



# Camcycle response to the Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan

## Purpose and overall position

Camcycle welcomes the ambition in the Greater Cambridge Local Plan to address climate change, support health, and deliver high-quality places. The Plan contains powerful language on sustainability, wellbeing and good design, and begins to recognise the importance of walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport.

However, the Plan does not yet treat active travel as fundamental to shaping development outcomes. Instead, walking and cycling are largely framed as desirable transport options that can be encouraged once development locations, layouts and densities have already been decided.

This matters because travel behaviour is not an afterthought. It is one of the most decisive factors in whether development is genuinely low carbon, healthy and inclusive. A development where most everyday trips can be made on foot or by cycle will have fundamentally different outcomes to one where car use is structurally embedded, regardless of how energy-efficient the buildings are.

We would therefore like to see the Plan treat walking, wheeling and cycling not just as a transport solution, but as a way to actively shape land use, density, layout and connectivity so that walking and cycling are the natural choice for most everyday journeys.

## Theme 1: Climate policy gap

The Plan rightly places a strong emphasis on climate change and net zero. The climate change chapter is detailed and ambitious in relation to buildings, energy, water and materials. However, the overall approach treats climate change primarily as a technological challenge, rather than a behavioural and spatial one shaped by how places are planned and how people travel.

Transport is the [largest source of carbon emissions in Cambridgeshire](#), yet the Plan does very little to set out a clear role for cycling as a core climate response. While sustainable travel is referenced throughout, there is no policy that identifies walking and cycling as an important, cost-efficient and primary means of reducing transport emissions. Instead, the Plan largely assumes continued car use, with electrification presented as the main route to decarbonisation.

Electric vehicles are consistently grouped alongside walking, cycling and public transport within the Plan's definition of [sustainable travel](#). While electrification is important, it does not address congestion and its impact on bus reliability and the cost of running services, the cost of allocating land to car infrastructure, road safety, or the health impacts of inactivity. Without a clear hierarchy that prioritises mode shift, this approach risks allowing car-dependent development patterns to persist under the banner of sustainability with all the negative externalities this brings.

Net zero standards within the Plan focus heavily on buildings, but largely ignore the carbon impacts of car-dependent land use patterns. A highly efficient building located in a place that requires daily car use for work, education and services will still generate high transport emissions over its lifetime. Given the plans stated ambitions on carbon reduction, it seems a significant oversight not to put greater emphasis on lifetime emissions, which risks locking in car dependency, and thus exacerbating the climate crisis.

The Plan states that its spatial strategy (where and when things happen) has been informed by carbon assessment, but this has largely been a qualitative assessment and it has not translated into policies that deliver binding development requirements. Camcycle has reviewed the Sustainability Appraisal that accompanies the Plan and it clearly fails to reflect the transport-related carbon consequences of different spatial choices. In particular, it does not meaningfully distinguish between locations with fundamentally different potential for walking, cycling and public transport, and therefore risks treating very different places as broadly equivalent in sustainability terms.

The Sustainability Appraisal acknowledges that transport is a major contributor to emissions, but it does not robustly compare the lifetime transport impacts associated with dispersed, car-dependent growth versus compact, well-connected urban locations. Nor does it test credible alternative scenarios where land use, density, layout and connectivity are deliberately designed to maximise mode shift. This weakens the link between the Plan's climate objectives and its spatial strategy and makes it harder to justify difficult but necessary choices.

Climate objectives cannot be met through technology alone. For transport they require sustained mode shift, which in turn depends on land use, density and layout decisions that actively favour walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport.

Camcycle is also concerned about the transparency and assumptions within individual site assessments. For example, the West Fields site between Barton Road and West Cambridge (Site ID115681) has been assessed using very low housing densities and highly conservative assumptions about future mode share. These assumptions are at odds with what is already being delivered immediately adjacent in Eddington. Modelling long-term transport behaviour on this basis risks significantly understating the potential for mode shift and distorting the conclusions of the Plan. In Cambridge, it is possible within this Plan period to achieve sustainable mode share of up to 90% of trips if land use and connectivity are planned in a way that provides people with local needs and high-quality active travel and public transport, whilst correctly pricing the cost of car ownership. At present, there is a risk that overly cautious assessments and a reluctance to allocate housing in more challenging locations are constraining the Plan's potential to deliver sustainable development.

[Recent research from the University of Oxford](#) shows that when full life-cycle emissions are considered, including vehicle manufacture, energy use and disposal, emissions from cycling can be

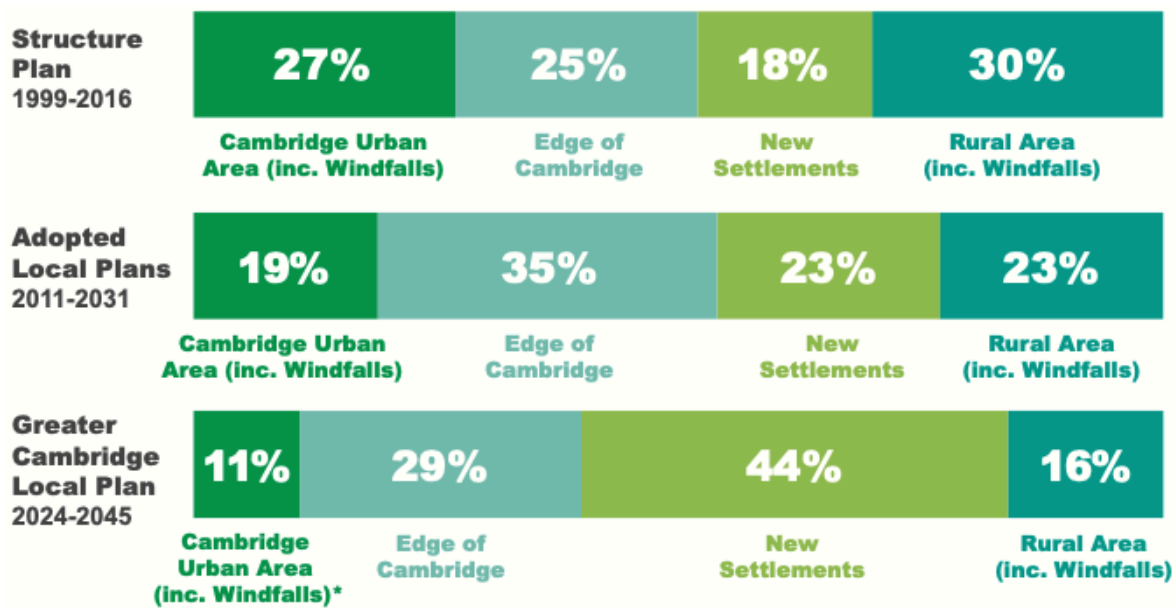
more than thirty times lower per trip than driving a petrol or diesel car, and around ten times lower than driving an electric one. In the UK, around seventy-two percent of all trips are made by car, while only around two percent are cycled – despite [70% of trips being under five miles in length and 25% under one mile](#). This demonstrates that the carbon leverage of cycling is substantial and currently widely understated in policymaking.

