

Planning Policy Monthly Update (March 2015)

We bring you this monthly update to:

- Highlight where we would like your involvement in future plan making in South Cambridgeshire and show the progress of past consultations; and
- Bring to your notice news items relevant to planning at national, county and local levels.

Text in **red** highlights the latest opportunities for you to become involved in plan making and the latest updates on news items.

The update is available to view on our website: <http://www.scambs.gov.uk/content/planning-policy-news>

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE NEWS

Local Development Scheme (LDS)

The [Local Development Scheme](#) shows the key stages for preparing the new South Cambridgeshire Local Plan and is available on our website.

Five year housing land supply

In his decisions on two planning appeals in Waterbeach in June 2014, a planning inspector concluded that the district cannot currently demonstrate a five year supply of land for building new houses. This is a requirement set by national planning policy to help boost housing supply. These decisions will affect how we make decisions on planning applications for new homes until we do have such a supply, although all housing proposals will still have to show they are sustainable development against the tests in the National Planning Policy Framework. The need to demonstrate a five year supply will be a factor in the examination of our new Local Plan. Matter 8: Housing Land Supply and Delivery is now programmed and will include consideration of 5yr housing land supply. (See below for timetable)

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan

Submission of the Local Plan

On 28 March 2014, the Local Plan and its supporting documents were submitted for independent examination to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government via the Planning Inspectorate. The submission documents are all available to view on the [Council's website](#).

Examination of the Local Plan

Latest news

The Inspector has issued a revised [Hearings Programme](#) to include the next block of hearings in April 2015 and the [Matters and Issues](#) for these hearings. **Matter 9 is 'Areas of Major Change / Major Development Areas on the edge of Cambridge'**.

The deadline for written statements by invited participants for Matter 9 is midday on 30 March 2015.

Please note these hearings are to take place in Cambridge – Committee Rooms 1&2, Guildhall

Matter 9 - Areas of Major Change / Major Development Areas on the edge of Cambridge.

- 9A – General Principles: and West Cambridge, North West Cambridge and Orchard Park (Joint Session)
Hearing session programmed to start at 10.00am on 28 April 2015
- 9B –Cambridge East and South of Coldham’s Lane (Joint Session)
Hearing session programmed to start at 10.00am on 29 April 2015
- 9C – Cambridge Northern Fringe East (Joint Session)
Hearing session programmed to start at 10.00am on 30 April 2015

The Inspector and her role

The Secretary of State has appointed Laura Graham BSC MA MRTPI as the Inspector from the Planning Inspectorate to carry out an independent [examination](#) of the Local Plan. Her task is to establish whether the Local Plan is ‘sound’, taking into consideration representations made during public consultation on the Proposed Submission Local Plan between July and October 2013. She will then report on her findings, including advising if changes are needed to make the Local Plan sound. This report will be made public. It will not address each individual objection.

The Inspector is being assisted by an Assistant Inspector – Alan Wood MSC FRICS – and a Planning Officer – Laura O’Brien.

Gloria Alexander is the Programme Officer who is assisting the inspectors. All correspondence relating to the examination should be via the Programme Officer:

- Email: programme.officer@scambs.gov.uk
- Mobile: 07803 202578

Laura Graham has also been appointed to examine the Cambridge Local Plan. Given the close relationship between the two plans the key shared issues are to be considered by the Inspector at joint hearings.

The Inspector will hold hearing sessions, where specific people or organisations with relevant objections to the content of the Local Plan will be invited to discuss matters relating to their objections. Hearings are an opportunity for the Inspector to clarify and/or seek additional information on any issues relating to the ‘soundness’ of the Local Plan. These sessions will be held in public.

The Examination Process

The Local Plan examination is following the format outlined below:

- **Pre-hearing meeting** –The Inspector’s notes of this meeting held in September 2014 are on the examination [webpage](#).

At the Pre-Hearing Meeting the Councils introduced a [Memorandum of Understanding](#). This has been agreed by Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District

Council about a Greater Cambridge Joint Housing Trajectory (September 2014). It confirms the agreement between the two Councils under the duty to co-operate that the housing trajectories for the two areas should be considered together for local plan purposes, including 5-year housing land supply. The merits of the Memorandum of Understanding will be an issue for consideration at appropriate hearing sessions of the examination. A question from the inspector about this issue has been included in Matter 8B: Housing trajectories and five year land supply. The hearing session for this matter and for Matter 8A is programmed for two days from 17-18 March 2015.

- **Publication of Matters and Issues** – These are the matters and issues that the inspector will consider at hearings.

