

Notes of a Village Meeting on Monday, 19th January 2026

The Expansion of Cambourne north of the A428 and what it means for Elsworth

Presenters: Peter Deer, Parish Councillor
David Pope, resident and former Parish Councillor

Present: 90 attendees including (a small number of people from Boxworth, Conington and Papworth Everard)



The presentation summarised what the Local Plan does and supplemented the leaflet (author: Peter Deer) that had been previously circulated to the village which, judging from the comments made at the meeting, has been well received.

It was explained that under the Plan, because of the availability of land north of the A428, Cambourne North had been earmarked as a major area for growth with 13k+ homes and 108,000 sq m of 'employment floorspace' which would create a critical mass for the provision of facilities and services and provide Cambourne with a new town centre; when completed this would make Cambourne the third largest settlement in Cambridgeshire after Cambridge and Peterborough. While the Plan provides a framework, it is for developers to make specific proposals in accordance with the policies within it.

Landscape buffer

Regarding the Land Use map, it was noted that areas earmarked for development came very close to the village and that, by way of mitigation, a 'landscape buffer' (designated 'Cambourne Forest') was being proposed to separate and prevent coalescence between Cambourne North and Elsworth and Knapwell. From the comments made it seemed counter intuitive to many present that the forest would include open spaces and arable fields. Coupled with the lack of depth of the buffer near Elsworth and Knapwell serious doubts were expressed by many that it would prove that effective in screening the village and protecting it from being absorbed into Cambourne North over time. Moreover, the representatives from Papworth Everard suggested that the landscape buffer might not provide a barrier to additional housing over and above what is in the Plan as they had already been approached by a developer.

Station location

It was also noted from the map that the station's location was now to be further west close to the Cambourne roundabout. One consequence would very likely be that traffic travelling from/to the north east via Boxworth would not then go through Knapwell but continue along Boxworth Road through Elsworth and then turn down Brockley Road to reach/come from the station and the new town centre.

Benefits

It was recognised that possible benefits for residents could arise from the proposals in the Plan including the possibility of local employment, proximity to a railway station, improved bus services, business opportunities, leisure facilities and housing. An attendee suggested that if the opportunity was taken to address flood problems, this would be a benefit to Elsworth and villages downstream; others expressed scepticism about this as so much land would be lost to construction.

On the other hand, there were also issues and concerns.

Traffic

Foremost amongst these for residents is the problem of increased traffic passing through the village. The most recent indication is that the station would be completed by 2032. As soon as trains are able to use the line, people will be travelling to and from the station. At present the assumption seems to be that traffic from existing Cambourne and the south will access the station via the Cambourne roundabout on the A428; however, at peak times this is heavily used already and quite likely to become a pinch point.

Little is said in the Plan about travel to/from the north through Elsworth, Boxworth and Knapwell; about the extra traffic that will be generated by the building of new housing and logistics developments; and about traffic generated by residents of Cambourne North themselves. Current projections of the scale of traffic were considered too low and were met with disbelief and dismay that villagers' safety would be compromised given that many local roads were often narrow and have no pavements.

All of this points to significantly increased traffic flowing through the village. By way of mitigation "traffic calming" measures are mentioned in the Plan but these are seen not to deter traffic at the moment. Villagers commented that with local roads being in such a poor state of repair and could not cope with additional volumes and that alternative routes /new roads would be needed. It was noted that the Plan references that "the road network in South Cambridgeshire is reaching capacity, particularly roads into Cambridge...". Noting that the Combined Authority (not the District Council) is responsible for producing a Transport Strategy and will not report until the end of 2026 when the Local Plan has to be submitted, the absence of more specific information on matters like this, makes it very difficult for parishioners to comment sensibly on some aspects of the Plan.

Build Out

The well known issues of water supply means that 2032 seems the very earliest that house construction can start. Moreover, the speed of build, at an expected rate of c350 houses p.a., would inevitably affect how quickly facilities and services are provided so it appeared to many that few of the potential benefits would accrue and all the problems associated with development would be experienced in the meantime. Northstowe provides a salutary example concerning the delivery of infrastructure such as new schools, GP services, etc. Cambourne itself is another example where the influx of new people into a new settlement has seen social and behavioural problems increase, while the planned infrastructure originally promised has still not come to fruition and there is not a lot for young people to do or opportunities for their employment. Parishioners queried why Cambourne North would necessarily be any different.

Job Numbers

Considerable scepticism was expressed about the 73,000 additional jobs in Greater Cambridge predicted as a benefit in the Plan and how many of them would actually be local. Several people raised concerns that Cambourne North would end up being primarily a dormitory town for commuters to Cambridge and London.

Coalescence/Loss of Identity

Parishioners were angry at the perceived loss of identity and existential threat to Elsworth and neighbouring villages. They believe that as the development progresses power will pass to Cambourne Town Council, that the wishes of the villages will be ignored and that their parishes are likely to be subsumed. Again these issues are things not addressed in the Plan. Nor is what will happen to s106/similar monies arising from the proposed developments. As these developments will actually be built in the parishes, it is felt that there should be some financial benefits to the parishes and not just to Cambourne.

EWR

Several residents raised the impact the proposed EWR route will have on the locality and its limited benefit to local communities.

Summary

Peter Deer thanked everyone for attending and for their comments and urged residents to complete the Consultation Document at <https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/local-plan>.

For further information (including the slides used in the presentation) see:
'Cambourne Is Coming' on the home page of the Parish Council web site at <https://elsworth-pc.gov.uk/>.

Updates about the Local Plan will also be provided from time to time in the *Elsworth Times* and on the Elsworth Village and Elsworth & District Forum face book pages.

Comments, questions, offers of help etc, should be addressed to:

CIC Working Group

Peter Deer (co-ordinator), David Pope at peter.deer@elsworth-pc.gov.uk