



# CAMBOURNE TOWN COUNCIL

District of South Cambridgeshire

## **Cambourne Town Council Response to the Emerging Local Plan – North Cambourne**

*Cambourne Town Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the emerging Local Plan proposals relating to North Cambourne.*

### **1. General Position**

*Overall, the Council considers the proposals to be broadly sensible in their ambition and strategic direction. However, there are several critical issues that must be addressed if North Cambourne is to function as a successful and integrated extension of Cambourne, rather than as a separate or disconnected settlement.*

### **2. Integration and Connectivity**

*A fundamental concern is how North Cambourne will operate as part of a single, coherent town, particularly given the physical barrier created by the A428. This issue must be addressed explicitly and at an early stage in the planning process.*

*Connections between North Cambourne and existing areas of Cambourne require detailed review and careful design to prioritise permeability, legibility, and safety for all users. Particular concern exists regarding proposed routes into West Cambourne, where some alignments appear to pass through or conflict with residential areas. Further detailed design work is essential at an early stage to ensure these routes are practical, safe, and attractive.*

*The Town Council and the master developer (MCA), as significant landowners, must be recognised as key consultees throughout this process.*

### **3. Town Centre Provision**

*The Council is concerned by references to a “new” town centre for North Cambourne and the reference to the existing Highstreet to be a secondary Highstreet. Cambourne does not yet have a fully realised town centre, and there is a clear risk that proposals for an additional centre could undermine or delay delivery of the existing town centre strategy.*

*Development at North Cambourne must therefore actively reinforce the delivery of a single, viable town centre serving Cambourne as a whole. Strong physical connections, high-quality active travel routes, and effective public transport links between North Cambourne and the existing town centre proposals will be essential.*

### **4. Transport and Infrastructure Delivery**

*The proposed railway station would represent a major asset for Cambourne. However, the Council is concerned that existing and already-committed transport improvements—such as the Cambourne–Cambridge bus service and other measures intended to address current transport pressures—could be delayed or deprioritised as a result of the scale of new development. These commitments must be delivered as planned and not deferred.*

*The transport strategy must place a strong emphasis on multi-modal travel, particularly non-car journeys. High-quality active travel infrastructure should be embedded from the outset, including:*

- *Safe, direct cycle routes linking North Cambourne with the rest of Cambourne, particularly the business park, town centre, and Bourne Airfield site*
- *Provision for e-bikes and, where appropriate, e-scooters*
- *Off-road or segregated cycle routes connecting to surrounding villages, avoiding reliance on high-speed roads*

*Early delivery of this infrastructure is essential to influence travel behaviour from first occupation. The Council strongly believes that links between North Cambourne and the existing settlement must be delivered before housing occupation begins. This is critical to ensure the early community integrates successfully with Cambourne.*

*Importantly, the financing of this infrastructure must not be dependent solely on Section 106 contributions from the new development. Alternative funding sources should be secured prior to the construction of the first homes.*

### **5. Housing Delivery and Construction Methods**

*The Council notes that current rates of housebuilding are insufficient to meet demand and are delivered too slowly. For a development of this scale, alternative construction methods—such as modular or modern methods of construction—should be actively encouraged to accelerate delivery.*

*The current approach of developing small parcels over extended periods (often around 18 months), as seen in West Cambourne, is not acceptable for North Cambourne. Clear delivery targets should be established, with an ambition to complete individual parcels within six months where feasible.*

## **6. Housing Design and Architectural Character**

*The Council considers that the architectural approach for North Cambourne must be sensitive to the established character and identity of Cambourne and the wider Cambridgeshire context. The historic character of Cambridgeshire's villages and market towns—reflected in their scale, materials, proportions, and relationship between buildings and public space—should inform the design approach for new development.*

*While high-quality contemporary design has a role to play, an overly distinctive or self-contained architectural theme risks creating an isolated development that feels disconnected from the existing town. This would be inappropriate for a community that is intended to be fully integrated with Cambourne rather than perceived as a separate or contrasting settlement.*

*North Cambourne should therefore adopt an architectural language that respects local history and townscape traditions, drawing inspiration from Cambridgeshire's market towns while allowing for modern construction methods, sustainability, and innovation. Design codes should require context-led, human-scaled architecture with a cohesive palette of materials and forms, enabling variety within a shared framework and reinforcing a strong, unified sense of place across Cambourne.*