The hearings for the Cambridge Local Plan and South Cambridgeshire Local Plan examinations began in November 2014. There have been joint sessions for both districts which covered:

- Matter 1: Legal Process and Requirements;
- Matter 2: Overall Spatial vision and general issues;
- Matter 3: Housing need;
- Matter 4: Employment and Retail;
- Matter 5: Infrastructure /Monitoring /Viability.
- Matter 6: Green Belt;
- Matter 7: Transport;

The next blocks of hearings are in March and April 2015 which are joint sessions:

- Matter 8: Housing Land Supply and Delivery.
- Matter 9: Areas of Major Change / Major Development Areas on the edge of Cambridge

- **Production of Written Statements** – These statements are written in response to the Inspector's Matters and Issues by those with relevant representations, including Statements of Common Ground. The [Written Statements](#) for Matters 1-8 are published on the examination webpage.

The deadline for written statements for Matter 9 is midday on 30 March 2015.

- **Hearing Sessions** –

The latest hearings sessions are on Matters 8 - 9 as follows:

Matter 8 – Housing land supply and delivery

- Matter 8A and 8B – Housing trajectories and five year housing supply (Joint session)
Hearing session programmed for two days from 17-18 March 2015
- Matter 8C – Contribution of more sustainable villages to housing supply (South Cambs Local Plan)
Hearing session programmed for half day from 10.00am on 19 March 2015

Also it should be noted that in the hearing timetable there is a session for Matter 5 – Infrastructure / Monitoring / Viability – This is a continuation of an earlier session to deal with unfinished business in relation to this matter and is scheduled to take place on 19 March 2015 at 2pm.

Programmes for future hearings will be published as the Inspector publishes the programme for the matters for discussion. The programme for each block of hearings and the list of participants can be subject to change. The [examination pages](#) of the South Cambs website will be kept up to date with all the information about the hearing sessions.

Please note the programme officer has advised that she will not be sending out further notifications of updates to the Hearings Programme, Matters and Issues and other Examinations documents to all representors either by post or email as a matter of course. Representors are advised to ensure they keep themselves informed of future hearings being programmed by regularly checking the Hearings Programme on the websites if they have requested to appear at a hearing for particular issues, or have an interest in observing at the hearings.

The Council will be sending out an email to Parish Councils to notify them of any updates to the Hearing Programme so that they can be made aware of these.

- **Potential Consultation on Major Modifications** to the Local Plan (likely to be requested by the Inspector)
- Production of the **Inspector's Report** outlining her findings from the examination

Throughout the examination process there may be correspondence on certain issues between the Inspector and the Council; this correspondence can be found via links on the [examination pages](#).

The Inspector has indicated that it is a complex task to carry out the examinations on the two Local Plans for Cambridge City and for South Cambs. There is currently no indication when the hearings are likely to be finished. Once completed there is likely to be further public consultation on modifications proposed to make the Local Plan sound. Following consideration of the representations received during this consultation the Inspector will decide if she needs to hold further hearings before her report is finally presented to the Council for consideration.

If you wish to find out in more detail how the examination of the Local Plan will be carried out the Planning Inspectorate has published a useful guide – [Examining Local Plans Procedural Practice](#).

Local Green Space Consultation with Landowners

The Council carried out an additional focused 6-week consultation on Local Green Spaces specifically with the owners of land proposed to be designated in the Local Plan which ended on 1 December 2014. This was in response to government guidance published after the submission local plan was prepared. It was only the landowners of proposed Local Green Spaces that were able to comment during this consultation. These comments will be registered as 'late representations' to the Local Plan and will be published on our website alongside all the representations that were submitted after the formal consultation on the Proposed Submission Local Plan, which took place in Summer 2013.

All the late representations from this consultation with landowners will be provided to the inspector examining the 'soundness' of the plan.

A report about the consultation will be considered by the [Planning Portfolio Holder](#) on 10 March 2015. The report includes recommendations for a small number of modifications to the submitted Local Green Spaces and, if agreed, this information will be provided to the planning inspector.

Cambridge Northern Fringe East Area Action Plan Consultation

South Cambridgeshire District Council is working jointly with Cambridge City Council to consider the future of the Cambridge Northern Fringe East area. This is one of the most important brownfield regeneration opportunities in the Greater Cambridge area and to ensure the area is looked at comprehensively, the Councils are preparing a joint Area Action Plan (AAP).

The Councils are now considering the representations that were received during the recent public consultation on the Issues and Options Report for the AAP which ended on 2 February 2015.

For more information about the progress of the AAP there is a [Cambridge Northern Fringe East AAP](#) page available on our website.

Neighbourhood Planning

There is a [neighbourhood planning](#) section on the South Cambs website which provides an introduction to this subject including information about the funding that is available to local communities considering preparing a plan for their area and information on the progress on neighbourhood planning in South Cambs.

Latest neighbourhood plan news in England

The Government has published a [bulletin](#) about the latest news on neighbourhood planning which celebrates the fact that there are now 50 neighbourhood plans that have passed their referendums and have been 'made' (special term used for when a neighbourhood plan is adopted) across England. The bulletin provides a list of these plans and a link to each of their websites.

