

Greater Cambridgeshire Partnership  
Strategic Planning

Online submission only

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

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Dear Sir

Greater Cambridge Local Plan – First Proposals

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the First Proposals of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan 2041.

The consultation document clearly sets out the development strategy for Greater Cambridge for the period up to 2041 and the Council recognises that there is a significant amount of development proposed. At this stage in the plan making process, the Council does not wish to make any detailed comments about the proposed development strategy set out in the consultation document, given that the significant proposals are situated to the north of Cambridge and there will be a more limited impact for North Hertfordshire.

As you will be aware, North Herts Council is anticipating receipt of the Inspector's report for our Local Plan for the period up to 2031. The Council has committed to undertaking an early review of the Local Plan for the period beyond 2031 and it maybe that there will be cross boundary issues to discuss further between the authorities once this review starts.

During our local plan examination, the Council has recognised that continuous, incremental growth for the towns and villages in North Hertfordshire may not be the most appropriate growth strategy in the future. It has also already resolved to fully explore options for a new settlement in the longer term. Other Hertfordshire authorities are similarly constrained in their ability to meet future development needs and this could result in outward pressure for growth.

In an action coming out of our local plan examination, the Council has agreed with Natural England to prepare a mitigation strategy for the Therfield Heath SSSI, to the west of Royston. The Heath is a sensitive location and additional recreational pressures arising from developments, particularly within the SSSI Zones of Influence will need to be considered in the future.

Any proposed development along or close to the A505 will have an impact on North Hertfordshire, positively in terms of increased employment opportunities or negatively in terms of additional traffic using the A505. The significant employment sites at Duxford, Granta Park, the Wellcome Genome Campus and the Babraham Institute are currently only accessible by car from

North Hertfordshire. The recommendations from the current A505 corridor studies could have a bearing on the attractiveness of these sites to North Herts residents and on traffic levels through North Herts.

There is a similar issue with the A10, which is the most direct route for North Herts residents to Cambridge and the Cambridge Biomedical Campus. With the Campus set to expand, more trips will be drawn into the site. Residents in North Herts will be well placed to take jobs or use the facilities at the Campus. Some of the additional trips will be by car on the A10 which would have a significantly negative impact on Royston. The consented, but as-yet unbuilt, car parks on the Campus site, and the planned 'travel hubs' at Hauxton and Foxton will all potentially generate more car trips along the A10.

This pressure on the A10 may be relieved to some extent by the creation of Cambridge South railway station. But that will create different pressures in North Hertfordshire, in terms of passenger throughput and access to its stations – Royston, Ashwell & Morden, Baldock, Letchworth and Hitchin. Although the onus will be on North Herts, Hertfordshire and Great British Railways (or the train operating company) to address those pressures, those bodies will need data from the Greater Cambridge Planning Service to help quantify those pressures and respond appropriately to them – in terms of timely funding and installation of enhanced cycling and walking infrastructure at the stations.

The role of Royston as a local centre for the communities in the southern areas of Cambridgeshire should also be recognised and where development is proposed, the policies in the Greater Cambridge Local Plan should allow for appropriate contributions to be made for sustainable travel projects which will support the role of Royston for these communities.

We would welcome further discussions about potential longer term cross boundary issues as both the Greater Cambridge and North Hertfordshire plans progress.

Yours faithfully

Clare Skeels  
Senior Planning Officer