

# Cambridge City Council

## Record of Executive Decision

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

**Decision of:** Councillor Thornburrow, Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Infrastructure

**Reference:** 24/URGENCY/P&T/10

**Date of decision:** 07/06/24

**Date Published on website:** 18/06/24

**Decision Type:** Non-Key

**Matter for Decision:** To agree the Council's response to the public consultation on the submission version of the South Newnham Neighbourhood Plan. The consultation closes on 18 June 2024.

#### **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. The response will provide the independent examiner with the Council's comments on the South Newnham Neighbourhood Plan.

An alternative option would be for the Council not to respond to the submission consultation, but the Council has a duty to support neighbourhood forums in their plan-making. If no response is made the neighbourhood forum and the independent examiner would not be made aware of the Council's views.

**The Executive Councillor's decision:** Agrees the response to the submission consultation on the South Newnham Neighbourhood Plan as set out in Appendix 1. [Document Meeting 240924 RoD Appendix 1 .South Newnham Neighbourhood Plan Response to consultation on the submission plan - Cambridge Council](#)

**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. The response will provide the independent examiner with the Council's comments on the South Newnham Neighbourhood Plan.

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

**Report:** The response from Cambridge City Council to the submission consultation on the South Newnham Neighbourhood Plan is attached as Appendix 1 (including Appendix A).

[Document Meeting 240924 RoD Appendix 1 .South Newnham Neighbourhood Plan Response to consultation on the submission plan - Cambridge Council](#)

**Conflict of interest:** None.

**Comments:** No adverse comments made.

Councillor Porrer (Lib Dem Spokes) said the following - *Thank you also to officers for all their very detailed work on this, which I support, in particular the references to the need to make the plan clearer about water usages in paras 21 and 22.*

## **Briefing paper**

The South Newnham Neighbourhood Area was designated on 9 January 2017. The neighbourhood area is for the southern part of the ward of South Newnham.

Officers have met with the Neighbourhood Forum ahead of the submission consultation process and recognise the hard work that has been put into preparing the plan. The Forum has worked hard to engage with the local community and has ensured that they have had an opportunity to input into the final plan.

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening was undertaken on a draft version of the Neighbourhood Plan, and a screening determination was published in April 2023.

Pre-submission public consultation on the draft Neighbourhood Plan was undertaken by the Neighbourhood Forum from 12 June until 30 July 2023. Officers provided a formal response to the consultation, providing constructive comments about the plan to assist the Neighbourhood Forum with finalising the Neighbourhood Plan. Officers have met with the Neighbourhood Forum to discuss these comments and are aware that the submission version of the plan has taken on board many of the suggested changes.

On 15 April 2024, the South Newnham Neighbourhood Forum submitted their Neighbourhood Plan to Cambridge City Council. Officers have confirmed, as set out in the Legal Compliance Check for the Neighbourhood Plan, that the submitted version of the Neighbourhood Plan and its accompanying supporting documents comply with all the relevant statutory requirements at this stage of plan making. The Neighbourhood Plan and its accompanying supporting documents are published on our [website](#).

We therefore were able to carry out a consultation on the South Newnham Neighbourhood Plan from 7 May 2024 until 18 June 2024.

Officers, in conjunction with the South Newnham Neighbourhood Forum, are in the process of appointing an independent examiner to consider this Neighbourhood Plan. All comments submitted during the public consultation on the submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan will be provided to the examiner for their consideration.

The South Newnham Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by the South Newnham Neighbourhood Forum to provide planning policies for development in the area, with the aim of providing greater clarity when determining planning applications in the area. The Neighbourhood Plan includes 15 planning policies that cover a range of issues including:

- (i) Protecting and enhancing local green spaces
- (ii) Protecting and maintaining the connectivity network
- (iii) Improving and enhancing neighbourhood community assets
- (iv) Protecting and supporting homes and facilities for older people
- (v) Conserving additionally identified Local Heritage Assets
- (vi) Achieving sustainable and well-designed development in Character Areas

To successfully proceed through its examination to a referendum, a Neighbourhood Plan must meet a number of tests known as the 'Basic Conditions'. These tests are different to the tests of soundness that a Local Plan must meet. The [Basic Conditions](#) are set out in national planning guidance and are summarised as follows:

- (a) having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the Neighbourhood Plan.

(b) the making of the Neighbourhood Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.

(c) the Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area.

(d) the making of the Neighbourhood Plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.

(e) prescribed conditions are met in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan, including that the making of 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.

(f) the making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Our Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit includes Guidance Note 11 ([What are the Basic Conditions and How to Meet Them](#)), which sets out further details on each of the Basic Conditions. When a Neighbourhood Plan is submitted to the local planning authority it must be accompanied by a Basic Conditions Statement that sets out how the Neighbourhood Forum considers that their Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions.

When considering a Neighbourhood Plan, the examiner will assess whether or not the Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions. When an examiner recommends that the Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to referendum (if it meets the Basic Conditions, with or without modifications), the examiner's report must also set out whether the referendum area should be extended beyond the neighbourhood area. Comments made during the current consultation on the submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan, which will be provided to the examiner for their consideration, should therefore address whether the submitted Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions and can also address whether the referendum area should be extended beyond the neighbourhood area.

Cambridge City Council is fully supportive of neighbourhood forums bringing forward neighbourhood plans for their areas, including South Newnham Neighbourhood Forum's decision to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan, and officers have been supporting the Neighbourhood Forum in the plan's preparation. The Council's proposed response to this public consultation on the submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan is set out in Appendix 1.

Cambridge City Council is supportive of the aims of the South Newnham Neighbourhood Plan and our comments are intended to help the plan to be successful at examination as well as delivering policies that are clear in their meaning and are unambiguous in their interpretation. Cambridge City Council recognise the achievement of South Newnham Neighbourhood Forum in reaching this stage of submitting their plan to us for examination.

If the examiner is minded to recommend that the Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to referendum, the Council does not feel that the referendum area needs to be extended beyond the designated Neighbourhood Area as the planning policies included in the plan would not have a substantial, direct or demonstrable impact beyond the Neighbourhood Area.