

Greater Cambridge Local Development Scheme (Local Plan timetable)



November 2025

Cambridge City Council

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South Cambridgeshire District Council

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This Greater Cambridge Local Development Scheme (local plan timetable) November 2025 was approved by:

Cambridge City Council

Cabinet – 24 November 2025

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Cabinet – 24 November 2025

It took effect from 25 November 2025.

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Introduction

1. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Section 15 requires that Local Planning Authorities must prepare and maintain a document to be known as their Local Development Scheme (noting that the [Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 \(Schedule 7, 15B\)](#), which was enacted in 2023, but which will be brought into force at a future date, updates this requirement to prepare and maintain a “local plan timetable”). This Local Development Scheme provides information on the Development Plan Documents that the Councils intend to produce and sets out the timetable for their production.
2. The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is designed to help the local community and all our partners interested in development and the use of land and buildings in Greater Cambridge to understand what plans the Councils intend to produce.
3. Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council (“the Councils”) have committed to work together to prepare a new Local Plan for Greater Cambridge.
4. This LDS is therefore prepared and agreed jointly by both Local Planning Authorities. This LDS updates and replaces the LDS adopted earlier in 2025.

What new Development Plan documents are to be prepared

Context

5. The plans and timetables addressed in this version of the LDS are based on the current plan-making system. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act was given Royal Assent in November 2023, which proposes changes to the plan-making system. On 12 December 2024, Government confirmed a new National Planning Policy Framework and also confirmed a transitional date for plans under the current plan-making system to be submitted of December 2026.

6. For some milestones in the timetables for plan making, the LDS uses seasons. These are using standard definition as used by the Meteorological Office as set out below. Where a key stage falls in Winter of a particular year, it will be followed by brackets saying 'late' for December and 'early' for January to February to avoid confusion about the part of the year involved.

Spring

- March to May

Summer

- June to August

Autumn

- September to November

Winter

- December to February.

Greater Cambridge Local Plan

7. The Councils have committed to work together to prepare a new Local Plan, for the combined area of Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, described as "Greater Cambridge". It is intended that once adopted, this will replace the existing local plans for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire and all adopted Area Action Plans.
8. The Councils remain committed to submitting a Local Plan for examination under the current plan making system in December 2026. However, the timetable for some of the interim milestones has been updated to reflect some small delays in finalising key elements of the Plan's evidence base, some of which have required further updating in response to national planning policy changes announced in December 2024.

North East Cambridge and Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant (CWWTP) Development Consent Order (DCO)

9. The Councils have been working together to prepare an Area Action Plan (AAP) for the North East Cambridge area (the geographic extent of this area is shown at Appendix 1). However, since the publication of the last LDS, there have been changes in the national and local context that have prompted a change in approach.

10. In February 2025, the government published its response to the previous government's 2023 consultation on implementing reforms to the plan-making system. This confirmed the government's intent to implement a series of reforms to local plans, including a shift away from plans being prepared as a suite of documents towards a simpler system of single, consolidated plans. There would also be an option for local planning authorities to prepare supplementary plans outside of the normal local-plan making cycle for individual sites or two or more sites considered to be "nearby" to each other.
11. The context for the North East Cambridge development has also changed considerably. The Proposed Submission version of the AAP was agreed contingent on approval of a separate Development Consent Order (DCO), led by Anglian Water, for the relocation of the Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant (CWWTP) to another off-site location. While the DCO was approved in April 2025, a subsequent decision by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in August 2025 to withdraw funding from its Housing and Infrastructure Fund on the grounds of significant cost increases in the project has created uncertainty as to whether the effective delivery of the Councils' earlier published vision for North East Cambridge remains achievable.
12. The Councils remain committed to submitting the Local Plan for submission by December 2026. While the overall soundness of the Plan is not reliant on the deliverability of the proposed development at North East Cambridge, work will continue over the coming months to explore the alternative options for maximising the development potential of the site.
13. Given the changes in circumstances, it was decided that a consolidated local plan incorporating key policies from the proposed Area Action Plan for North East Cambridge would be the most time efficient and effective way to establish a robust planning framework for the area.

Neighbourhood planning

14. Local communities have the power to influence the future of the places they live and work by preparing neighbourhood plans. When a neighbourhood plan has been successful at examination which is carried out by an independent examiner and a local referendum voted in support of the plan, the Council must adopt it as a 'made' neighbourhood plan as part of the development plan, and take it into account when it makes decisions on planning applications in the area, alongside other adopted development plan documents.

15. As neighbourhood plans are not prepared by the Council and their timetables are dependent on the progress made by the community, timetables for their preparation are not included the LDS.

Greater Cambridge Local Plan timetable

Document title	Subject matter and geographical area	Chain of Conformity	Consultation	Publication of Proposed Submission DPD and public consultation	Submission and Examination of DPD	Adoption and publication of DPD
Greater Cambridge Local Plan	<p>Includes the Vision, Objectives and Spatial Development Strategy and policies for Greater Cambridge</p> <p>Prepared for the whole of the administrative areas covered by Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council</p>	Conformity with the NPPF	<p>Issues and Options (Reg 18)</p> <p>January 2020</p> <p>Preferred Option Consultation (Reg 18)</p> <p>Autumn 2021</p> <p>Draft Plan Consultation (Reg 18)</p> <p>Winter 2025/26</p>	<p>Proposed Submission Consultation (Reg 19)</p> <p>Summer/Autumn 2026</p>	<p>Submission to Secretary of State for independent Examination (Reg 22)</p> <p>December 2026</p>	Subject to progress of independent Examination

Appendix 1

Geographic extent of North East Cambridge Area Action Plan

