

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Policy Team

Your ref:

Sent by email to:

localplan@greatercambridgeplanning.org

Our ref:

DtC GC/CBC

Date:

30/01/2026

Dear Sirs,

Greater Cambridge Local Plan – Draft Plan Public Consultation

Thank you for providing Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) the opportunity to comment on the Greater Cambridge Local Plan – Draft Plan Public consultation. Please accept this letter as our formal response.

We welcome the opportunity to respond to the proposals in this consultation and look forward to continuing the good working relations that CBC has already forged with the two substantive authorities.

We have provided some comments below on the consultation documentation which we hope are useful. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any further questions.

General Comments

Overall, the Council supports the approach you have taken in terms of undertaking a joint local plan to ensure a consistent approach to planning and building across both Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council up to 2045.

We support the order of preference that has been identified in terms of meeting development needs, reflecting on the sustainability of different locations to accommodate development:

- Within the Cambridge urban area;
- On the edge of Cambridge whilst considering the impact on Green Belt purposes;
- At Cambourne and new settlements; and
- In the rural area at Rural Centres and Minor Rural Centres.

We also support the longer-term vision and strategy for the new plan - identifying developments that will continue to deliver new homes, jobs and infrastructure beyond the plan period, to help maintain a land supply and reduce the need for development in less sustainable locations.

We note that the plan period has been rolled forward an additional 5 years since the previous consultation and that subsequently, the growth requirements for the area have increased for new homes by 8% from 44,400 to 48,195, and for new jobs by 20% from 58,500 to 73,300. We also note that there is an identified need within the Greater Cambridge area for 159 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers, and 20 plots for Travelling Showpeople and that the Local Plan seeks to meet all of your needs, for homes, jobs and Gypsies and Travellers, in full.

The Draft Plan at pages 61-62 helpfully sets out clearly where the new housing growth will be delivered across the Greater Cambridge area. In relation to how Gypsy and Traveller needs will be met, it is understood that 120 pitches are to be provided through six strategic allocations, and 22 pitches that were not permanently authorised are now authorised. The remaining pitches are likely to come forward through other sources including household dissolution enforcement action and through the intensification within existing sites. The latter is anticipated to ultimately provide over and above the identified need for the plan period, which supports the likelihood that some Gypsy and Traveller pitches within strategic allocations may come forward outside of the plan period.

Whilst the housing and jobs figures have been identified through the Greater Cambridge Employment and Housing Evidence Update (EHEU) 2025, and the homes target reflects the government's standard method housing calculation for the area, the jobs number now proposed, increases significantly more than the housing need.

Whilst CBC recognises the desire for the Greater Cambridge area to capitalise on its strong growth sectors, and welcomes economic growth of neighbouring authority areas, particularly where there are opportunities for complementary economic growth within our own administrative area, we would not support a level of growth that could detrimentally impact upon the ability of neighbouring authorities, such as Central Bedfordshire, to meet and deliver their own economic ambitions and growth aspirations.

Of the 73,300 jobs anticipated over the plan period, around 35,000 are identified to be office, R&D and industrial jobs. The EHEU converted these jobs into employment floorspace needs of almost 1,220,000sqm. The rest of the jobs forecast are in services and support uses such as shops, schools and healthcare.

The draft plan proposes to meet the jobs need through the delivery of:

- 302,600 sqm offices and 600,000 sqm of Research and Development (R&D) space; and
- 317,000 sqm of industrial / warehousing (Use Classes B2/B8).

The EHEU also recommends that to ensure a flexible employment land supply for office, R&D and industrial jobs, and encouraging growth in existing businesses and attracting inward investment, that a greater amount of employment floorspace is planned for than that associated with identified need, taking into account the needs of different employment sectors.

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As noted above, the Draft Plan helpfully sets out clearly where the new housing growth will be delivered across the Greater Cambridge area, but there does not appear to be the equivalent level of detail for where employment needs will be met.

We note the consultation plan identifies that around 1,000,000sqm of employment space is already planned for at locations including Cambridge Science Park and the Wellcome Genome Campus. Whilst it does not appear to be explicitly stated, it is therefore assumed that the plan needs to identify an additional 220,000sqm of floorspace to meet identified needs within the plan's timeframe. Of this, 108,000sqm of floorspace is identified to be accommodated within the proposals for Cambourne North, but it is unclear where the remaining 112,000sqm is to be accommodated, or the extent to which any over provision of employment floorspace is proposed. It is understood that the remaining requirement will be distributed across other proposed allocations within the plan, but a table detailing where and the quantum of floorspace to be provided, would provide clarity and make it easier to find the information.

Cambourne

Cambourne is identified to deliver a significant amount of growth over the plan period and beyond, with substantial mixed use proposals at Camborne North (13,000 homes and 108,000sqm of employment floorspace) as well as Cambourne West (up to 2,350 homes and 30,625sqm of employment floorspace), both of which are in addition to the new allocation within the town centre for 120 homes and the allocations being carried forward from previous Plans, including the Bourn Airfield new village for 3,500 homes and up to 1,400sqm of employment floorspace.

