

Greater Cambridge Share Planning Service

By Online Consultation Portal

14/11/2023

Dear Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service



Cambridge Past, Present & Future
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Response to Consultation on Statement of Community Involvement

Cambridge Past, Present & Future is Cambridge's largest civic society. We are a charity run by local people who are passionate about where they live. We operate in the greater Cambridge area and working with our members, supporters and volunteers we:

- Are dedicated to protecting and enhancing the green setting of Cambridge for people and nature.
- Care about Cambridge and are an independent voice for quality of life in the strategic planning of Greater Cambridge.
- Are working to protect, celebrate and improve the important built heritage of the Cambridge area.
- Own and care for green spaces and historic buildings in and around the city for people and nature, including Wandlebury Country Park, Coton Countryside Reserve, Cambridge Leper Chapel & Barnwell Meadows, Bourn Windmill and Hinxton Watermill.

It is noted that the website only directs people to comment on line and does not explain other methods of commenting. One would have to read to the SCI to know you can send your comments by email or post.

We wish to comment on the following sections of the SCI.

1.0 Introduction

The current layout of the document is difficult to read online as the two columns means one has to scroll up and down each page. Most people will read the SCI online and therefore a web friendly layout should be published, with a separate print version available if hard copies are provided.

The interactive map which includes layers for the adopted local plans is incredibly useful. It would be better for the SCI to link in paragraph 1.11 to this rather than the one showing just the First Proposals. Greater functionality of the layers would be appreciated, allowing easier turning on and off of individual Local Plan layers rather than them being on as a default.

2.0 How can I get involved in the Planning Process.

The hyperlinks in paragraph 2.5 to information on Northstowe and Waterbeach cannot find the correct page. Please ensure that all hyperlinks work.

4.0 Methods of community engagement at the planning application stage

We support the SCI setting out the benefits of pre-application consultation with the local community. However, we wonder if there are means by which the Councils can incentivise developers to consult with local communities and groups.

In responding to development proposals, we have become aware that during the pre-application stage there is no joined up communication between the views of community groups and the views of officers. This can lead to the applicant bringing forward proposals which meet the officers' views, but which are not supported by the local community, and we have several examples of this. We have raised this issue with the planners previously and they felt that it would be helpful for officers to be aware of local concerns in order to inform the advice they are giving to developers. However, one of the challenges is confidentiality at the pre-application stage. One way around the confidentiality issue would be to ask for the developers' consent for the planning authority to seek informal local input.

The section on Pre-application advice and consultation could be expanded to encourage a three-way communication between applicant, officer and community/civic group.

To make it easier for developers to consult the community we suggest that the Councils could provide contact details of parish councils, community groups and organisations.

We support the reference to the use of Urban Rooms. The hyperlink takes you to a University of Reading page. Would it not be more appropriate to link people to the University of Cambridge page on an Urban Room for Cambridge. <https://www.arct.cam.ac.uk/research/urban-room-cambridge>

In relation to the development of strategic sites, holding master planning workshops is another useful tool which can involve all parties (developer, local authority and community) discussing issues and hearing the views of others.

I trust that you will take our comments into consideration.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Nicholas

Principal Planning Officer