

**REPORT TITLE: Draft Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations Supplementary
Planning Document Adoption**

To:

Councillor Katie Thornburrow Cabinet Member for Planning and Transport

Cabinet 23 March 2026

Report by:

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Wards affected:

All

Director Approval: Director Stephen Kelly confirms that the report author has sought the advice of all appropriate colleagues and given due regard to that advice; that the equalities impacts and other implications of the recommended decisions have been assessed and accurately presented in the report; and that they are content for the report to be put to the Cabinet/Cabinet Member for decision.

1. Recommendations

1.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- a. Agrees the draft Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations SPD (attached at Appendix 1) and accompanying Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) (Appendix 2) are formally adopted subject to any changes following the Cambridge City Council Cabinet; and
- b. Agree that any subsequent material amendments following the SPD's adoption to be made by the Cabinet Member for Planning and Transport, 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 in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Transport.

This report presents the draft Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations SPD, which once adopted will be a material consideration in the determination of planning

applications. The SPD will support the Council's in securing infrastructure necessary to provide for the needs generated by new development. It will also improve the process of negotiating, preparing and completing a S106 agreement.

2. Purpose and reason for the report

2.1 The Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets out the approach, policies and procedures taken by Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council in respect of the use of planning obligations. It will supplement policies in the adopted 2018 Local Plans, detailing the planning obligations the Councils may seek through section 106 on a range of topics, and providing clarity on the processes to be followed, with an overall aim to speed up the planning process.

This report presents the results of a second round of consultation that was held in August 2025 on the draft Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations SPD. The decision to proceed to a further consultation was agreed by each of the respective CCC and SCDC Committees. This report presents the final version of the SPD for members consideration and seeks agreement for its adoption.

The purpose of the Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations SPD is to provide guidance on how the Councils seek to apply planning obligations, through the Section 106 process, to new development proposals. It supplements Policy 85: Infrastructure delivery, planning obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018 and Policy TI/8: Infrastructure and New Developments of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018, alongside other policies within the adopted development plans that seek to secure infrastructure necessary to support the needs generated by proposed developments.

The document has been prepared to:

Aid the smooth functioning of the planning application process by making developers and landowners aware of the procedures for securing planning obligations, including the

provision of affordable housing;

Clarify the types of planning obligations that may be sought depending on the nature of the development proposal and site circumstances and assist in the timely negotiation and agreement of those obligations;

Clarify the relationship between planning obligations and planning conditions; and

Help to deliver good quality sustainable growth across the Greater Cambridge area that accords with the policies and requirements of the Development Plans.

3. Alternative options considered

3.1 The options available to members are:

- a. Make a decision to adopt the draft SPD as provided in Appendix 1 and formally adopted along with the accompanying EqIA in Appendix 2.
- b. Not to adopt the draft Planning Obligations SPD and to continue to make amendments to the SPD.
- c. Not progress with the draft Planning Obligations SPD and continuing to use the Cambridge City Council Planning Obligations Strategy (2010) and parts of the South Cambridge Open Space in New Development SPD (2009) when securing planning obligations.

4. Background and key issues

4.1 The Planning Obligations SPD is intended to be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The SPD provides guidance on the application and translation of existing development plan policies through the S106 process. The document also offers guidance to developers on other forms of community benefits that might not be explicitly required through extant planning policy but which, because they reflect broader ambitions around inclusive growth expressed in other statutory plans for the area, have previously been offered by and secured through the S106 process in

Greater Cambridge. The guidance in the SPD is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) and policies in the adopted Development Plans for Greater Cambridge. The SPD outlines the relevant policy requirements set out in the Development Plans, and the types of obligations likely to arise as a result of applying these local planning policies. In the Planning Obligations SPD, the process of negotiating, preparing, and completing a S106 agreement is also outlined.

The SPD is split into chapters that set out specific types of infrastructure or obligations that may need to be secured in line with adopted local planning policies. The types of infrastructure or mitigation applicable is dependent on the land use proposed (residential, commercial, mixed-used), the scale of development proposed, the location of development, and its impacts (environmental, economic, social) both on the immediate and wider area. In this respect, the SPD makes very clear that each planning application will be assessed on its merits and only those obligations applicable to the development proposed will be of relevance.

Upon adoption, the Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations SPD will supersede both the Cambridge City Council Planning Obligations Strategy SPD 2010 and specific elements of the South Cambridgeshire Open Space in New Development SPD will be superseded, in particular in relation to costings, but the document overall will remain a material consideration.

The proposed consultation draft SPD has been subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment screening, and in both cases the requirement for further reassessment was screened out. It has also been subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment.

The first draft of the Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations SPD went out to consultation between November 2024 to January 2025. The results of the consultation were taken to [South Cambridgeshire District Council Cabinet meeting](#) and the [South Cambridgeshire District Council Cabinet meeting](#) and the [Cambridge City Council Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee meeting](#) in March 2025. Following this, it was agreed at both meetings that subject to the SPD providing additional evidence and

a decision being made by the Lead Cabinet Member for Planning at South Cambridgeshire District Council and the Cabinet Member for Planning and Transport at Cambridge City Council, on the revisions made to the SPD, that it could then proceed to an additional round of public consultation in Summer 2025.

