

Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document



To: Councillor Katie Thornburrow, Executive Councillor, Planning Policy and Transport

Planning & Transport Scrutiny Committee, 11/01/2022

Report by:

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Wards affected:

All

Key Decision

1. Executive Summary

The Greater Cambridge Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was first brought before this committee in June 2021 with the request to proceed to public consultation. That request was granted and public consultation was undertaken between 23 July and 17 September 2021.

A range of feedback was received from members of the public and organisations. Responses have been carefully assessed by officers, and a number of modifications to the draft SPD are proposed. This report recommends that the SPD as amended is adopted by Cambridge City Council, so that it can be used as a material consideration in planning decisions supporting implementation of the adopted Local Plan.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended to:

- a) Consider the main issues raised in the public consultation, agree responses to the representations received and agree proposed changes to the SPD as set out in the Statement of Consultation (appendix 1 of this report);
- b) subject to (a), adopt the amended Greater Cambridge Biodiversity SPD (appendix 2 of this report); and
- c) delegate to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development, in consultation with the Executive Councillor for planning policy and transport and the Chair and Spokes for the Planning Policy and Transport Scrutiny Committee, the authority to make any necessary editing changes to the SPD prior to publication.

3. Background

Supplementary planning documents (SPDs) build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on policies in an adopted local plan. As they do not form part of the development plan, they cannot introduce new planning policies into the development plan. They are however a material consideration in decision-making.

Due to ongoing climate and biodiversity emergencies, the Councils need current, up to date and accurate guidance for development schemes in order that development does not leave biodiversity in a worse condition than prior to development but improves the condition and / or increases the area of habitats which can support biodiversity.

The SPD was initially drafted in early 2021. Engagement with members was in place from the outset and prior to a public consultation in July, the draft version of the SPD came before members of both Councils during committee meetings in June for approval to take to consultation. The public consultation period ran between 17 July and 23 September 2021, and met the requirements of the Councils' Statement of Community Involvement.

Around 40 responses were received from many local interest groups, members of the public, and interested organisations providing recommendations and feedback. The Statement of Consultation (appendix 1 to this report) details the comments received, provides a summary of the main issues raised, and how they have been taken into account. It includes

details of modifications proposed to the consultation version that have been included in the version now proposed to be adopted.

In addition to responding to the consultation responses, factual changes to text have also been applied to the SPD to reflect that the Environment Bill has now passed through the democratic UK Parliamentary process and has received Royal Assent, becoming the Environment Act as of 9 November 2021.

The consultation draft Greater Cambridge Biodiversity SPD was subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment screening, and in both cases the requirement for further reassessment was screened out. The amendments now proposed do not change these conclusions, and an updated screening report has been prepared (appendix 3). They also are not considered to change the outcome of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) that accompanied the consultation (appendix 4).

Once adopted, this Biodiversity SPD will supersede the current South Cambridgeshire SPD covering biodiversity, (2009) and (subject to the decision by South Cambs DC) will become a joint SPD for biodiversity for Greater Cambridge.

4. Implications

a) Financial Implications

No financial implications are anticipated

b) Staffing Implications

No staffing implications are anticipated, although, once adopted the SPD should mean that the City and District Ecologists have clear and current guidance to direct developers to and this should save time.

c) Equality and Poverty Implications

No equality or poverty implications are anticipated. The draft SPD was subject to equalities impact assessment.

d) Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental Implications

Using the climate change rating tool the impacts are considered to be high positive.

The adoption of the Biodiversity SPD will ensure that developers have access to up to date and accurate guidance on existing policy and legislation relating to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity at development sites. The SPD promotes a more sustainable and more nature-friendly approach to

development which will bring many positive direct impacts, as well as many indirect positive impacts.

e) Procurement Implications

No procurement implications are anticipated

f) Community Safety Implications

No community safety implications are anticipated

5. Consultation and communication considerations

The consultation approach is set out in the main report. The communication of the results of the consultation, and of the final adopted document will follow standard procedure for Supplementary Planning Documents and will be in keeping with expectations and agreed approaches of both Councils.

6. Background papers

Background papers used in the preparation of this report:

Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document Consultation Draft July 2021
<https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/media/2316/gcsp-biodiversity-planning-doc.pdf>

Draft Greater Cambridge Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Statement of Consultation - July 2021
https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/media/2318/consultation-statement_july_21.pdf

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) & Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report
https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/media/2319/greater-cambridge-biodiversity-spd-sea_hra-screening-report_2021_final-copy.pdf

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA): Draft Greater Cambridge Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document
<https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/media/2317/bspd-eqia-july-2021.pdf>

7. Appendices

Appendix 1. Statement of Consultation

Appendix 2. Greater Cambridge Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (for adoption)

Appendix 3. SEA / HRA Screening (updated)

Appendix 4. Equalities Impact Assessment (updated).

8. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact John Cornell, Natural Environment Team Leader, Tel: 07927681932, email: John.cornell@greatercambridgeplanning.org