

3.0 Our methods for community engagement in Planning Policy

- 3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) explains that the Local Plan is a plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the local community. A local plan can consist of either strategic or non-strategic policies, or a combination of the two and cover all or part of the Greater Cambridge Area.
- 3.2 Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council each adopted individual Local Plans in 2018. The councils will commence a joint Local Plan review in 2019, which will cover the whole of the two districts with a single plan. In addition, a joint Area Action Plan is being prepared for the Cambridge Northern Fringe. This will provide specific policies to cover this Area of Major Change. These documents are subject to sustainability appraisal, and must also be considered at independent examination before they can be adopted.
- 3.3 A timetable for preparing and reviewing local plan documents is set out in the Local Development Scheme, which is available on the councils' websites. This is regularly updated, and during plan preparation live information is provided online.
- 3.4 Local Plans are supported by supplementary planning documents (SPDs). These provide guidance to support the implementation of planning policies. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the Development Plan. An SPD should also not add unnecessarily to the financial burdens on development. The key difference for SPDs is that they do not undergo public examination by a Planning Inspector and are not automatically subject to a sustainability appraisal. The same applies to the process for preparing or reviewing a statement of community involvement.
- 3.5 It should be noted that where documents are being produced by an individual council rather than jointly, the measures in this SCI will be applied by the individual council. An example might be an SPD being produced to supplement one of the current separate local plans.
- 3.6 Neighbourhood planning is a way for local communities to take a proactive approach to deciding the future of the places where they live and work. Communities can use a neighbourhood plan to help shape the future development and use of land in their neighbourhood. As LPAs, both South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council have a statutory

duty to give advice and assistance to their communities or qualifying bodies⁸ when it considers appropriate in the preparation of a neighbourhood plan.

- 3.7 The LPAs will provide details of both adopted plans and plans in preparation on their websites⁹, including neighbourhood plans and Orders.

How will the Local Planning Authorities consult on Local Plan documents?

- 3.8 The LPAs will give those with an interest in development in the area the opportunity to have their say on planning policy. The councils will aim to provide a flexible, proportionate and effective approach to consultation, customised and guided by the nature of the document being prepared.
- 3.9 We will also ensure that we meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, which aims to promote equality, eliminate discrimination and encourage good relations between different groups associated with age, disability, gender/gender reassignment, race, religion and other protected characteristics. It is recognised that some parts of the community are not always adequately represented such as gypsy and traveller communities in the area, the young and the elderly. The councils will work closely with relevant organisations that have experience in a particular matter to find the best way of consulting and liaising with these groups.
- 3.10 In preparing a Local Plan document, the LPAs will engage with relevant stakeholders and gather evidence. They will prepare a Consultation Statement setting out how this has been done, and how issues that have been raised have been considered in preparing the plan.
- 3.11 As part of the Examination process there could be further consultations, for example on main modifications to a plan. Any additional consultations will be for 6 weeks unless it falls over a main holiday period where it may be extended.
- 3.12 The statutory process for preparing these documents is set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations (2012). There are two key stages of consultation during local plan preparation:

⁸ Qualifying Body is the term used in national legislation to refer to local groups preparing neighbourhood plans.

⁹ Cambridge City Council: www.cambridge.gov.uk/about-the-local-development-scheme-latest-information-and-timetables
South Cambridgeshire District Council: www.scambs.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-and-neighbourhood-planning/news-and-updates/

Table 1: Local plan preparation

Local Plan Stage	Consultation duration	Consultation methods
Public participation (Regulation 18)	One or more public consultations, on issues and options or draft policies. Consultations will be undertaken for a minimum of a 6 week period. All representations must be received within the consultation period.	Inviting representations through a notice on the councils' website, and advertising through other methods such as social media, news releases, Council publications or press adverts;
Pre-submission publication (Regulation 19)	Consultation will be undertaken for a minimum of a 6 week period. All representations must be received within the consultation period.	Written / email consultations with 'specific consultation bodies' and appropriate 'general consultation bodies' and other relevant stakeholders ¹⁰ ; Consultation documents will be available to view on the councils' websites, and at council offices ¹¹ ; Public consultation events if appropriate to the nature of the consultation. These may include public exhibitions and open day events.

3.13 Following the stages above the council submits the Local Plan to the Secretary of State together with the representations received at the Regulation 19 stage. The submitted document, and the representations received, will be considered by a Planning Inspector at an independent examination. The councils will notify the specific and general consultation bodies who were invited to make representations at earlier stages, and all those who have requested to be notified, of this stage.

3.14 Those individuals and organisations that have made representations may be invited by the inspector to submit a written statement during the examination. Individuals and organisations that made an objection to the document and have requested to speak at the examination will be contacted by the Inspector to be informed of the procedure for being heard.