Camcycle would therefore welcome significant changes to the Plan to clearly set out the role of cycling under the environment and climate themes, not simply as a transport option, but as a primary delivery mechanism for emissions reduction, public health and high-quality places.



## Theme 2: Jobs and housing geography and the consequences for transport

The Plan's own evidence shows a growing imbalance between where people live and where people work. Employment growth remains heavily concentrated in Cambridge and its immediate edge, while housing growth is increasingly dispersed across the wider area. This imbalance already presents significant transport challenges across Greater Cambridge, with large numbers of people travelling long distances daily and converging on Cambridge, yet the Plan does little to acknowledge the scale of the issue or set out a clear pathway to resolve it. Instead, the spatial strategy risks entrenching existing problems by further separating homes from jobs.



**Figure 12:** Distribution of growth in comparison to previous Local Plans\*

Figure 12 in the Plan illustrates how this imbalance is compounding over time. It shows a clear and sustained reduction in the proportion of new housing being delivered within Cambridge, alongside a corresponding increase in housing growth in more distant and dispersed locations. It is unclear whether this figure includes the currently-paused Hartree site. On its own, this figure could be read simply as a response to constraints within the city. However, when considered alongside the continued concentration of employment growth in Cambridge, it points to a more serious structural issue. Homes and jobs are increasingly being planned in different places.

The [Transport Evidence Report](#) usefully confirms that location is decisive for transport outcomes. It shows that development in Cambridge and on the edge of Cambridge generates far fewer additional car trips per home or job than remote new settlements, and has dramatically lower car mode share. For example, car mode share is modelled at around 24-28 percent for North East Cambridge and Cambridge East, compared with around 55-62 percent for locations such as Cambourne and other new settlement options.

However, the Transport Evidence Report also illustrates a key weakness in the Plan's evidence base. It largely relies on 'predict and provide' modelling, testing conservative assumptions and then seeking mitigation, rather than exploring what could be achieved through stronger policy requirements and place-based design. It does not meaningfully test scenarios where edge of Cambridge sites are planned to achieve Eddington-level sustainable mode share, nor does it interrogate how different parking, permeability, density and amenity assumptions could change outcomes. This risks baking in low ambition and treating car dependency as a baseline rather than something planning can and should prevent.

The report also makes comparisons between sites such as Grange Farm, Waterbeach and Northstowe that do not reflect the different delivery mechanisms and constraints that will shape real-world travel behaviour. In practice, committed mitigation and policy requirements will determine outcomes, and the

Local Plan should be using the evidence base to set higher expectations, not to normalise conservative mode share assumptions.

No equivalent spatial or temporal analysis has been produced for employment growth, and this should be addressed with urgency. Much of the headline growth in jobs is planned within or immediately adjacent to Cambridge. Cambridge Science Park currently hosts around 7,000 employees and is planning significant intensification, with potential growth to around 30,000 employees. The Cambridge Biomedical Campus is already one of the largest employment sites in Europe, with more than 20,000 jobs in health sciences, medical research and life sciences, and continues to expand at scale. Employment growth around Cambridge Station and Cambridge North is also significant, including the delivery of what will be the largest employment building in the city within the next two years.

Despite this scale of growth, the Local Plan does not provide an equivalent analysis of employment distribution to sit alongside Figure 12. Employment growth is discussed largely in narrative terms and embedded within individual site allocations, making it difficult to understand how the distribution of jobs compares with the distribution of housing over the Plan period. Camcycle considers this a serious omission. A clear diagram showing the spatial and temporal distribution of employment growth, using the same geography and timeframes as Figure 12, is essential to assess whether homes and jobs are being planned in the same places and to properly understand the transport implications of the spatial strategy.

This divergence has profound negative impacts on Greater Cambridge's transport network. Dispersing housing without a corresponding dispersal of employment directly increases average trip lengths and intensifies pressure on a limited number of radial corridors into Cambridge. It reduces the viability of walking and cycling for everyday journeys and makes serving developments by high-quality, frequent public transport challenging. The issue is not that Cambridge is accommodating too much growth, but that growth is being planned in a way that assumes medium- or long-distance travel into the city as the norm.

This matters because the capacity of transport corridors into and within Cambridge is fundamentally constrained. The city cannot create new road space at scale. The capacity of Cambridge's road network to accommodate private cars is finite, and long journey times for motor vehicles at peak periods show that it is already heavily stressed.

By contrast, the capacity to accommodate people walking, wheeling and cycling can be significantly expanded within both new and existing corridors. Dedicated active travel routes are far more elastic in capacity. A six-metre-wide segregated route can accommodate in the region of 40,000 trips per day, and well planned cities space such corridors at around 400 metre intervals.

Growth in and around Cambridge can therefore be accommodated sustainably, but only if it is planned predominantly around walking and cycling as the capacity of these modes can be scaled to meet development needs.

Much of the Plan's transport discussion, and wider transport debate, is framed around commuting into Cambridge. This commuter-led framing creates two problems. First, transport systems designed primarily around peak commuting struggle to deliver viable and attractive services. Second, it overlooks the fact that the majority of trips are not made for work, but for everyday activities such as shopping, education, healthcare and social life. Access to local amenities plays a far greater role in

shaping travel behaviour than access to distant employment alone, yet this is not sufficiently reflected in the spatial strategy.