## **7. Employment and Commercial Development**

*The Council supports the inclusion of mixed industrial, laboratory, and office campus uses. However, a different approach to delivery is required. In Cambourne, employment sites have too often been delivered late in the development cycle, undermining local job creation and increasing commuter travel.*

*Recent experience in West Cambourne—where a small commercial site in Parcel 2a has been at risk of being reduced or constrained—illustrates this issue. The Council is also concerned about the imposition of unreasonable planning conditions, such as mandatory residential units above commercial premises. In many cases, commercial sites should remain wholly commercial.*

*Given increasing viability pressures on local commercial development, particularly from online retail, planning policy should focus on removing barriers to delivery rather than introducing additional constraints.*

## **8. Housing for Older People**

*The Council identifies a significant gap in housing provision for older residents who are capable of living independently but require smaller, more manageable homes. While extra-care and multi-tenant models exist, there is a clear lack of:*

- *One- and two-bedroom houses designed specifically for older people*
- *Bungalows or step-free homes*

*There are currently almost no bungalows in Cambourne. North Cambourne presents a valuable opportunity to address this long-standing shortfall.*

## **9. Sustainability and Zero-Carbon Homes**

*All new housing in North Cambourne should be delivered as zero-carbon or near-zero-carbon from the outset. This must include:*

- *Renewable-based heating systems*
- *High standards of insulation and energy efficiency*
- *Solar panels and battery storage installed as standard, rather than merely “provisioned for”*

*These measures should be mandatory rather than optional to ensure genuine long-term sustainability.*

## **10. Adaptability and Future-Proofing**

*The Council is concerned that many homes are built with little regard for future adaptation. Good local examples already exist, such as housing delivered by Arup in Trumpington, where:*

- *Roofs were designed to accommodate future loft conversions*
- *Garages were double-skinned to allow later conversion to living space*

*North Cambourne should adopt similar principles, ensuring homes can evolve as residents' needs change over time.*

## **11. Parking Strategy**

*Given the anticipated population density of North Cambourne (Based on the images/maps provided), the Council considers it essential that the parking strategy is fully future-proofed and grounded in realistic patterns of behaviour rather than idealised assumptions about modal shift. Parking provision must reflect actual car ownership levels, household composition, servicing and delivery requirements, and the transitional period before public transport and active travel networks are fully mature.*

*This is especially important in light of the proposed railway station, which is likely to attract additional vehicular traffic from neighbouring towns and villages seeking park-and-ride or informal commuter parking. Without adequate and well-planned provision, there is a significant risk of overspill parking impacting residential streets, local centres, and surrounding neighbourhoods.*

*The Council strongly recommends that parking standards and layouts are embedded within binding design codes and secured through clear planning conditions, rather than being deferred to later reserved matters stages. These design codes should allow for flexibility and adaptation over time, including the ability to reallocate or convert space should travel patterns change.*

*Any parking strategy must be supported by a clear, deliverable, and enforceable management framework, aligned with Cambridgeshire County Council parking guidance and regularly reviewed against observed demand rather than projected best-case scenarios. Failure to plan for realistic parking demand from the outset would create long-term pressures on the public realm and undermine the overall success of the development.*

## **12. Inclusivity, Accessibility and Lifetime Communities**

*To develop sustainable communities, inclusivity must be designed into all aspects of development if North Cambourne is to achieve a genuine place-making outcome. This should extend across both the public realm and the built environment, from inclusive playground and recreational equipment to the delivery of accessible and adaptable homes.*

*To support a diverse community, particularly diversity of age and ability, provision should be made for all stages of a person's life. Designing inclusivity into developments from the outset is more effective and significantly more cost-efficient than attempting to retrospectively add or adapt features once homes and spaces are already built.*

*The Council notes that the replacement for the former Lifetime Homes standard is Building Regulations Requirement M4(2) (Category 2), which is considered broadly equivalent in terms of accessibility and adaptability. However, these standards are optional, and local planning authorities must explicitly adopt M4(2) within their Local Plan in order for them to be required through the planning system.*

*For residents with more complex mobility needs, Building Regulations Requirement M4(3) (Category 3) provides the higher standard for fully wheelchair-accessible homes and is equivalent to the Wheelchair Housing Design Guide. The Council considers it essential that the Local Plan clearly addresses both standards, ensuring that a meaningful proportion of homes in North Cambourne are accessible and adaptable, and that provision is made for wheelchair-accessible housing in line with identified needs.*

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