New programme for neighbourhood planning support 2015-2018

There is to be a [new programme of support](#) from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to local communities preparing a neighbourhood plan for their area as from 1st April 2015. An [announcement](#) was made on 17 February that Locality will be continuing to provide this programme of assistance and that they will be launching a new website in early March. We will update our South Cambs neighbourhood planning webpage with this link when it is available.

Possible Article 4 Direction for pubs

Pubs play a central role in lots of communities and the Council has already assisted many parishes in listing such pubs as Assets of Community Value. This gives groups a chance to bid for them should they come up for sale.

The Council has carried out a consultation seeking views concerning the proposed use of "Article 4" directions to help retain village pubs. Article 4 directions could be used to withdraw the permitted development rights which currently allow the conversion of pubs to other uses such as retail or offices, or for their demolition without the need for a planning application.

The deadline for comments was 23 February 2015 and we are now using the results of the consultation to help us decide whether we should use Article 4 directions to provide an additional safeguard for village pubs and to which pubs specifically they could be applied. It is anticipated that a report will soon be taken to a future meeting of the [Economic Development Portfolio Holder](#) meeting to consider whether to use Article 4 directions.

Contact Clare Gibbons from the Sustainable Communities Team for more information on this consultation. clare.gibbons@scams.gov.uk or 01954 713290.

Right to Build Scheme

South Cambridgeshire District Council has introduced a Right to Build Scheme which will support people to design and build their own homes. It will offer the opportunity to people with grand plans as well as those with modest budgets. We are working with Cambridge City to create a register of people interested in building their own property. The register will help us to bring together like minded people who want to custom build homes in the same area

If you would like to find out more information about the scheme there is a page dedicated to [Right to Build](#) on our website or if you have any queries about the registration, please contact Amelia Davies by email amelia.davies@scams.gov.uk or call 01954 713181.

NATIONAL NEWS

A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Improvement Scheme

An application for a Development Consent Order to build the A14 improvement scheme was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate by the Highways Agency on 31 December 2014.

The Planning Inspectorate has now accepted this application for examination and has approximately three months to prepare for the examination.

This is the last opportunity to have your say about the A14 scheme before an Inspector examines the application. Everyone who registers their interest or makes comments will be invited to take part in the examination, which can take up to 6 months. You have until **Thursday 12 March 2015 at 11.59pm** to register as an interested party and to provide an outline of your comments on the application. There is a link to register on the [Planning Inspectorate's website](#) as well as further information on the Development Consent Order process.

The Council will be considering the proposals and deciding its response.

The Highway Agency has published a summary [leaflet](#) about the current scheme showing where the application can be viewed and a time line that the scheme will go through.

For further information on the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Scheme visit the [Highways Agency website](#)..

Government Consultation – Building more homes on brownfield land

A [consultation document](#) was published on 28 January 2015 by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) which seeks views on a range of proposals to support local planning authorities further in identifying and recording brownfield land suitable for housing, and to encourage them to make good progress in getting permissions in place for housing through local development orders.

The Council will be taking a report to the [Planning Portfolio Holder](#) meeting on 10 March 2015 responding to this consultation.

The deadline for comments to DCLG is **11 March 2015**.

New threshold for affordable housing

A government consultation was carried out earlier this year called [Planning performance and planning contributions](#) which included a proposal to introduce a new national threshold of 10 units or more for Section 106 affordable housing contributions. Rural Exception Sites would be outside the scope of this new threshold. The consultation ended in May 2014 and the [Government's response](#) to this consultation was published at the end of last year.

The government has now made changes to national policy to prevent local planning authorities from seeking affordable housing contributions from "sites of 10-units or less, and which have a maximum combined gross floor space of 1,000 square metres".

A lower threshold could be implemented in rural areas designated under section 157 of the Housing Act 1985, which includes National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. South Cambridgeshire is not within such a designated rural area. The changes in policy do not apply to Rural Exception Sites "which, subject to the local area demonstrating sufficient need, remain available to support the delivery of affordable homes for local people".

This revised guidance has been added to the National Planning Practice Guidance – the Government's on-line guidance for planning in the section on Planning Obligations (See paragraphs 012 – 023).

In the January monthly update we promised to let you know when the Council had considered the implications of this new guidance for South Cambridgeshire. A report about these changes was considered at [Planning Committee](#) on 4 March 2015 – agenda item 12. It was agreed that

- a) Decisions on planning obligations and associated legal agreements, where there has been a resolution to grant planning permission by the Planning Committee on smaller residential developments, be delegated to the Executive Director for Planning and New Communities, in accordance with government policy and
- b) A planning condition be used requiring submission and approval of an Affordable Housing Scheme for developments of 3 or more new dwellings, or 4 or more where an existing dwelling is to be demolished.

For further information please contact Tony Pierce – Interim Development Control Manager on tony.pierce@scambs.com or 01954 713165.