The SPD was revised in light of the representations received to the first round of consultation and further evidence was prepared including the Planning Obligations SPD Costing Update Paper. The Planning Obligations SPD Costing Update paper was produced by AtkinsRealis as part of their commission in preparation of the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and was completed in July 2025. The Costings paper provides an update on the costs of specific infrastructure provision – namely, open space, green infrastructure, indoor and outdoor sports facilities, playgrounds, and community buildings. These costs replace outdated costs being relied upon from within the CCC Planning Obligations Strategy SPD (March 2010, updated 2023) and the approaches used by SCDC, including the Open Space in New Developments SPD (2009).

In August 2025, the decision to proceed to a further round of public consultation was made by both the the [Lead Cabinet Member for Planning at South Cambridgeshire District Council](#) and the [Cabinet member for Planning and Transport and at Cambridge City Council](#).

The re-consultation on the Planning Obligations was held between the 22 August to 17 October 2025. In total, the Councils received 142 responses to the revised draft of the SPD. The responses came from a range of sources, including local residents, statutory consultees, Parish Councils, developers of both housing and commercial floorspace and a Cambridge College.

Officers have considered the comments received and, where considered appropriate or necessary to address specific objections, have made further changes to the SPD as detailed in the consultation statement (see Appendix 3). These changes include the deletion of parts of the SPD (notably on affordable workspace) and adjustments to requirements on skills and inclusive growth related matters, on community infrastructure contributions and on the Councils emerging ambitions to secure enhanced commitment to Biodiversity Net Gain. A new section is proposed in respect of Heritage matters

following advice from Historic England. The consultation statement also details how the Councils responded to comments received during the consultation in Winter 2024. Relevant services from across the Councils were re-consulted during the preparation of the SPD to assist with responding to the representations made and to ensure that sections of the document remained up to date. All representations made on the Planning Obligations SPD at all stages of consultation are publicly available [here](#).

As a result, following the consultation on the draft Planning Obligations SPD, the following changes have been made:

Review for accuracy, clarity and conciseness of wording across the SPD including in the sections on consultation and pre-applications.

Review of requirements to clarify where these are required of policy or to be encouraged. Specifically around Biodiversity Net Gain, affordable workspace provision and employment and skills plans.

References to Neighbourhood Plans have been strengthened throughout the SPD.

Updates to the relevant names of Health bodies following the national NHS transformation initiative.

Amendments for clarity to costs associated with financial viability and confidentiality of viability assessments.

Inclusion of reference to the recently adopted Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) in the context of Biodiversity Net Gain.

Revisions to clarify that obligations from commercial development towards community facilities will only be sought from development proposals within Cambridge City, including fringe sites, noting the different drafting that applies to the SCDC Local Plan. Amendments to the Waste Chapter to reflect the latest position regarding RECAP and costings.

Amendment to clarify that only residential development that generates child yield needs consider education provision.

Revisions for clarifications to the requirements for minor and major development with regard to Burial Space.

Amendments to the Employment and Skills Plan section to clarify that this not a policy requirement but provides guidance on the form obligations may take if offered by a development for weighing in the planning balance.

Amendments to the Public Rights of Way section have been included to strengthen this section and refer to the Environmental Land Management Schemes grants.

Provide a new Chapter addressing the Historic Environment to reflect representations from Historic England.

Table A-6 has been added to Appendix A to set out the multiplier for SEND.

Removal of tables of costs in chapters 5, 7, 13, and 14.

Amendments to the Affordable Workspace chapter and Employment and Skills to explicitly state that this is an aspiration.

The following changes have been identified and modifications changed post Cabinet at South Cambridgeshire District Council for clarity. These changes have been included for consideration as part of this report. These changes have been made to Appendix 1 and Appendix 7, and Appendix 8 has been created additionally to set out these changes. As a summary, these changes are:

Minor formatting / editorial changes including references to correct table numbers.

Amendment in 5.12 to 'Appropriate contributions will be negotiated on a case by case basis. Developers will be encouraged to apply Natural England's 8 hectares per 1,000

population for Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGS) measure.'

Amendment to Chapter 14 Public Open Space to clarify process, including to Paragraphs 14.27 and 14.28 to clarify the management of public open space, offering it to Town and Parish Council to own and manage and where the community asset is transferred to a management company, how it should be managed.

Amendment to Table 14-1 – summary of Cambridge open space standards to amend the informal open space figures for accuracy.

Amendments Table 14-3 and Table 14-5 to say excluding the costs of land.

Maintenance costs for open space typologies in the new table 14-3 have been added back in.

Amendment to Table 14-6 to amend some maintenance costs for Children's play space for accuracy.

The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service is separately considering the potential to bring forward a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Any proposed CIL would complement rather than duplicate the obligations set out in a S106 agreement.