¹⁰ Defined in Appendix 1

¹¹ Defined in Appendix 5

- 3.15 The council will notify all those who have requested to be notified, as soon as reasonably practicable following the receipt of the Inspector's Report. The report will also be made available on the councils' website and at council offices¹².
- 3.16 If the Inspector has concluded that the Plan is 'sound' the council will adopt the plan and will publish an adoption statement on their website and make it available to view at council offices. They will notify all those who have requested to be notified as soon as reasonably practicable.

Who the Local Planning Authorities involve in plan making?

- 3.17 Regulations specify a number of organisations that LPAs must consult when preparing planning policy documents. These bodies are set out in Appendix 1. They include 'specific consultation bodies' and various types of 'general consultation bodies'. Specific consultation bodies include utility companies, government agencies, local authorities and parish councils. General consultation bodies are voluntary bodies active in the area and those bodies which represent different interests.
- 3.18 The council is required to co-operate with neighbouring local planning authorities and other prescribed bodies on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries under the statutory 'duty to co-operate'. These bodies are also listed in Appendix 1.
- 3.19 Although those identified above will be specifically contacted during the preparation of Local Plan documents, any individual, business, organisation or group is welcome to submit comments during consultation periods.
- 3.20 The LPAs will notify individuals, organisations or bodies who have requested to be notified about the preparation of documents they are interested in. The online consultation systems allow individuals and organisations to register their details, and identify documents they would like to receive updates on.
- 3.21 Individuals and organisations can opt-in to receiving future mailings in relation to public consultations or notifications on planning policy documents by logging in to the [Cambridge City](#) and/or [South Cambridgeshire District](#) consultation database and choosing the 'areas of interest' that you would like future mailings about. When you log in, you will find the list of 'areas of interest' under 'My Details'.

¹² Defined in Appendix 5

- 3.22 As a recently established shared planning service, there are currently two separate consultation databases. The ‘areas of interest’ available to opt-in to within the two consultation databases are different as the ‘areas of interest’ either relate to planning policy documents for South Cambridgeshire or Cambridge.
- 3.23 If you do not have an email address and would like to opt-in to receiving future mailings in relation to public consultations or notifications on one or more of our planning policy documents, please telephone us using the following numbers:
- South Cambridgeshire District Council: 01954 713183
Cambridge City Council: 01223 457200
- 3.24 The privacy notice for planning policy consultations and notifications sets out how your personal data will be used and by whom, if you opt-in to any of our ‘areas of interest’. This privacy notice is available to view online¹³.
- 3.25 If you make comments on a planning policy document, we will also offer you the opportunity to opt in to these updates, which will keep you informed about future stages of the plan making process.

How can comments (representations) be submitted?

- 3.26 During the consultation periods it will be possible to submit comments in writing, or electronically via email or, if available, an online consultation portal. Verbal comments will not be recorded. Representations received will be published on the councils’ website(s).
- 3.27 Responding to the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), the councils have published a Privacy Notice, regarding how it will handle representations and your personal data submitted with those representations. This can be viewed on the councils’ websites.
- 3.28 The councils will not accept or publish comments that contravene its compliance with the Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010¹⁴.

¹³ Cambridge City Council: www.cambridge.gov.uk/planning-policy-consultations-and-notifications-privacy-notice

South Cambridgeshire District Council: www.scambs.gov.uk/planning-policy-privacy-notice

¹⁴ Equality Duty – Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council must have due regard to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between different protected groups; and foster good relations between different protected groups.

Preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

- 3.29 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's) can be prepared in order to add greater detail and guidance to planning policies or allocations. An SPD can not create new or amend existing planning policy. SPDs could relate to a location or area or they may be topic-based, such as affordable housing or design guidance. The process for preparing an SPD is different to Local Plan preparation.
- 3.30 Prior to the formal stage of consultation, the LPAs will engage with relevant stakeholders and gather evidence. They will prepare a consultation statement setting out how this has been done, and how issues that have been raised have been considered in finalising the SPD.
- 3.31 The statutory process for preparing these documents is set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning (England) Regulations (2012). There is one key stage of consultation during SPD preparation:

Table 2: SPD preparation

Supplementary Planning Documents Stage	Consultation duration	Consultation methods
Regulation 12 and 13 Public Consultation on the Draft SPD	Minimum of four weeks	<p>Inviting representation through a notice on the councils' website, and advertising through other methods such as social media, news releases, Council publications or press adverts;</p> <p>Written / email consultations with specific and appropriate general consultation bodies and other relevant stakeholders (as set out in Appendix 1);</p> <p>Consultation documents available to view on the councils' websites, and at council offices¹⁵;</p> <p>Public consultation events if appropriate to the nature of</p>

¹⁵ Defined in Appendix 5

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3.32 The LPAs will consider all valid comments that are made and make any appropriate changes to the SPD before it is adopted. Upon adoption the SPD will be published together with an adoption statement, made available to view on the councils’ websites, and at the councils main offices during normal working hours. It will also send a copy of the adoption statement to all those who requested to be notified.