Cambourne provides a cautionary example of what happens when housing growth, jobs amenities and movement are poorly aligned. Cambourne meets a genuine housing need and is home to a settled community, and many people value living there. However, it is structurally car-dependent. Transport modelling within the evidence base indicates that new settlement locations typically have much higher car mode share than development in and on the edge of Cambridge, reinforcing the need for binding requirements rather than reliance on future mitigation. Its layout, limited everyday amenities, extensive town centre car parking and poor walking and cycling environment reinforce car use as the default. Further growth at Cambourne could provide an opportunity to address these issues, including through rail investment and major upgrades to walking and cycling connectivity. However, doubling the size of Cambourne without fundamentally reimagining how the existing town functions risks repeating and amplifying its current shortcomings.

The allocation of [Grange Farm](#) near the A1307 and A11 raises more serious strategic concerns. This site appears in the Plan largely as a response to constraints elsewhere, particularly the removal of the Hartree site. However, Grange Farm is not a suitable substitute for an urban development. It is located between settlements rather than forming a coherent extension of an existing place, has limited access to everyday amenities, and relies heavily on the A11. Walking and cycling access to meaningful destinations is weak, and public transport provision is speculative and uncommitted. In Camcycle's view, the site fails to meet the core requirements of a genuinely sustainable community and should not proceed.

The cumulative effect of these choices is to embed car dependency at a strategic level, before individual site layouts are even considered. While the Plan recognises the importance of sustainable travel in principle, its spatial strategy does not yet align with that ambition. A sustainable plan must either rebalance the distribution of jobs and homes or deliver a step change in direct, safe and continuous active travel connectivity at a regional scale. At present, the Plan does neither with sufficient force, leaving the future transport strategy to address problems that have already been locked in through land use decisions.

### **Theme 3: Density, car ownership and cycle parking**

Higher-density development is presented as sustainable by some, and problematic by others. However, whether density delivers positive outcomes depends entirely on how people are expected to move. In historic cities such as Cambridge, where the street network offers little scope for increased highway capacity, density must be treated as a transport decision as much as a matter of design or townscape.

While the Local Plan addresses density primarily through considerations of character, form and visual impact, this approach does not resolve the central question of movement. High-density development and high levels of car ownership are fundamentally in tension. Parking, servicing and vehicle access consume large amounts of space, dominate ground-level conditions and undermine the quality of streets and public realm. Where this tension is not actively resolved through policy, dense places quickly become uncomfortable, hostile and constrained environments. Too often, discussions become dominated by how to accommodate just one more parking space rather than envisioning a different transport future.

Cambridge has repeatedly attempted to deliver dense development while retaining high levels of private car parking, and the results are consistently poor. In several recent schemes, including sites in Barnwell, Fanshawe Road and Darwin Green, land given over to cars approaches or even matches the footprint of the homes themselves. Streetscapes are dominated by parked vehicles, walking and cycling space is compromised, and the lived experience of density becomes negative. These outcomes are not design failures. They are the predictable result of permissive parking assumptions embedded within policy.

Even one of Cambridge's strongest recent developments illustrates this constraint. Eddington has set a new standard for development in the city in terms of walking, cycling and overall place quality, yet it remains unable to fully decouple private housing from private car parking. All houses are sold with a parking space allocated to them, often immediately adjacent to the home. By contrast, the affordable housing at Eddington requires parking to be purchased separately on an annual basis and stored in shared parking garages. This results in significantly lower car use and breaks the assumption of one car per household that continues to limit genuinely low car ownership in new developments. This demonstrates that travel behaviour is shaped by policy and design choices, not fixed demand.

Car parking also has a direct and often ignored impact on housing affordability. When people buy a home, they are paying both for the building and for the land it occupies. In high-density schemes, private car parking represents a substantial share of that land cost, yet it is bundled invisibly into the price of housing. This means households without cars are effectively forced to subsidise car ownership. In Cambridge recently, a city centre parking space sold for £127,000, illustrating the true land value tied up in vehicle storage.

Small increases in the effort required to access a car, combined with clear pricing, have a powerful effect on travel behaviour. International examples such as Freiburg, where car parking is sold separately from houses, show that separating the cost of housing from the cost of car ownership can significantly reduce car use, improve place quality and make homes more affordable, while remaining fair to those who choose to own a car.

This highlights a wider risk within the Local Plan. As attention rightly increases on reducing embodied carbon, underground car parks will become harder to justify. Without a stronger policy framework to reduce car ownership in high-density developments, schemes will be forced to accommodate vehicles at ground level, further degrading streets and undermining liveability. The Plan does not currently address this tension.

Camcycle therefore considers it essential that the Local Plan explicitly links high-density development to low car ownership **if density is to deliver its intended benefits**. High-density schemes should not assume private car parking and should go well below the one car per household level. Where parking is provided, it should be optional, generally separated from housing, and priced transparently so that the cost of car ownership is borne by those who choose it. Without this shift, density will continue to be experienced as a problem rather than as an opportunity for sustainable growth.

## Cycle parking quality and accessibility

The draft Plan's approach to cycle parking contains good principles, including that cycle parking should be as convenient as car parking, step-free, well-lit and easy to use. However, the supporting

expectations risk being undermined by an overly simplistic focus on the quantities of parking and by allowing very high proportions of two-tier stands.

The requirement for 5 to 10% non-standard cycle parking is also unclear because it bundles together different needs. Many people ride standard cycles but cannot use two-tier stands, for example due to disability, age, strength, balance, injury, pregnancy, or because they are carrying a child seat and need a stable, simple manoeuvre. These users need accessible parking, not necessarily oversized parking. Oversized parking is also essential, for example for cargo cycles, cycles with trailers, adapted cycles, and longer or wider cycles. These are distinct categories and should be planned for separately. On smaller sites they may reasonably be combined, but on larger sites it is often better to provide them as distinct provision with clear layout and legibility.



*Non-standard cycle parking provision on the ground floor of Cambridge Station's Cyclepoint. On the left is accessible parking, used by those with mobility needs, child seats etc. On the right, is the oversized parking area for cargo bikes, trailers etc. This includes ground anchors.*

In current practice, commercial schemes routinely provide around 80% of spaces in two-tier racks, and the draft approach could unintentionally push this towards 90%. 80% is already too high in many developments, because it reduces usability for everyday cycling and creates an accessibility barrier.