5. Corporate plan

- 5.1 The draft Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations SPD aligns with the visions and strategies as set out in the Cambridge City Council Corporate plan 2022-2027: [Corporate plan 2022-27: our priorities for Cambridge - Cambridge City Council](#)

Priority 1: Leading Cambridge's response to climate change and biodiversity emergencies

If adopted, the SPD would support the Council in addressing the impacts of development on a range of issues that have climate related impacts including transport

and biodiversity. For example, in relation to biodiversity, the SPD sets out the approach to S106 and requirements of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

Priority 2: Tackling Poverty and Inequality and helping people in the greatest need

If adopted, the draft SPD seeks to secure mitigation measures from appropriate developments to address impacts to community services and facilities.

Priority 3: Building a new generation of council and affordable homes and reducing homelessness.

If adopted, the draft SPD explains the Councils' approach to the delivery of affordable housing through Section 106 planning obligations. It is supplementary to and expands upon the Local Plan policies for affordable housing, which are set out in the Cambridge City Local Plan (Policy 45) and the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (Policy H/10 and H/11). It explains how the policies will be applied and provides additional information on what will be expected when dealing with planning applications for development for which an element of affordable housing should be provided.

Priority 4: Modernising the council to lead a greener city that is fair for all

If adopted, the SPD would support the council in achieving this priority as the document seeks to ensure that sufficient S106 funding is secured to address the impacts of development to make it acceptable in planning terms.

6. Consultation, engagement and communication

- 6.1 During the preparation of the draft SPD a range of consultation had taken place with relevant Council Teams, and other organisations, including the County Council. The Council's approached these key stakeholders when responding to representations during the consultation and when making certain modifications to the document. Appendix 3 of this report sets out how the Planning Obligations SPD was consulted on.

7. Anticipated outcomes, benefits or impact

7.1 If adopted, the Planning Obligation SPD will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The SPD will support the Council's in securing infrastructure necessary to provide for the needs generated by new development. It will also improve the process of negotiating, preparing and completing a S106 agreement.

8. Implications

8.1 Relevant risks

In the writing of this report consideration was given to the following implications:

- A) Financial
- B) Legal
- C) Equality and socio-economic implications
- D) Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental Implications
- E) Procurement Implications
- F) Community Safety Implications

All of the implications listed have been considered below.

Financial Implications

8.2 The SPD seeks to provide guidance on how we address planning obligations, which have financial implications. The council does not stand to benefit from the increase in S106 income as it will be passed on. The guidance that has been provided within the document ensures that this is a robust and effective process. There are no fraud risks identified as a result of this report.

Legal Implications

8.3 Officers have sought appropriate legal advice from 3C Legal throughout the development of the SPD, including taking and considering advice from Counsel, and

Counsel having had regard to the third-party consultation responses received.

Equalities and socio-economic Implications

- 8.4 The Draft Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations SPD has been informed by an Equality Impact Assessment and the impacts identified are positive. The SPD has positive impacts on all protected characteristics because it secures the delivery of financial and non-financial obligations to ensure development is delivery affordable housing, community facilities, access to open space, for example. Factoring in design that will reduce anti-social behaviour and hate crime directed at: disabled people, LGBTQI+ people, transgender people, people of different ethnicities, different faiths, and women.

Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental implications

- 8.5 The SPD would seek to secure climate change related mitigation measures from new developments, supporting matters like recycling, sustainable transport, food security, and biodiversity. These could be judged as medium positive.

The SPD supports the Council to address the impacts of development on a range of issues that have climate related impacts including transport and biodiversity. For example, in relation to Biodiversity, the SPD sets out the approach to S106 and requirements of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). The SPD also contributes to minimising the impact of development on carbon emissions and refers to the South Cambridgeshire District Council Zero Carbon and Doubling Nature Strategies.

The SPD would have a net low positive impact. The SPD does not introduce new standards but supports the adopted Local Plan which includes policies to ensure development has a positive impact on the environment and addresses climate change.

Procurement Implications

- 8.6 There are no procurement implications arising from the report.

Community Safety Implications

8.7 There are no community safety implications arising from the report.

9. Background documents

[Planning Obligations Strategy SPD \(2010\)](#)

[Open Space in New Developments SPD \(2009\)](#)

[Cambridge City Council Planning Obligations strategy SPD 2010](#)

[Cambridge City Local Plan \(2018\)](#)

[South Cambridgeshire Local Plan \(2018\)](#)

[Draft Local Plan Viability Report \(2025\)](#)

9.1 Upon adoption, it is intended to revoke the Cambridge City Council Planning Obligations Strategy SPD 2010, as it will be superseded by this SPD.

10. Appendices

10.1 Appendix 1: Draft Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document: Version for Adoption.

Appendix 2: [Draft Equality Impact Assessment for the Planning Obligation Supplementary Planning Document.](#)

Appendix 3: [Consultation Statement: Draft Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document](#)

Appendix 4: [Draft Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report.](#)

Appendix 5 [Draft Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document Sustainability Appraisal.](#)

Appendix 6: [Planning Obligations SPD Costings Update.](#)

Appendix 7: [Tracked Changes Version of the Draft Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document: Version for Adoption.](#)

Appendix 8: [List of subsequent changes to the Planning Obligations SPD following the Planning Obligations SPD.](#)

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

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