Preparation of Neighbourhood Plans

3.33 The statutory process for preparing these documents is set out in the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 and subsequent amendments. Table 3 below sets out the key stages of consultation during Neighbourhood Plan preparations that are undertaken by the local planning authority. More information regarding the neighbourhood planning process can be found online¹⁶.

Table 3: Neighbourhood Plan preparation

Neighbourhood Plan Stage	Consultation duration	Consultation methods
Regulation 5, 6 and 7 Neighbourhood Area Designation Designating a neighbourhood area – the qualifying body ¹⁷ applies to the local planning authority for an area to be designated.	No consultation is required where the whole of a parish is proposed. A minimum period of 6 weeks consultation for all other proposed neighbourhood areas.	Inviting representation through a notice on the councils’ website, and advertising through other methods such as social media, news releases, Council publications and/or press adverts; Notify by email the specific and appropriate general consultation bodies and other relevant stakeholders; The relevant qualifying body will be asked to assist the LPA in publicising the consultation by:

¹⁶ South Cambridgeshire: www.scambs.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-and-neighbourhood-planning/neighbourhood-planning

Cambridge City: www.cambridge.gov.uk/neighbourhood-planning

¹⁷ 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 within a non-parished area. .

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placing information about it in any local newsletters or on their website, and • Placing around their local area at key locations the consultation poster prepared by the council. <p>If requested by the relevant qualifying body the LPA will also notify local contacts in the proposed neighbourhood area. The contact details of these local groups to be provided by the qualifying body;</p> <p>Consultation documents available to view on the councils' websites and at council offices¹⁸ during normal working hours; and additionally at the relevant qualifying body's office or other appropriate publically accessible venue within the neighbourhood area. The qualifying body may consider having the document available to view on their community website if one exists.</p>
<p>Regulation 9, 10 and 11 Designation of a neighbourhood forum</p>	<p>Not less than 6 weeks from the date on which the application is first publicised.</p>	<p>Inviting representation through a notice on the councils' website, and advertising through other methods such as social media, news releases, Council publications and/or press adverts;</p> <p>Notify by email the specific and appropriate general consultation bodies and</p>

¹⁸ Defined in Appendix 5

		<p>other relevant stakeholders;</p> <p>The relevant qualifying body will be asked to assist the council in publicising the consultation by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placing information about it in any local newsletters or on their website, and • Placing around their local area at key locations the consultation poster prepared by the council. <p>Consultation documents available to view on the councils' websites and at council offices¹⁹ during normal working hours; and additionally at the relevant qualifying body's office or other appropriate publically accessible venue within the neighbourhood area. The qualifying body may consider having the document available to view on their community website if one exists.</p>
<p>Regulation 15 and 16 Submission Where a draft neighbourhood plan is submitted to the local planning authority and the plan meets the requirements in the legislation, the local planning authority must publicise the neighbourhood plan</p>	<p>Minimum of 6 weeks</p>	<p>Inviting representation through a notice on the councils' website, and advertising through other methods such as social media, news releases, Council publications and/or press adverts;</p> <p>Written / email consultations to notify any consultation body referred to in the consultation statement submitted alongside the draft neighbourhood plan. These</p>

¹⁹ Defined in Appendix 5

		<p>bodies are referred to in Paragraph 1 of Schedule 1 in the regulations. The qualifying body will have considered which of these to notify depending on whose interests the qualifying body considers may be affected by proposals in the draft plan;</p> <p>Emails to anyone that has 'opted-in' to be notified of consultations on the specific document being prepared;</p> <p>Consultation documents available to view on the councils' websites and at council offices²⁰ during normal working hours; and additionally at the relevant qualifying body's office or other appropriate publically accessible venue within the neighbourhood area. The qualifying body may consider having the document available to view on their community website if one exists.</p>
<p>Regulation 18 Independent Examination Post receipt of the Examiners Report the local planning authority may decide to make a decision which differs from that recommended by the examiner. If this is the case the local planning authority must carry out a targeted consultation inviting representations.</p>	<p>Within 6 weeks of the local planning authority first inviting representations</p>	<p>Emails sent by the LPA inviting representations from;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) the qualifying body; ii) anyone whose representation was submitted to the examiner; and iii) any consultation body that was previously consulted.

²⁰ Defined in Appendix 5

3.34 Section 4.0 of this Statement of Community Involvement sets out how the LPAs will assist and advise Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Forums during the neighbourhood plan making process.

Annual Housing Position Statement

3.35 The National Planning Policy Framework²¹ (2018) requires LPAs to prepare an annual housing position statement which sets out a five year supply of deliverable housing sites against the annual housing target set out in the Local Plan. In line with Planning Practice Guidance²² (PPG), the Annual Housing Position Statement will be consulted on for a minimum of 4 weeks. The LPAs will consult with the relevant organisations found in Appendix 1.

²¹

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/740441/National_Planning_Policy_Framework_web_accessible_version.pdf

²² www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-land-availability-assessment