For large commercial developments, cycle parking should be treated primarily as a space-allocation and user-experience requirement, not just as a numbers exercise. High-mode-share outcomes depend on a seamless experience. This means prioritising at-grade, step-free access and a simple, direct route from street to parking, avoiding unnecessary doors, gates, pinch points, sharp turns or dead ends. Cycle parking should be located at least as close to entrances as car parking, and should avoid basements or upper floors where car parking is not treated the same way. Two-tier parking should be used only where sites are genuinely constrained and as a tool for future densification, not as the default solution from day one. Accessible spaces and oversized spaces should be clearly distinguished, with both provided at the most convenient locations and protected from informal take up by standard cycles.

Camcycle is also concerned about the growing use of mobility hubs to group cycle parking in one place within larger developments, away from the individual buildings which users are seeking to access. This approach devalues the cycle experience by removing the door-to-door convenience that makes cycling attractive, particularly where hubs are detached or remote from entrances. In the vast majority of cases, secure cycle parking must be integrated into, or directly adjacent to, buildings and entrances.

#### **Policy IEV should be amended to:**

- Separate accessible cycle parking from oversized cycle parking, with a minimum of 5% for each on larger sites
- Control the proportion of two-tier parking, with a clear presumption that single-level stands are the default and two-tier requires justification
- Require equivalence with car parking in both location and journey quality, including step-free access and minimal barriers
- Limit reliance on detached cycle hubs by requiring convenient destination cycle parking at, or directly adjacent to, building entrances

#### **Suggested wording for two-tier control:**

As a guideline, the proportion of two-tier spaces should not normally exceed 50% at initial implementation. Additional two-tier provision can be introduced later if required up to 80%.

#### **Suggested wording for level changes:**

Where level changes are required, ramped access should be the preferred solution. Shallow stepped routes may be acceptable only where they are accompanied by convenient accessible and oversized parking on the ground floor, or by lifts suitable for wheeling cycles in and out. Where a lift-only solution is proposed, a minimum of two suitably-sized, walk-in/walk-out lifts should be provided to ensure resilience.

## **Theme 4: Permeability and design principles must be mandatory**

At the heart of good active travel infrastructure are five well-established design principles: routes should be coherent, direct, safe, comfortable and attractive. These principles are clearly set out in [Active Travel England's national guidance and standards](#), but are widely misunderstood across the planning and transport professions. Much development across Greater Cambridge fails to meet them. The Local Plan should reverse this by embedding these core design principles in planning policy.

### **Coherent**

Coherence remains one of the most consistent shortcomings in recent development. Routes may exist in theory, but are broken, diluted or overridden by other priorities on the ground. Two case studies of failure in Cambridge are the spaces around the railway stations, which should enable rather than block sustainable movement.

At Cambridge Station, the principal east-west walking and cycling desire line aligns directly with the station square. Instead of reinforcing this with a small but effective segregated walking and cycling

route, the route is severed by the drop-off area placed directly across it (see images below). This outcome was raised repeatedly during the planning process by Camcycle and others. The result is a fragmented and hostile movement environment that risks embedding poor patterns of use for the lifetime of the station area. A similar situation also arose at Cambridge North. We have to learn that public space and cycling work together, but segregation is required.



## Direct and permeable

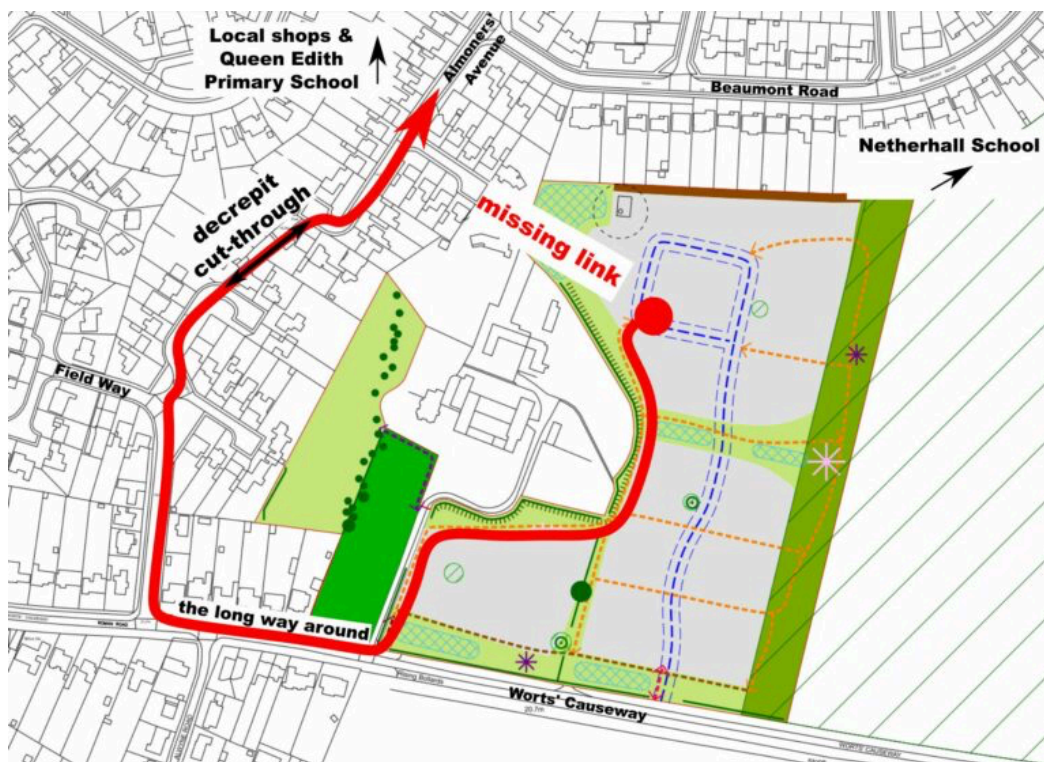
Directness and permeability (the ability to move easily through urban environments) are inseparable. Direct routes only exist where layouts are permeable, and permeability is the structural condition that allows walking and cycling to be convenient.

Across Greater Cambridge, walking and cycling routes are routinely diverted, interrupted or deprioritised, when motor traffic circulation is prioritised or due to unfounded safety concerns. The cumulative effect of these small decisions is profound. Each detour, signal delay or loss of priority reduces the usefulness of the network and discourages everyday trips by foot or by cycle.

