



General Information on Town and Country Planning, including Neighbourhood Planning

For Neighbourhood Plan Referendums

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Referendums for Neighbourhood Plans

At the referendum you will be asked to vote 'yes' or 'no' to the following question: **“Do you want Cambridge City Council to use the neighbourhood plan for *[name of neighbourhood area]* to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?”**

You will be able to vote if:

- you are registered and entitled to vote in local council elections;
- you are 18 years old or over on the day of the referendum; and
- your address is in the referendum area.

If you are not already registered to vote, you can register online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote. You will need to do this at least 12 working days before the referendum.

If you are unable to attend the polling station to vote in person, you can apply to vote by post or by proxy. Find out more about voting by post or by proxy, and how to apply, by visiting our [website](#).

You should vote by putting a cross (X) in the box next to 'Yes' or 'No' on your ballot paper. You should not mark your ballot paper in any other way or your vote may not be counted.

If more people vote 'yes' than 'no' in the referendum, then SCDC will 'make' (adopt) the Neighbourhood Plan and it will become part of the development plan for Cambridge, giving it the same legal status as the Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan will be used when making decisions on planning applications within its area.

If more people vote 'no' than 'yes' in the referendum, then planning applications will be decided without using the Neighbourhood Plan.

Town and Country Planning

The Planning System

The planning system manages the development and use of land and buildings with the aim of creating sustainable places to live and work. Without a planning system, development could take place anywhere, with considerable impact on people and the environment. Proposed developments are managed through planning applications, using national planning policy and the development plan as a basis to make decisions. Not all forms of development require planning permission as some proposed developments, depending on their scale and type, are covered by permitted development rights.

Decisions on planning applications in Cambridge are made having considered national planning policy, the development plan for Cambridge, and any other material considerations.

National Planning Policy

National planning policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development and sets out core planning principles to be followed which include environmental, social and economic aspects. The NPPF is supported by National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).

The NPPF was originally published in March 2012 and was revised in 2018, 2019, 2021 and most recently in December 2023.

The development plan for Cambridge

Planning policies and proposals that guide the development and use of land in Cambridge are set out in the development plan. The development plan is a set of documents and in Cambridge it currently consists of:

1. [Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Minerals and Waste Plan](#): this sets out the planning policies that provide a framework for all minerals and waste developments in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and is prepared jointly by Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council.
2. [Cambridge Local Plan](#) (adopted October 2018): this sets out the planning policies that provide a framework to guide new development in Cambridge to 2031, and is prepared by us. It aims to deliver the required homes, jobs, community facilities and transport infrastructure for the Cambridge, while protecting and enhancing the environment and character of the area.
3. [Cambridge East Area Action Plan](#) (adopted February 2008): this sets out the planning policies to guide the proposed development on the eastern edge of Cambridge around Cambridge Airport, and was prepared jointly with South Cambridgeshire District Council.
4. [North-West Cambridge Area Action Plan](#) (adopted October 2009): this sets out the planning policies to guide the development on the north-western edge of Cambridge for housing, student accommodation, and new faculty buildings for the University of Cambridge, and was prepared jointly with South Cambridgeshire District Council.
5. [North-East Cambridge Area Action Plan](#) (Proposed Submission Plan approved in 2021): this sets out the planning policies to guide the development on the North East of Cambridge for housing, employment, shops, sports and community facilities and other services, and was prepared jointly with South Cambridgeshire District Council.

Neighbourhood Planning

What is Neighbourhood Planning?

Neighbourhood planning is a way for 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. This includes the development of homes, shops, offices and infrastructure.

What are the stages in the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan?

The stages in the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan are summarised in the national planning practice guidance: www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2#key-stages-in-neighbourhood-planning

Who can prepare a Neighbourhood Plan?

In Cambridge, Neighbourhood Forums are the 'qualifying bodies' that can initiate the neighbourhood planning process and work with the local community to develop their neighbourhood plan. As the local planning authority, Cambridge City Council has a duty to support the Neighbourhood Forum and local community through the neighbourhood planning process.

Where can I find further guidance on Neighbourhood Planning?

Our [Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit](#) has been designed to help local communities decide whether they want to get involved in creating a neighbourhood plan and if they do, how to go about preparing a neighbourhood plan.

There is further guidance on Neighbourhood Planning:

- published in the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG): www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2
- prepared by Locality: <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/>

Further Information

For further information on voting and the arrangements for the referendum, please visit the elections pages on our website: <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/elections-in-2025> or contact the Elections Team on elections@cambridge.gov.uk or 01223 457048.

For further information on the development plan in Cambridge, including information on the Local Plan and Area Action Plans, please visit: <https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/current-plans-and-guidance/> or contact the Planning Policy Team on localplan@greatercambridgeplanning.org or 01954 713000.

For further information on Neighbourhood Planning, including information on a specific Neighbourhood Plan, please visit: <https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/emerging-plans-and-guidance/neighbourhood-planning/> or contact the Neighbourhood Plan Team on neighbourhood.planning@greatercambridge.org or 01954 713000.