

## Planning Policy Monthly Update (December 2011)

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/Environment/Planning/DistrictPlanning/monthlyupdate.htm>

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### South Cambridgeshire News

#### Local Development Scheme

The latest [Local Development Scheme Timetable](#) is available on our website and sets out the timetables for preparation of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan and the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document (DPD). **This timetable now needs revising and a report will be considered by the Planning and New Communities Portfolio Holder at his meeting on 25 January 2012.**

#### South Cambridgeshire Local Plan

The Scheme sets out the timetable for a review of three key Local Development Framework (LDF) documents. This will take the form of a single plan called the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, and will incorporate a review of the Core Strategy, Site Specific Policies and the Development Control Policies DPDs. The first stage will be consultation on Issues and Options in summer 2012.

#### Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)

The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment is part of the evidence base for the new South Cambridgeshire Local Plan and is a technical assessment to identify sites that are potentially suitable for housing development.

All sites received during the 'Call for Sites' have been registered and are available to view on the [Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment](#) page of our website, either as a list or using an interactive map. This list has been updated as additional sites have been registered and it is therefore recommended to check this website regularly.

More information can be found on the on the [Local Development Framework](#) web page.

Field Code Changed

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## Cambridgeshire News

*Please note that we can only be responsible for our own programmes. Information from other organisations is the latest and most up to date given to us.*

### Minerals and Waste Local Development Framework

#### Inspector's Report on the Minerals and Waste Site Specific Proposals Plan DPD

Having received the [Inspector's final report on the Site Specific Proposals Plan DPD](#) the next stage is for Cambridgeshire County and Peterborough City Councils to take the amended document through their member processes, with a view to adopting the Plan in February 2012.

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## National News

### Localism Act

Following agreement by both Houses of Parliament on the text of the Localism Bill this Bill received Royal Assent on 15 November 2011. The Bill is now an Act of Parliament.

The plain English guide produced by the Department of Communities and Local Government on the Bill has now been updated to reflect the contents of the Act. This [plain English guide on the Localism Act](#) is on the DCLG website.

The Act includes a raft of planning and regeneration-related measures. The following is a brief summary

**Abolition of regional strategies** - Communities secretary Eric Pickles wrote to local authorities in 2010 to tell them that the government intended to abolish regional strategies. The Localism Act will enable the government to do this. A 12-week consultation into eight strategic environmental assessments into the decision to scrap regional strategies must be completed before orders can be laid in Parliament to revoke the plans. This consultation will end on 20 January 2012 and it is anticipated that following this date and an assessment of comments received the Government will be able to produce orders to revoke all the existing Regional Plans to take effect next Spring.

**Duty to cooperate** - The duty requires local authorities and other public bodies to work together on planning issues.

**Neighbourhood planning** - The Act introduces a new right for communities to draw up a neighbourhood plan. The Government is currently consulting on the regulations that would need to be in place to provide the legal guidance on how communities will be able to produce neighbourhood plans. ( See item below for details on this consultation) . It is anticipated by DCLG in their [Business Plan](#) that April 2012 will be when neighbourhood planning can begin.

The DCLG says that local communities will be able to use neighbourhood planning to grant full or outline planning permission in areas where they most want to see new homes and businesses.

According to the DCLG, provided a neighbourhood development plan or order is in line with national planning policy, with the strategic vision for the wider area set by the local authority, and with other legal requirements, local people will be able to vote on it in a referendum. If the plan is approved by a majority of those who vote, then the local authority will bring it into force.

**Community right to build** - Under provisions in the new Act, a community organisation, formed by members of the local community, will be able to bring forward development proposals which, providing they meet minimum criteria and can demonstrate local support through a referendum, will be able to go ahead without requiring a separate traditional planning application. The current consultation on neighbourhood planning regulations also considers the regulations for the Community right to build. (See item on this consultation below)

**Requirement to consult communities before submitting certain planning applications**- The Act introduces a new requirement for developers to consult local communities before submitting planning applications for certain developments.

**Strengthening enforcement rules** - The Localism Act will strengthen planning authorities' powers to tackle abuses of the planning system, such as deliberately concealing new developments.

**Reforming the Community Infrastructure Levy** - The Act gives the government the power to require that some of the money raised from the levy go directly to the neighbourhoods where development takes place.

**Reform the way local plans are made** - The Localism Act will limit the discretion of planning inspectors to insert their own wording into local plans.

**Nationally significant infrastructure projects** - The Localism Act abolishes the Infrastructure Planning Commission and hands its responsibility for taking decisions to government ministers. It also ensures the national policy statements, which will be used to guide decisions by ministers, can be voted on by Parliament.

**Clarifying the rules on predetermination** - The Localism Act makes it clear that it is proper for councillors to play an active part in local discussions, and that they should not be liable to legal challenge as a result.

**Greater local control over business rates** - The Localism Act gives councils more freedom to offer business rate discounts. Councils would need to meet the cost of any discount from local resources.

**Community right to bid (assets of community value)** - The Localism Act requires local authorities to maintain a list of assets of community value which have been nominated by the local community. When listed assets come up for sale or change of ownership, the Act then gives community groups the time to develop a bid and raise the money to bid to buy the asset when it comes on the open market.

## **A Housing Strategy for England**

A new strategy for housing has been published by the Government to 'tackle the housing shortage, boost the economy, create jobs and give people the opportunity to get on the housing ladder'.

This strategy is called [Laying the foundations- A housing strategy for England](#) is on the DCLG website and sets out a package of reforms.

## **Neighbourhood Planning Regulations**

The Government has published a consultation on [neighbourhood planning regulations](#). The consultation seeks views on proposed new regulations governing the process for establishing neighbourhood areas and forums, the requirements of Community Right to Build organisations, and the preparation of neighbourhood plans and neighbourhood development orders, and Community Right to Build Orders.

**Comments should be sent to the Government by 5 January 2012.**

## **Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations**

The Government has published a consultation on the [Community Infrastructure Levy regulations](#). This consultation is seeking views on the detailed implementation of the Government's proposals, including on the draft regulations. **The Government has asked for comments to be sent to them by 30 December 2011.**