In places where cycling works well internationally, very high levels of convenience are achieved not through speed, but through directness and continuity. Minimal stopping, few barriers and consistent priority allow people to cover distance comfortably and predictably. By contrast, the layering of barriers seen here creates a cycle network that is slow, frustrating and ultimately limiting.

Recent planning decisions demonstrate why permeability must be mandated rather than encouraged.

At **Wort's Causeway**, around five hundred homes were approved on what is, in effect, a cul-de-sac, hugely limiting movement opportunities for both new and existing residents, and baking in car dependency for the lifetime of the site. [Read more here.](#)



*Lack of permeability at the Wort's Causeway development limits active travel movement*

For the **Westbrook redevelopment** (at the Western end of Milton Road) the adopted SPD (Supplementary Planning Documents) identified the reinstatement of historic routes as necessary to support permeability. During planning, these connections were treated as optional. While some links were delivered, a key connection towards Gilbert Road was not secured, illustrating the weakness of relying on aspiration rather than a requirement.

At **The Paddocks**, a major employment development has been approved with a single connection onto Cherry Hinton Road. Despite the scale of the site, its budget and its leverage, no additional northern or western connections were required, missing a clear opportunity to strengthen the wider network.

At the **Grafton Centre**, the SPD recognised the importance of reinstating permeability and improving north-south movement. While some pedestrian routes were included, cycling connections were limited, and subsequent proposals have sought to dilute even these gains. The opportunity to unlock a significant strategic route through the site was not fully realised.

In each case, policy support for sustainable travel proved insufficient to secure permeability as a requirement rather than a negotiable outcome.

## Safe

Safety must be understood through two lenses. The first is actual safety. Too many developments prioritise vehicle capacity at site access points, resulting in oversized junctions that encourage excessive motor traffic speeds and form hostile barriers to walking and cycling. Junctions are the biggest risk to cyclists and pedestrians. Recent examples include junctions associated with Eddington,

Darwin Green, Marleigh and the Land North of Cherry Hinton, alongside older unresolved failures such as Orchard Park.

The second is perceived safety. Lighting remains a major weakness across the network. Important everyday routes remain unlit and solar studs (while a useful guidance solution) are presented as a substitute for lighting when they are not. The barrier this presents in particular to young adults and women is well known and [researched](#) but environmental concerns are frequently cited as reasons not to act, yet the environmental cost of journeys not made by bike and instead made by car is rarely acknowledged. Sadly in Cambridge many locations that are lit and only lit after a serious incident have occurred. We should not have to wait for a horrible assault or a collision before [lighting is installed](#).

The western access to Cambridge South Station illustrates this problem clearly. Despite serving what will be a major station within an active urban area, the route remains unlit. Modern, responsive lighting solutions exist that could address environmental concerns while supporting safe everyday travel, but they have not been applied.

## Comfortable

Comfort continues to be treated as optional rather than essential. Surface quality, width, drainage and maintenance remain points of dispute despite clear national guidance. Poor surfacing and constrained widths disproportionately affect less confident users and those using non-standard cycles, directly undermining inclusive mode shift.

Comfort is not about luxury. It is about enabling predictable, smooth and accessible journeys for everyday use, across seasons and user types.

## Attractive

One of Greater Cambridge's greatest attributes for cycling is its ability to connect people to their destinations via green space and alongside water. Routes such as those across commons and along river corridors are not in conflict with nature but instead provide people with a powerful experience of nature everyday.

Development should build on this strength, treating cycling as a means of stitching together landscapes, communities and daily life.

Two policies should be added to the Local Plan:

### Policy 1: Active travel design principles

**Potential draft policy:** All development must be designed to support walking and cycling as the default choice for everyday journeys. Proposals will only be supported if they demonstrate compliance with the five active travel design principles.

### Policy 2: Mandatory permeability

**Potential draft policy:** To ensure directness and convenience for walking and cycling, development proposals must meet minimum permeability standards based on site size. For example:

- Developments of up to 50 homes or equivalent floorspace must provide at least two direct outward walking and cycling connections to the surrounding area
- Developments of 51 to 100 homes or equivalent floorspace must provide at least three direct outward connections, aligned to different cardinal compass directions
- Developments of more than 100 homes or equivalent floorspace must provide direct outward connections in all four cardinal compass directions, unless it can be robustly demonstrated that this is physically impossible

## Theme 5: Making the site allocations work for our communities

The Local Plan includes several large strategic allocations that will shape travel behaviour across Greater Cambridge for decades. These sites represent the greatest opportunity to deliver mode shift at scale. However, without much stronger requirements for walking and cycling connectivity, permeability and network integration, they risk embedding car dependency regardless of the draft Local Plan's stated ambition.

This section applies the principles set out in Sections 4 and 5 to the Plan's key growth locations. In each case, the issue is not aspiration, but delivery. Supportive language is not sufficient where strategic outcomes depend on early, enforceable decisions.

### Cambridge Retail Park

Cambridge Retail Park is one of the most car-dominated sites in the city, yet it sits between dense residential areas and along key walking and cycling desire lines. Its redevelopment is therefore a critical opportunity to reduce short car trips and stitch together fragmented networks.

The walking and cycling route linking the Equiano bridge on Riverside through the Retail Park to the Beehive Centre and into Petersfield is strategically important. It must be delivered as a protected, continuous and direct route suitable for everyday active travel trips. Recent revisions by the applicant move this route away from the shop fronts and bring this cycle route into conflict with large volumes of turning motor traffic, significantly weakening its effectiveness. This should not be supported. The cycle alignment should be located on the opposite side of the carriageway from the car parks, closer to the shops, where it can remain legible, direct and separated from conflicted vehicle movements as much as possible.

The Plan refers to improving permeability through the site, but does not explain how this will be achieved in a location defined by railway severance. The Retail Park should safeguard land for a future pedestrian and cycle bridge to Coldham's Common. This connection would transform access between the river corridor and the Common and establish a strategic foundation for future connectivity between the airport site and the wider eastern network.

