

NEWS RELEASE

Tuesday 30 June 2015

Councils remain committed to working together with communities as next steps for Local Plans announced

Councils in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire have announced today (Tuesday 30 June) that further work on plans to deliver thousands of new jobs and homes will be presented to Government inspectors in February.

In a letter to Government inspectors, Laura Graham and Alan Wood, the Councils have mapped out the next few months of work to address issues raised by the inspectors last month – but also confirmed that local people will once again be asked to have their say before any extra information is submitted.

In the letter sent to the inspectors, Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Councils have said that they expect a public consultation to be held this November and December on any modifications to their respective Local Plans, with the responses then considered by each Council over the following two months.

Any modifications to the Local Plans are planned to be submitted to Government in February 2016.

Government inspectors examining plans to develop the area up until 2031 wrote to both Councils at the end of May, outlining the issues that they consider need to be addressed to ensure that key parts of the plans could be found sound.

Additional work will include looking again at the evidence for the development strategy the Councils put forward, which proposed building most homes in new towns and villages with only small amounts of additional development in the green belt. The proposed homes would be in addition to those already planned for on the edge of Cambridge and at Northstowe. The Councils have also been asked to show that the right transport links and infrastructure can be provided.

Changes to the Government's national planning policy have also come into effect since the Local Plans were submitted last year and the Councils will review and update the submitted plans to take this into account.

The inspectors have also asked the Councils to look again at the affordability of housing in the area and consider whether an adjustment to the number of new homes proposed is appropriate.

While work is carried out, and local people consulted, both Councils have accepted the inspectors' proposal that the independent examination should be suspended.

In a second letter to the inspectors, the Councils have also asked them to consider concluding the work on joint housing trajectory as quickly as possible. The Government has stated that South Cambridgeshire District Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year housing land supply which means developers have submitted speculative planning applications for land not included in the proposed Local Plan.

Although all applications are still assessed against national planning policies to make sure they are appropriate and have all the necessary facilities, some local housing policies cannot be taken into account.

Cllr Robert Turner, South Cambridgeshire District Council's cabinet member for planning, said: "Making sure we have a strategy to deliver high quality well-planned homes is vital. Although it is important to get this work done at a good pace, it is critical we take the right amount of time to get it right and consult with our communities. It is really important to remember that the inspectors have not made a final judgement on the Local Plans we have both submitted as yet, what we need to do is extra work to demonstrate what we have put forward. The extra work could result in changes being made but until the work is carried out it is too early to jump to a conclusion. We will keep local people informed over the coming months and look forward to gathering their views on any modifications later in the year."

Cllr Kevin Blencowe, Cambridge City Council's Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Transport, said "We are committed to getting sound Local Plans in place and undertaking the further work required by the Inspectors as quickly and effectively as possible. Our focus is on concluding the Local Plan process and on delivering jobs, homes and infrastructure for the Greater Cambridge area. "

Cambridge's submitted Local Plan includes provision for 22,100 more jobs and 14,000 new homes, while South Cambridgeshire's submitted Local Plan plans for 22,000 new jobs and 19,000 new homes up until 2031.

An update report on the Local Plan will also be considered by South Cambridgeshire District Council's planning portfolio holder next week.

ENDS

The letter sent to the inspectors by the Councils can be viewed by visiting www.scambs.gov.uk/content/local-development-framework-news and www.cambridge.gov.uk/local-plan-review-about-the-examination

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