

**South Cambridgeshire District Council  
Record of Executive Decision**

This form should be used to record key and other decisions made by individual Lead Cabinet members. The contact officer will ensure that the signed and completed form is given to Democratic Services as soon as reasonably practicable after the decision has been taken.

A key decision shall not be taken unless notice of the item has been published at least 28 days before the decision is to be taken except where:

- a General Exception notice has been published under Rule 15 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules and the Chairman of Scrutiny and Overview Committee has been informed in writing; or
- a Special Urgency notice has been published under Rule 16 of those Rules and the Chairman of Scrutiny and Overview Committee has agreed the decision is urgent.

Unless permission has been obtained from the Chairman of Council and the Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee that this decision may be treated as a matter of urgency under Rule 12.19 of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee Procedure Rules, this decision will come into force, and may then be implemented, on the expiry of five working days after the publication of the decision, unless called in under Rule 7 of the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules or Rule 12 of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee Procedure Rules. Where consent has been obtained to exempt the decision from call-in, this will be specified below.

<b>Lead Cabinet Member</b>	Lead Cabinet member for Planning
<b>Subject Matter</b>	Response to Government Consultation: Strengthening planning policy for brownfield development
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All Wards
<b>Date Taken</b>	Tuesday, 26 March 2024
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Samantha Johnston, Planning Policy Technician (samantha.johnston@scambs.gov.uk)
<b>Date Published</b>	Tuesday, 26 March 2024
<b>Call-In Expiry/Exempt from call-in</b>	Thursday, 4 April 2024
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No
<b>In Forward Plan?</b>	No
<b>Urgent?</b>	No

<b>Purpose / Background</b>
<p><b>NOTE:</b> This is an amended response to that published on the 19/03/2024. A substantive amendment has been added to the wording within Appendix 1, at question 1 and question 15. Additional wording has been added due a response from a Cambridge City Councillor and this is a joint Councils' response.</p> <p>The Department for Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities (DLUHC) is seeking views on how it might strengthen national planning policy to support brownfield development. It</p>

also seeks views on reviewing the threshold for referral of applications to the Mayor of London. The 3 consultation proposals are:

- Changes to national planning policy to give significant weight to the benefits of delivering as many homes as possible and to take a flexible approach in applying planning policies or guidance relating to the internal layout of development.
- Changes to the way the Housing Delivery Test operates in the 20 towns and cities subject to the uplift in the standard method. This would introduce an additional presumption in favour of sustainable development on brownfield land where the Housing Delivery Test score falls below 95%.
- Reviewing the threshold for referral of applications to the Mayor of London.

Consultation closes on **26 March 2024** and further information can be viewed on the DLUHC webpage for the consultation: [Strengthening planning policy for brownfield development - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/strengthening-planning-policy-for-brownfield-development)

Feedback is requested via submission of written responses to the answered questions included within the document. The councils' response is set out in Appendix 1. Given that the proposal relating to the threshold for referral of applications to the Mayor of London does not relate to Greater Cambridge, no response is proposed to the questions related to this.

Within the councils' response, many of the key responses relate to the:

- change to national planning policy to make clear local planning authorities should give significant weight to the benefits of delivering as many homes as possible
- change to national planning policy to make clear local planning authorities should take a flexible approach in applying planning policies or guidance relating to the internal layout of development.
- other planning barriers in relation to developing on brownfield land
- how national planning policy better support development on brownfield land
- how national planning policy better support brownfield development on small sites

The Councils response states that although we are supportive of development of brownfield sites, which reflects the existing NPPF, we express multiple concerns that strengthening planning policy around such areas through the options proposed will lower the quality of homes and lead to 'quantity over quality' on brownfield sites. All options proposed reduce standards of development and placemaking. This would lead to the erosion of development quality, sustainability, affordability, energy efficiency, and homes with sufficient space for families / working at home, for the provision of quantity. It also states that through the Local Plan as a comprehensive strategy, rather than piecemeal change, is the appropriate approach to allocating the best and most appropriate sites for residential uses, and this includes the re-use of brownfield sites.

Note that the response is proposed to be joint by Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council, subject to each council's individual decision sign off process.

<b>Declaration(s) of Interest</b> <i>Record below any relevant interest declared by any executive Member consulted or by an officer present in relation to the decision.</i>
None.

<b>Dispensation(s)</b> <i>In respect of any conflict(s) of interest declared above, record below any dispensation(s) granted by the Council's Standards Committee.</i>
None.

<b>Consultation</b> <i>Record below all parties consulted in relation to the decision.</i>
None.

<b>Other Options Considered and Reasons for Rejection</b>
Option 1: To not respond to the consultation. Reason for Rejection: if no response is made by Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Councils, DLUHC would not be made aware of the Councils' views on the proposed changes to national planning policy.

Final decision	Reason(s)
That the Lead Cabinet Member for Planning agrees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) to submit the response to the open consultation on strengthening planning policy for brownfield development as set out in Appendix 1.</li> <li>b) that delegated authority is given to the Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development to agree any minor amendments to the response in order to finalise the joint response.</li> </ul>	To provide feedback on the consultation reflecting issues relevant to Greater Cambridge.

Signed	Name (CAPITALS)	Signature	Date
Lead Cabinet Member	Signed copy available upon request from Democratic Services (democratic.services@scams.gov.uk)		
Chief Officer			

<b>Further Information</b>
Appendices  Appendix 1 BFL Consultation 260324