### Required policy change

Policy S/AMC/BC should be amended to include:

- A requirement for a protected, continuous and direct cycle route through the site that avoids conflict with turning vehicles and aligns with strategic desire lines

- A requirement to safeguard land and secure delivery mechanisms for a future pedestrian and cycle bridge across the railway to Coldham's Common
- A requirement that permeability for walking and cycling is mandatory rather than encouraged, with multiple direct connections beyond the site boundary

## Cambridge East and the Airport area

The scale of growth proposed at Cambridge East and the Airport area requires transformational active travel connectivity from the outset. While the Plan includes positive language around low car ownership, this is undermined by the introduction of a car trip budget of 1,500 to 1,800 trips in the PM peak. This could equate to between approximately 16,500 and 22,000 car trips per day, which adds to an already saturated network.

With around 8,000 dwellings and between 2,000 and 4,000 jobs anticipated, the proposed trip budget risks normalising high levels of car use rather than driving mode shift. The framing of the trip budget also lacks spatial context. We should plan for a number of vehicular trips feeding onto the A14; however any trips into the city are extremely problematic, and must be discouraged. General vehicle access to Barnwell Road should therefore be removed as well as the numerous site accesses onto Newmarket Road.

The Plan also underestimates the level of investment required in the surrounding active travel network. Several critical nodes are already at or beyond capacity. The Coldham's Lane railway crossing near the Beehive site will not be capable of accommodating the level of walking and cycling demand and no safe, high-quality solution is possible without widening the space under Coldham's Lane railway bridge by Sainsbury's. Both of these should be treated as a prerequisite for development, not aspirations.

### Required policy change

Policy S/CE and associated infrastructure policies should be amended to:

- Review car trip budgets and introduce binding walking, cycling and public transport mode share targets
- Make delivery of key active travel links a planning condition and phasing trigger, supported by a co-delivery plan between the councils, highways authority and developers, including pooled funding where necessary.
- Explore and understand the need for connectivity across Coldham's Common with financial safeguarding to deliver a bridge from the Cambridge Retail Park to Coldham's Common.

## Cambridge North

With or without the Hartree proposal, the Cambridge North development area represents a step change in intensity and movement demand. However, the current planning framework lacks a coherent transport-led spatial strategy.

Movement through the Cambridge North station area is already compromised, with a loss of segregation and lack of coherent surfacing that risks bringing pedestrians and cyclists into unnecessary conflict. Beyond that there are bottlenecks such as the shared-use path at Moss Bank,

which is three metres wide and already functioning as a critical failure point. This constraint is not adequately acknowledged in the Plan or in the previously issued North Cambridge Area Action Plan, despite the scale of growth proposed.

More fundamentally, the river crossings are insufficient. The Chisholm Trail bridge, while valuable, was conceived to connect Abbey and Chesterton. It was not designed to provide, nor does it achieve, effective connectivity between Cambridge North, Riverside and the Commons. That movement is currently provided by the Green Dragon Bridge, whose limitations are only lightly acknowledged in the Plan.

Without a new or significantly improved bridge, high levels of cycling to and from Cambridge North will not be achieved. This is not a local issue, but a strategic constraint that directly limits densification and sustainable travel. All growth at Cambridge North is affected by this.

### **Required policy change**

The North Cambridge Area Action Plan should be redrafted

The Local Plan should treat a new or substantially upgraded river crossings as essential infrastructure

## **The Biomedical Campus**

The expansion of the Biomedical Campus is understandable given its regional and national importance. However, the Local Plan does not yet set out a sufficiently robust spatial strategy to accompany this growth. While Cambridge South station will significantly improve access, it primarily resolves an existing deficiency rather than enabling the scale of growth now proposed. Transport cannot be treated as a single intervention. Large-scale employment growth without corresponding housing or genuinely mixed-use development risks intensifying peak travel demand and increasing pressure on already constrained corridors. At present, the level of mixed-use development proposed around the campus is token. If the objective is to support healthcare, research and education, the Plan must enable people to live close to where they work.

Figure 63 appears to justify Green Belt land release by presenting a fortified edge to the expansion area. While this may be intended as mitigation, it risks locking in long-term structural barriers to sustainable growth. If land is released around the Biomedical Campus, the Plan should not embed physical and spatial constraints that prevent homes being built close to the campus.

Recent investment around Addenbrooke's has delivered no net benefit for active travel. In some cases, conditions have worsened, with changes to the busway and degradation of key cycling corridors contributing to declining levels of cycling to the Campus. The Plan identifies cycle connections over the railway, but does not acknowledge that these are already major failure points as well as a fragmented on-site network. The busway bridge in particular requires significant intervention, either through cantilevered widening or a parallel structure, if it is to support the level of cycling demand associated with further Campus expansion.

Connectivity between the Biomedical Campus and West Cambridge is critical if growth in these two areas is to be successful. This is discussed further in the following section.

## Required policy changes

Policies affecting the Biomedical Campus and Cambridge South must be strengthened to ensure that growth is accompanied by a coherent spatial and transport strategy that enables sustainable travel.

The Local Plan should:

- Require genuinely mixed-use development at a meaningful scale within and adjacent to the Biomedical Campus, including high-density housing with low car ownership, to reduce the need for long-distance commuting
- Avoid token residential provision and explicitly link employment growth to housing delivery in a walking or cycling distance to the campus
- Ensure that boundary treatments associated with Green Belt release do not create long-term physical or spatial barriers to movement, future connections or neighbouring communities
- Identify the active travel connections over the railway line as critical infrastructure and explicitly acknowledge the need for improvement
- Secure firm commitments to upgrade the key walking and cycling corridors serving the campus, including Trumpington Road, Long Road and the busway path with delivery tied to development phasing.

## West Cambridge

At present, public transport connectivity between West Cambridge and the Biomedical Campus is poor, unreliable and in places unsafe. Bus journeys can regularly take an hour at peak times, despite the two sites being relatively close in distance. This undermines public transport as a realistic alternative to the car for everyday journeys between two of the city's most significant employment locations.

If growth is to continue at these two sites, we have to improve connectivity between them. It is possible to achieve a 20 minute journey time for public transport and cycling. Achieving this by bus requires a step change in bus priority and reliability. This is not simply a transport strategy matter. It does not depend on major new infrastructure, but on clear choices and strong action. The Local Plan has a critical role in setting the direction and establishing the political basis for those choices now. Delivering a 20-minute public transport journey would require significant reductions in general traffic in the city core particularly around Lensfield Road and the approaches to the city centre. These interventions involve decisions that could be explicitly acknowledged and supported through the Local Plan. Without this, bus-based solutions will remain constrained by congestion.

