhood planning, such as:

- **methods of community engagement;**

This guidance will be provided as a flexible ‘live’ resource on [SCDC’s website](#), and eventually on the Cambridge website but provided in a format that is capable of downloading and printing as a single document at any point in time. Not all the guidance will be available from the start and future guidance provided will be informed by feedback from local communities.

Other Resources:

Locality:

[Resources](#) – provides a suite of documents that cover different aspects of neighbourhood planning.

Planning Aid:

[Resources](#) – a suite of documents and resources to assist those developing a neighbourhood plan.

Other Council’s Guidance Notes

Herefordshire Council: [Guidance Notes](#)

- c) CCC will share information on **contacts** for key consultees.
- d) CCC will provide up to date information on the emerging Cambridge **Local Plan**.

Other Resources:

[CCC Local Plan Examination webpages](#)

SCDC [Planning Policy Monthly Update](#) – this provides the latest news on the progress of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan.

- e) CCC will **highlight the key allocations and designations** included on the Local Plan **Policies Map** which a neighbourhood forum will need to be aware of.

Step Five: Writing the Plan

How will CCC support local communities in writing the plan?

- a) CCC will provide **constructive comments** on emerging draft policies in the neighbourhood plan against the basic conditions.

Timescales

CCC will need 3 weeks notice of when documents or policies will be submitted to us for comment. If you have kept us informed of your progress (by keeping the timeline up to date) we will know when you will be asking for help and can plan our resources accordingly.

CCC will seek endeavour to respond within 3 weeks and often sooner, subject to resources and taking account of local timescales as far as possible, or as agreed with the neighbourhood forum. We want to ensure that we provide constructive comments which will help your plan-making and need sufficient time in order to do so.

- b) CCC with SCDC will provide a range of **guidance** and **specialist advice**, subject to capacity, on planning issues that may be included in a neighbourhood plan, such as local housing need and affordable housing,

This guidance will be provided as a flexible 'live' resource on [SCDC's website](#), and eventually on the Cambridge website but provided in a format that is capable of downloading and printing as a single document at any point in time. Not all the guidance will be available from the start and will be informed by feedback from local communities.

- c) CCC will make the neighbourhood forum aware of the requirement to carry out a **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulation Assessment Screening (HRA)** of their neighbourhood plan to ensure that it meets the statutory environmental standards.

It should be noted that if a full SEA or HRA is required **Locality is offering technical support packages** to carry out full Habitat Regulation Assessments and Strategic Environmental Assessments where they are required.

Other Resources

[SCDC Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit:](#)
Strategic Environment Assessments (SEA)

[Locality technical support packages –](#)

- Strategic Environmental Assessment
- Habitat Regulation Assessment

Guidance and Regulations

National Planning Practice Guidance – [Strategic Environmental Assessment requirements for Neighbourhood Plans](#)

These regulations may occasionally change or new regulations introduced

Timescale

Need to consult with statutory bodies, therefore need to allow time for them to respond. The whole process is likely to take 2-3 months.

d) CCC will provide **technical mapping support** as set out in 'Maps for Neighbourhood Plans'. CCC will also offer the following services (anything additional to the below will require further cost):

- **Neighbourhood area designation**
- **Policies map** – 8 hours of mapping time
 - create map
 - provide 3 electronic copies at A3 or smaller
 - additional layer sharing of neighbourhood plan policies and proposals
 - anything beyond 8 hours will require additional costs.

Other Resources

[SCDC Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit:](#)

Maps for Neighbourhood Plans

Step Six: Pre-submission Consultation and Preparing the Plan for Submission to CCC

How will CCC support local communities in the pre-submission consultation and preparing the plan for submission to CCC?

- a) CCC will advise the neighbourhood forum of the value of having a pre-submission **health check** of the draft neighbourhood plan before they submit their neighbourhood plan and supporting documents to CCC

Locality is offering a technical support package that carries out a health check of a neighbourhood plan if it meets eligibility tests. The eligibility test for this support is if your plan meets any of the following criteria:

- Is allocating sites for housing
- Includes design codes which provide detailed design guidance for a site or area in your plan
- Planning to use a neighbourhood development order

[SCDC Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit](#)

Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA)

What are the Basic Conditions and How to Meet Them

Strategic Policies

- b) CCC with SCDC will provide a **lending library of resources** that local communities may find useful to help prepare their neighbourhood plan e.g. exhibition boards, banners, examples of neighbourhood plans.

Step Seven: Submission of the Plan to CCC

How will CCC support local communities in the submission of the plan to CCC?

The final stages of preparing the neighbourhood plan are undertaken with CCC as the lead rather than the neighbourhood forum.

- a) CCC will keep the neighbourhood forums **informed of progress** and liaise with them to resolve any issues as the plan goes through the examination and referendum stages towards its completion, including:
- liaise with the neighbourhood forums regarding **appointment of an examiner**;
 - liaise with the neighbourhood forum over **changes proposed in the examiner's report** to ensure the plan meets the basic condition tests;
 - liaise with neighbourhood forum over any **changes to the Neighbourhood Plan**;
 - liaise with neighbourhood forums over Council decision to **proceed to referendum** and the timing of the referendum.

Other resources

[NPIERS Guidance to service users and examiners – March 2018](#)