Whilst it is recognised that only 2,550 of the 13,000 new homes proposed at Cambourne North will come forward within the plan period, it is essential that the existing and future growth, and the implications on the wider area, are taken into consideration, with any required mitigation identified and planned for from the outset.

Development proposals of this scale must accommodate all of the resulting needs (services, facilities and infrastructure) within the proposed allocations, so that there are no detrimental, or cumulative impacts on services, facilities and infrastructure outside of the Greater Cambridge area.

The Draft Plan states that the policies in the local plan require developments to be located and designed so that sustainable travel choices are available. They also require developments to contribute towards the cost of these transport schemes, to mitigate the impact of development. CBC recognises the benefits of locating growth at Cambourne due to the proposed busway, improvements to the A428 between Black Cat and Caxton Gibbet, as well as the proposals for East West Rail (EWR) providing rail services between Oxford, Bedfordshire and Cambridge. However, we would be keen to understand what work has been undertaken to date to identify impacts on the local and strategic road network outside of the Greater Cambridge area, and the mitigation identified to combat these impacts.

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The plan and supporting evidence appear to lean towards a 'vision led' approach to transport, with the emphasis on delivery of sustainable transport schemes such as EWR and the Cambourne to Cambridge busway. This is supported, as is the recognition in Policy I/ST, point 3, of the need to address transport infrastructure in the wider area including across the district boundary; however, it is considered there will inevitably be an impact on the A1 corridor and local road network within Central Bedfordshire, which does not appear to be reflected within the impact assessment or Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).

With regard to the concept of 'trip budgets' in relation to specific Local Plan site policy, Policy S/CBN states: 'The indicative trip budget is approximately 2,500 trips in the AM peak and 2,500 trips in the PM peak. A refined trip budget based on more detailed evidence must be agreed with the Local Highways Authority prior to submission of the outline application. A monitor and manage approach will be taken to ensure that the development remains within the agreed trip budget for the site throughout its delivery'.

It is assumed, based on the limited information available, that a budget of 2,500 trips in the peak hours relies on significant investment in sustainable transport, which although proposed, cannot be guaranteed to be the preferred method of travel for future occupiers. CBC would have reservations about this assumption at this time as it appears to suggest what the modelling says the network can accommodate, rather than the result any sustainable transport interventions might have.

We note that the Greater Cambridge section of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) states that a '...revised Transport Strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire will be prepared to support later stages of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan', and that 'this will confirm the transport infrastructure and policies required to mitigate the proposed sites once the development strategy is finalised. Engagement with the wider community, businesses, large employers, organisations at large employment sites, and developers will be critical in successfully delivering the vision for the area.'

We also note that a Statement of Intent document has been prepared to formally confirm the Combined Authority's intention to prepare a sub-regional Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy (GCTS) to support regional growth, including the Greater Cambridge Local Plan and also the government's wider ambitions for further growth in Cambridgeshire.

It is evident that further work still needs to be undertaken in relation to the traffic impacts of the combined proposals at Cambourne on the local and strategic road network, both within and beyond the Greater Cambridge area. Given the proximity of the proposals to Central Bedfordshire, it will be essential that CBC are engaged in this process as soon as possible, so we can help to identify the issues arising within our administrative area, understand the implications for our residents and communities, and help to identify where, and the extent to which, mitigation is required.

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In addition to the above, it may also be beneficial to include a commitment within part 43 of Policy S/CBN to adding other relevant stakeholders to what is currently a very short list, of those who the developer must consult with on the Strategic and Local Transport Mitigation Plan.

It is also considered that Policy S/CBN would benefit from clearly stating that the busway link and EWR are prerequisites and development will not commence/continue until these schemes are place, given the trip budget they state.

Draft Interim Statement of Common Ground (SoCG)

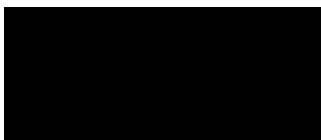
In relation to the draft Interim SoCG, we note it states, 'In summary, all relevant parties are committed to further collaboration and engagement to support the progression of the Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy in time to support the submission of the Local Plan; as such there are no areas of disagreement on this strategic matter.'

CBC are unclear at this stage if the last statement can be supported due to our concerns over the transport implications arising from the cumulative impacts of the allocations and proposed allocations at Cambourne. We will be happy to work with you to discuss our concerns, which we hope can be resolved ahead of the planned Regulation 19 consultation in Summer 2026.

Finally, just a comment to be helpful, but is Figure 9, pg59 of the draft plan missing a symbol for the Cambourne North proposals? Four locations are identified but there are only 3 symbols on the map.

We hope you find the above comments helpful in finalising your submission Local Plan for the Greater Cambridge area.

Yours sincerely



Caroline Danby
Head of Strategic Growth