

Railfuture East Anglia response to the Greater Cambridge Draft Local Plan Consultation

Railfuture East Anglia welcomes the ambition of the draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan to address climate change, health, and the creation of high-quality places to live. We are encouraged by the emphasis on sustainability, wellbeing, good design, and the importance of walking, cycling, and public transport.

However, good public transport must be placed firmly at the heart of future development. Public transport, including active travel, should shape development outcomes rather than respond to them. Trains, buses, and active travel are the genuinely sustainable modes of transport. We cannot accept the premise within the draft plan that electric vehicles form part of a sustainable transport solution.

While they have a role to play in decarbonisation and improving air quality, electric vehicles are still cars and continue to cause many of the problems the plan seeks to address, including congestion, land take, and particulate pollution from tyres and brake dust. Furthermore, the ability for electric car users (with off-road car-parking) to charge at home at far lower cost and without paying fuel duty, and without the introduction of road user charging risks making electric substantially cheaper than buses and trains in turn encouraging modal shift away from buses and trains to private car - the precise opposite of the stated aims of the emerging Local Plan.

The Role of the Railway

While the focus of development close to the city's three railway stations is supported, the regional railway network outside the city, including its seven local stations, has been largely overlooked in the draft plan, except around Cambourne, which is a station yet to be built. This is a significant omission. The railway is uniquely capable of moving large numbers of people rapidly, safely, and sustainably across Greater Cambridge and the infrastructure is already in place.

The railway already shapes major travel flows in the area. Stations at Whittlesford Parkway, Shelford, Ashwell & Morden, Meldreth, Shepreth, Foxton, and Waterbeach are vital assets and the passenger flows from these stations are substantial. The draft Local Plan must explicitly recognise the importance of these local and city stations and the potential for existing rail lines to operate as a formal metro system serving key employment and development areas, including:

- Cambridge Biomedical Campus (via Cambridge South)
- Cambridge Central Station area
- Cambridge North Science and Business Parks
- Waterbeach
- Cambridge East and Capital Park and Peterhouse Technology

Travel Hubs and Interception of Car Trips

The Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) proposals for rail-based travel hubs must be fully implemented.

Foxton Station: The proposed travel hub should intercept car journeys along the A10 into Cambridge, particularly for trips to the Biomedical Campus, Cambridge Central Station area, Cambridge North, the Science Park, and Waterbeach. Journey times by train are considerably quicker than alternative modes: 7 minutes to Cambridge South, 11 minutes to Cambridge Central, and 15 minutes to Cambridge North. Every car intercepted at Foxton improves the efficiency of local bus services across Cambridge and enables the Hauxton Travel Hubs to be utilised by traffic from the M11 motorway.

Whittlesford Parkway: A similar travel hub should be delivered here to intercept vehicle movements from the south-east of Greater Cambridge and to serve the nearby Genome Campus, as well as the M11 motorway.

Accessibility and Active Travel

Local stations at Ashwell & Morden, Meldreth, Shepreth, Foxton, Whittlesford Parkway, Shelford, and Waterbeach village are already well used, but access must be improved. The plan should commit future authorities to:

- Providing step-free access at all stations, including lifts and footbridges between platforms.
- Work with Network Rail and Greater British Railway to safeguard land for platform extensions, new footbridges, lifts etc as appropriate.
- Delivering safe, direct cycling and walking routes linking stations to their villages and surrounding villages building on the Greenway network.

It is particularly concerning that there is currently no safe walking and cycling route between Sawston, Duxford, and Whittlesford Parkway station.

Housing and Service Levels

No housing has been allocated near the seven rural stations, despite their ability to accommodate significantly higher footfall. Their position in the settlement hierarchy remains unchanged since the previous Local Plan. The draft Local Plan should support higher-density housing around these stations and commit to working with the railway to improve services so that a minimum of two trains per hour operate in each direction throughout the day. This aligns with national planning and transport policy.

Cambridge Stations and Urban Densification

Within Cambridge, substantial development is planned near Cambridge South and Cambridge Central stations.

We welcome the inclusion of proposals to deliver an eastern entrance at Cambridge Central Station to unlock higher-density development to the east and south-east.

We support further densification of research and employment development around Cambridge North, the Science Park, and the Business Park.

Waterbeach and Cambourne

Waterbeach village station must be retained to serve Waterbeach, Landbeach, and Horningsea.

The new town at Waterbeach should include high-density development focused around its new station.

At Cambourne, we support significant housing growth around the new station, but this development must be dense enough to ensure the railway can serve it effectively.

The Cambridge to Cambourne busway should be extended to directly serve Cambourne station enabling high quality bus services between Cambourne railway station and existing parts of Cambourne and the proposed Bourn Airfield housing allocation.

East Cambridge and Light Rail

In East Cambridge, the plan should commit to working towards a new station on the Newmarket line near Yarrow Road and Gazelle Way, ideally with the removal of the level crossing and its replacement by a bridge. This station will serve over 10,000 existing jobs at ARM, Peterhouse Technology Park, and Capital Park, as well as enabling high-density housing nearby.

In connection with these developments the future authority should demonstrate its backing of the restoration of double tracking of the Newmarket railway with Newmarket becoming the turnback station for East West Rail.

Land along Gazelle Way should also be safeguarded for a future light rail line linking east Cambridge to the airport site and Cambridge North continuing via Orchard Park to Darwin Green, Eddington, and Cambridge West, potentially using the part of the guided busway corridor. The former rail alignment between Barnwell Junction and Stow-cum-Quy for rapid transit /active travel use.

Grange Farm

Railfuture East Anglia cannot support the proposed development at Grange Farm. This settlement would be predominantly car-based and would significantly increase congestion on both local and national road networks, contrary to the stated objectives of the Local Plan.

It is only viable as a development if our proposal for a Cambridge to Haverhill railway is taken forward, otherwise it will become similar to the original flawed planning many years ago for Cambourne, now only being corrected by East West Rail.

Support for the response of our partners in the Cambridge Sustainable Travel Alliance

Railfuture is a partner within the Cambridgeshire Sustainable Travel Alliance of CamCycle, Cambridge Bus Users and Cambridge Living Streets. We fully support their responses to this consultation.

About Railfuture

Railfuture is the UK's leading independent organisation campaigning for better rail services for passengers and freight. **Railfuture** is a voluntary group representing rail users, with 20,000 affiliated and individual members.

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