

## Summary

Our vision is to create a new style of country park that combines leisure and learning with work.

Inspired by nearby Wandlebury Country Park and the Magog Down which experience high visitor numbers especially at weekends, this is a unique opportunity to create an additional woodland park in south Cambridge.

With a lakeside pavilion housing a cafe, bistro, gym, function rooms, nursery and day kennels, the park and amenities would be open to the public both during working hours as well as weekends and evenings.

The periphery would be screened by a shallow rise soil bund, planted with a native chalk-land grass mix alongside a selection of semi-mature native trees and hedgerows. This landscaping would ensure the park will be barely visible from the A1307 and the surrounding area from the outset.

Our vision is for a Park where everyone feels welcome regardless of their age, education or background; a place where locals and visitors - whether employed, retired or unemployed - could come to learn new skills or enjoy leisure activities; a place where they could mix with the entrepreneurs and scientists developing solutions for the challenges facing the world today. A Park where nature, science, innovation, and community all blend seamlessly together.

## Detail

The 100-acre site is across the road from Copley Hill Business Park (Copley) on the A1307 located three miles south-east of Cambridge.

South Cambridge is a major hub for life science campuses including the Cambridge Biomedical Campus, Babraham Research Campus, Wellcome Genome Campus, Granta Park and Unity Campus.

Most of these sites are closed to the public. With a focus on research, these world-renowned campuses understandably employ mainly graduates and postgraduates. As a

result, they offer limited opportunities to create skilled, science and technology jobs for non-graduates.

In a small city like Cambridge, this exclusivity may be helping to foster division and inequality within the broader community.

Located at the heart of the life sciences cluster, Copley Hill Business Park accommodates a wide range of businesses engaged in many different activities i.e. not just research.

Demand for space at Copley is outstripping supply - this includes demand from both existing tenants and companies that want to locate to Copley.

Building on the success of Copley, we have developed a master plan and vision for the 100-acre site. Called Cambridge Woodlands Innovation Park, it addresses the need for a more open, inclusive approach that is also highly sustainable. It would also provide much-needed amenities in this part of Cambridge.

The key features include:

- network of woodland paths with swales and indigenous planting - inspired by Wandlebury Country Park which is likely to become increasingly busy as the population of Cambridge increases.
- potential to provide a footbridge over the A1307 providing easy access from Wandlebury as well as off-road/cycle connections from Sawston to central Cambridge by upgrading existing public rights of way.
- central lakeside pavilion housing a cafe, bistro, gym, nursery, and function rooms all open to companies on site as well as locals and visitors both during working hours as well as weekends and evenings.

- modest, low-rise, eco-friendly buildings nestled amongst trees housing scientists and technologists using robotics and other state-of-the-art equipment in their pursuit of solutions to the challenges facing the world today.
- it would accommodate a broad range of industries including environmental technology, automotive, aerospace, construction, materials, electronics, and engineering, alongside life science companies that do not meet the entry criteria for the major life science hubs.
- it would accommodate a broad range of activities including design, research, development, prototyping and small scale production—facilitating the creation of tangible products as well as intellectual property; and creating jobs not just for people with degrees from Cambridge and beyond, but for those who are currently furthest from opportunities in the technology sector; this would provide meaningful career paths for individuals regardless of their educational background.
- the co-location of multiple sectors on the site would help to foster cross-sector collaborations adding value to the existing life sciences cluster and helping to diversify the economy on the southern fringe.

This approach is consistent with the findings of:

1. the Icen Report which was commissioned by Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (GCSP) and published in September 2024
2. The section of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan - First Proposals which reads “Encourage a flourishing and mixed economy which includes a wide range of jobs, while maintaining our area's global reputation for innovation.”

There are exceptional circumstances for permitting the proposed development in this location.

- no other suitable land available outside the Green Belt

Accepting the case that there is a need to diversify the economy south of Cambridge coupled with the lack of accommodation for “low to mid-tech” businesses on the southern fringe (as evidenced by demand outstripping supply at Copley Hill Business Park), there are no other sites outside the greenbelt in this part of Cambridge that could accommodate the need identified in terms of:

- a. the size/scale of site required for this type of mixed development (100 acres is ideal for an innovation eco-system to fully function)
- b. sustainable transport links
- c. proximity to the main life sciences hub
- d. proximity to existing and proposed residential developments.
- e. opportunity to create an additional woodland country park with amenities open to the public.

#### Other exceptional circumstances

- fulfils the need to accommodate development as part of a long-term strategy that aligns with local and national growth objectives.
- proposed changes align with sustainable development principles.
- there are exceptional economic & social benefits.
- addresses a severe shortage of employment opportunities.
- supports infrastructure projects.
- enhances the quality or accessibility of the remaining Green Belt