More ambitious mass transit options, such as trams, are now being considered by the Cambridge Growth Company. The strategic choices required to deliver such a link between West Cambridge and the Biomedical Campus have already been explored and discussed by the [Cambridgeshire Sustainable Travel Alliance](#). It is not the role of the Local Plan to define transport solutions, but it must acknowledge the scale of intervention required to enable growth and safeguard the spatial corridors needed to deliver it.

It is entirely possible to deliver a safe, high quality cycling route between West Cambridge and the Biomedical Campus that would support 20-minute journeys. However, existing routes fail to meet core design principles and are throttled by a small number of critical pinch points. Fen Causeway and

Sheep's Green Bridge significantly limit east-west cycling capacity. Sheep's Green Bridge, at approximately 1.2 metres wide, cannot function as a strategic active travel link between two major employment centres. Further growth at West Cambridge and the Biomedical Campus is not sustainable without resolving these constraints.

Connectivity between West Cambridge and the Sidgwick Site must also be improved. At present, pressure is concentrated on Burrell's Walk, which is already operating beyond a comfortable level for walking and cycling. Without additional parallel routes, connecting West Cambridge to Sidgwick Avenue and Barton Road, further development will degrade conditions for all users and undermine the attractiveness of active travel.

The Local Plan currently relies on the future Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy to resolve these issues. However, many of the required interventions are spatial or decision-based rather than purely financial and must be identified and safeguarded now. Without this, the Transport Strategy will be left attempting to retrofit solutions into corridors that have already been constrained by development decisions and without the political mandate needed to deliver the necessary change.

### **Required policy changes**

Policies affecting West Cambridge and the wider west to south corridor should:

- Identify active travel and public transport connectivity between West Cambridge, the city centre and the Biomedical Campus as a strategic priority
- Support a step change in bus priority and reliability, with explicit acknowledgement of the traffic reduction required to deliver this
- Identify Sheep's Green Bridge constraints, including replacement or additional river crossings where necessary, as prerequisites for further growth
- Require additional walking and cycling connections between West Cambridge and the Sidgwick Site to relieve pressure on Burrell's Walk.

### **Cambourne**

Cambourne is one of the most challenging locations in Greater Cambridge in which to deliver genuinely sustainable travel at scale. The Local Plan does not yet demonstrate that this challenge has been fully confronted.

Cambourne is already shaped by car-oriented infrastructure and severance. The A428 will create major barriers between the settlements, the station quarter and proposed expansion areas. While the Plan and supporting material acknowledge this, the movement network as currently laid out does not prioritise walking, cycling and public transport over general traffic.

The plan relies too heavily on future public transport investment to meet transport needs. However even an ambitious mode share for bus and rail will be only a small percent of total journeys and a journey involving rail nearly always includes transport by another mode as well, whether that's walking, cycling or driving.

Severance is the defining issue for Cambourne. While a range of new crossings is proposed, one including a bus and active travel-only link, there remains a strong emphasis on all-transport mode crossings. If all-mode permeability is the default, Cambourne risks embedding car access patterns that will be extremely difficult to reverse. This is particularly concerning given the acknowledged shortcomings of the existing town centre, which is dominated by surface car parking and lacks the qualities of a walkable, connected place. Doubling Cambourne in size without fundamentally changing its movement structure risks reproducing these weaknesses at a larger scale.

The Plan also refers to vehicular trip budgets as a control mechanism. While useful, a trip budget is not a substitute for a sustainable travel strategy and remains a car-centric way of framing transport outcomes. Without binding mode share and trip internalisation targets, a clear pipeline of transport interventions, and wider changes to the fabric of Cambourne such as new local amenities, trip budgets risk becoming aspirational rather than effective.

### **Required policy changes**

Policies affecting Cambourne should:

- Make permeability for walking, cycling and public transport the primary objective of stitching the settlement together, with a presumption against vehicular permeability between the existing and expanded Cambourne
- Require early delivery of strategic bus and active travel crossings across the A428 and rail corridor, tied to clear phasing triggers
- Secure a continuous, protected and legible primary cycle network linking neighbourhoods to the station, town centre, schools and employment
- Strengthen the trip budget approach by introducing binding mode-share targets and clear consequences if these are not met.

Camcycle considers that expanding Cambourne is a way of catering for the growth envisaged by the plan, but only if the Local Plan is honest about the scale of the challenge and willing to embed enforceable requirements that make sustainable travel the default rather than an assumption.

### **Grange Farm (A1307 / A11)**

The proposed allocation at Grange Farm raises serious concerns about whether the Local Plan is applying a sufficiently robust test of sustainability to its site choices. Delivering a strong, low carbon and well connected community in this location would be exceptionally challenging, and the Plan does not demonstrate that these challenges can realistically be overcome.

The site appears in the Plan largely as a response to constraints elsewhere, particularly the removal of the Hartree allocation. However, Grange Farm is not a like-for-like substitute. Its location relies heavily on the A11 and A1307, both of which already function as key strategic routes into Cambridge. Any development that adds pressure to these corridors requires particularly careful scrutiny, yet the Plan does not convincingly address how additional travel demand would be accommodated without undermining wider transport objectives.

The Plan and supporting evidence rely heavily on the potential extension of a segregated busway and associated crossings to justify the allocation. However, this work is explicitly high-level and exploratory. There is no clear commitment, delivery mechanism or timescale. Walking and cycling access is similarly understated. Improving active travel connections to nearby areas is framed as a matter of enhancement, when in reality it would require major new infrastructure crossing open land and hostile, high-speed corridors. This is not a minor design issue that can be resolved through later planning stages, but a fundamental constraint on the creation of a walkable and cycle friendly community with access to everyday destinations.

Camcycle is particularly concerned that the inclusion of Grange Farm risks undermining the credibility of the Plan's wider sustainability narrative. Allocating development in locations that require extensive transport mitigation simply to function, rather than directing growth to places where sustainable travel can be the default from the outset, reflects a predict and provide approach rather than a genuinely sustainable spatial strategy. This concern is heightened by Greater Cambridge's limited track record in delivering complex public transport mitigation at the scale assumed here.

