

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (GCSP)

Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan Consultation

Cambridge Approaches

Comments related to: **Cambourne, Cambourne North**

Summary

This response to a local plan consultation challenges the proposed Cambourne expansion linked to East West Rail (EWR). Key concerns include: the County Council's Transport Evidence Report shows only 1% of trips from extended Cambourne would go to Cambridge Biomedical Campus, contradicting EWR's justification for the route; despite £8 billion costs, EWR would contribute minimally to Cambridge's economic growth; the development of 13,500 houses appears viable without EWR; and there's insufficient justification for linking the housing development to the railway project, potentially wasting public funds through lack of accountability between planning authorities and EWR Company.

Transport Evidence Report October 2025 ¹

1. Further to our comments on the Rail Integration Study for Cambourne, the Transport Evidence Report Part 4 (TER) contains an assessment of the transport patterns around the proposed Extended Cambourne. This is based on the Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) transport modelling work and independent of the work done by the East West Rail Company (EWRCo.) published in their May 2023 Route Update Announcement (RUA) and Economic and Technical Report (ETR) ².
2. At the time of the RUA, then CEO of EWRCo. Beth West explained why the connection of EWR to Cambridge needed to be to the Cambridge Biomedical Campus. This was a justification for the route choice but also a justification for taking EWR to Cambridge at all ³. She said that: "It's to unlock sustainable growth between Oxford and Cambridge. The southern route connects to the Biomedical Campus, which has a huge opportunity for growth across the region". The ETR's Cambridge Trip-End model (Table 4.1) shows that the largest number of commuters to Cambridge would come from the expanded Cambourne.

¹ <https://consultations.greatercambridgeplanning.org/sites/gcp/files/2025-10/EBGCLPDCGTEROct25.pdf>

² <https://ewr-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/public/Route-Update-Announcement/9a2d6ec314/ETR-Appendices-2023.pdf> Economic and Technical Report Appendix 4

³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mgd10ZiriUo> 1:26

3. Given that the proposed development of 13,500 houses north of the A428 in Cambourne is clustered around the EWR station and – we understand from a meeting with EWRCo. and a representative of GCSP on 10 December 2025 – given that all 13,500 of these houses had been “allocated to EWR” then one might expect the CCC TER to show large numbers of trips from Cambourne to the Cambridge Biomedical Campus (CBC).
4. The TER gives a breakdown of the destinations for trips originating in an Extended Cambourne and the striking result is that only 1% of trips have the CBC as their destination ⁴. Note also that this 1% does not break down how many of the trips are by road, rail, bus etc.
5. The conclusion has to be that despite the £8 billion capital cost, EWR would contribute almost nothing to Economic Growth in and around Cambridge. As Cllr Peter Fane of SCDC put it at the January 2026 Haslingfield Parish Council meeting – Cambourne could be extended without EWR.
6. The argument is made that although EWR would not be cost effective now, or even in the timeframe of this Local Plan, in the far future as Cambridge develops eventually EWR will carry significant traffic. If this is the case for basing the development of Cambourne North on EWR, then why isn't that case made in the consultation – and justified? The lack of justification for EWR and this development of Cambourne is falling between GCSP and EWRCo. Both are responsible for this failure. Both are responsible for not flagging the waste of public money in the name of political expedience. But EWRCo. say they are not responsible for the housing and GCSP feel they have no responsibility for EWR.
7. EWRCo. will take all the 13,500 new houses in Cambourne North towards their business case, but the CCC TER and ETR both show that only a tiny fraction of the people living in these houses would use EWR to commute to the CBC. This is incorrect and misleading.
8. The EWR Cambourne North aspect of this Local Plan proposal needs to be properly justified, and if it cannot be justified then it needs to be dropped.

⁴ <https://consultations.greatercambridgeplanning.org/sites/gcp/files/2025-10/EBGCLPDCGTEROct25.pdf>, Table 90