

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

Record of Executive Decision

CHANGES TO THE CURRENT PLANNING SYSTEM CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Decision of: Councillor Thornburrow, Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Open Spaces

Reference: 21/URGENCY/P&T/07

Date of decision: 25 March 2021 **Published:** 06 April 2021.

Decision Type: Non Key

Matter for Decision: Greater Cambridge response to National Planning Policy Framework and National Model Design Code: consultation proposals

1. Background

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has launched an eight-week consultation on proposals to establish a new Office for Place, which would require all local planning authorities to create their own design codes in consultation with local stakeholders. These design codes would have to be adhered in the planning submission process by all developers, and would entail some alterations to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Link to document:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-planning-policy-framework-and-national-model-design-code-consultation-proposals>

Deadline: 27th March

2. Context

The consultation follows directly from the 2021 consultations on the Planning White Paper. Last autumn, the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service (GCSP) responded to the Planning White Paper: Planning For The Future, Changes To The Current Planning System and Land Data consultations last Autumn. A copy of this joint response can be seen here:
<https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/documents/s51405/Planning%20ofuture%20and%20Current%20Changes%20Response%20Report.pdf>

The rationale, proposals and specific questions for this consultation, as well as the draft text updates to the NPPF and the annexed draft National Model Design Code can be downloaded from here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-planning-policy-framework-and-national-model-design-code-consultation-proposals/national-planning-policy-framework-and-national-model-design-code-consultation-proposals>

In this consultation, the government is acting to implement some of the main recommendations from the Building Better, Building Beautiful Report.

3. Proposed Response from Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council

Overall, Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service Officers consulted agree with the government that the planning system could be improved and should have more emphasis on design. This view echoes Greater Cambridge's response to the Planning White Paper last year where proposals that simplify processes and take advantage of more digital approaches to provide more certainty, design quality, and an emphasis on sustainability were welcomed.

However, there are significant concerns that some of the proposed changes may undermine its stated objectives of achieving good design. This concern is centred on proposed changes to Article 4 directions and the resources to deliver the design codes in a coherent manner.

The full response proposed is included as Appendix which can be viewed at the link below:

<https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13474>

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

The consultation raises important issues that the council wishes to respond to.

The Executive Councillor's decision():

Approved the proposed response the National Planning Policy Framework and National Model Design Code: consultation proposals, as set out in the document appended to this decision which can be viewed at the link below:

<https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13474>

Reasons for the decision:

Outlined in the report why the decision had been made.

Scrutiny consideration:

Report:

<https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13474>

Conflicts of interest:

None known.

Comments:

No adverse comments were made.