In contrast, other promoted locations in this part of the city form more coherent extensions of existing communities and align more closely with established and emerging transport corridors, but are excluded largely due to Green Belt considerations. The Plan does not make a convincing case that Grange Farm represents a more sustainable alternative.

The core issue here is strategic. The Plan needs to prioritise locations where sustainable travel can be the default because of proximity and network access, not locations that require speculative mitigation to overcome inherent constraints. This includes being braver about spatial choices, including where appropriate a more honest review of Green Belt sites that could deliver sustainable urban form.

In Camcycle's view, Grange Farm does not meet the requirements of a genuinely sustainable community and should not be allocated within the Local Plan. Growth should instead be directed towards locations where high quality walking, cycling and public transport can realistically support everyday life, reducing the need for long distance travel and avoiding the need to retrofit sustainability at significant public cost.

### **Required policy change**

The Local Plan should:

- Remove the Grange Farm allocation from the Plan
- Avoid substituting constrained urban or edge of Cambridge sites with remote or poorly connected locations
- Prioritise development in locations where sustainable travel can be the default from day one, without reliance on speculative or uncommitted transport mitigation.

## **What must change in the Plan**

Throughout this response, Camcycle has engaged positively with the Plan's stated objectives on climate action, health, sustainable transport and high quality place making. However, we have consistently identified a gap between these objectives and the mechanisms provided to deliver them.

To meet its own commitments, the Plan must move beyond supportive language and establish clear, enforceable spatial requirements that shape development outcomes from the outset.

In particular, the following changes are required.

## **Explicit outcomes for sustainable travel**

The Plan should require measurable outcomes for walking, cycling and public transport rather than relying on general support for sustainable travel.

- Major developments must be required to meet explicit mode-share targets for walking, cycling and public transport;
- Clear car-trip reduction requirements must be set at the Plan level and applied consistently across major sites;
- Trip budgets, where used, must be accompanied by binding mode-share outcomes and clear consequences if they are not met.

## **Density linked to sustainable access**

Density must be treated as a transport and climate tool, not solely as a matter of character or townscape.

- Higher-density development should be explicitly linked to access to railway stations, high-quality bus corridors and local centres
- Major employment growth should be accompanied by genuinely mixed-use development, including housing, to reduce the need for long-distance travel
- High-density development should not assume private car ownership as the default.

## **Transport carbon as part of net zero**

The Plan's net zero approach must fully account for the carbon impacts of travel.

- Transport emissions must be included within net zero assessments, alongside operational and embodied building carbon.
- Development should be assessed on lifetime travel carbon, including the carbon impacts of car-dependent land use patterns.
- Electric cars should not be treated as a sustainable transport mode or a substitute for mode shift.
- The Sustainability Appraisal should be revised so it meaningfully differentiates between spatial options based on transport outcomes, including realistic mode share potential and lifetime transport emissions. The appraisal should not treat fundamentally different locations as broadly equivalent in sustainability terms.
- The Transport Evidence Report should be revised with a modelling approach to test higher ambition scenarios and policy levers, including Eddington-level mode share assumptions for edge of Cambridge sites, parking restraint, mandatory permeability, early delivery of high quality cycling networks, and stronger trip internalisation through mixed-use local amenities.

## Mandatory layout and permeability standards

Good outcomes for walking and cycling depend on early layout decisions that cannot be left to later stages.

- Mandatory permeability standards should be introduced based on site size, requiring multiple direct walking and cycling connections.
- Development layouts must be required to support coherent, direct, safe, comfortable and attractive routes as a policy test.
- Cul de sac layouts and single access sites should not be supported where they undermine sustainable travel.

## Strategic walking and cycling infrastructure

Strategic walking and cycling links must be treated as essential infrastructure.

- Key walking and cycling connections must be secured through planning policy and conditions, not left to future funding rounds.
- Critical links, including bridges and crossings, must be identified, safeguarded and tied to development phasing.
- Development should not proceed where essential active travel infrastructure is not secured.

## Cycle parking

Cycle parking requirements must be worded to maximise the convenience, accessibility and attractiveness of cycling facilities.

- Control the proportion of two-tier parking, with a clear presumption that single-level stands are the default and two-tier requires justification
- Require equivalence with car parking in both location and journey quality, including step-free access and minimal barriers
- Limit reliance on detached cycle hubs by requiring convenient destination cycle parking at, or directly adjacent to, building entrances

## Conclusion

Greater Cambridge faces a particular challenge but also has unique opportunities. Continued growth is coming at a scale likely to extend beyond this Plan, but how that growth is planned will determine whether the area becomes more congested, more divided and more carbon-intensive, or healthier, more connected and more resilient. The Local Plan is the moment where that direction is set.

For Greater Cambridge to function well and to meet its climate and health commitments, everyday trips need to be easy, convenient and attractive to make on foot, by cycle and by public transport. At present, many developments are still structured around unfettered and easy car access, alongside weak provision for walking, cycling and public transport. This shapes places where the easiest option is neither the healthiest nor the most sustainable. That approach is no longer sufficient in the context of this Local Plan and the scale of growth proposed.

We have already seen what radically different transport futures can look like in parts of Greater Cambridge. In Eddington, in the city centre, and in places where walking, cycling and public transport have been prioritised, everyday journeys are simpler, streets work better, and growth places less pressure on the wider network. These are not abstract ideas or future technologies. **They are real outcomes created by deliberate planning choices.** The challenge now is to ensure that these principles are not isolated examples, but are instead embedded consistently across all new development. Growth at this scale is only compatible with radically different transport futures, and the Local Plan must be explicit about delivering them.

Throughout this response, Camcycle has shown that whether people are able to travel sustainably is shaped primarily by planning decisions. Land use patterns, density, layout, permeability and network continuity determine travel behaviour far more than encouragement or technology alone. If these fundamentals are right, mode shift follows. If they are wrong, even the best transport strategies struggle to compensate.

The Plan contains many positive principles, but it now needs to match ambition with delivery. Supportive language must be backed by enforceable spatial outcomes that prioritise access, connection and choice. By doing so, the Plan can set a clear pathway towards a Greater Cambridge where growth supports a better quality of life, a healthier population and a genuinely low-carbon future.

Camcycle wants to see a local plan that is confident in that vision and bold enough to deliver it.