

Greater Cambridge Local Plan Strategic Spatial Options Assessment: Employment Supplement

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning

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With

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Greater Cambridge Local Plan Strategic Spatial Options Assessment: Employment Supplement Report assesses with regard to employment, the working assumption Greater Cambridge Local Plan preferred option development strategy, and a new blended Edge of Cambridge: Green Belt alternative, in the same way as was completed for the strategic spatial options in November 2020.
- 1.2 Alongside other evidence assessments and Sustainability Appraisal, consideration of the preferred option and Edge of Cambridge: Green Belt alternative alongside the strategic spatial options assessments ensures consideration of a range of reasonable alternative strategies.

2. Context

- 1.3 For the strategic spatial options stage we completed assessments of the three growth levels and eight strategic spatial options.
- 1.4 Further to this, ahead of the Preferred Options Plan consultation taking place in autumn 2021, officers from Greater Cambridge Shared Planning on behalf of the two councils shared with us a working assumption preferred option development strategy, including preferred growth level and distribution assumptions for dwellings, jobs and associated population growth.
- 1.5 Please note that use of the working assumption preferred option development strategy to inform this evidence base does not confer formal support by either council for that strategy. No decisions will be taken on development strategy assumptions until relevant member committees meet and approve documents for the Local Plan preferred options consultation. Such decisions will be informed by appraisal of reasonable alternatives. Setting out working assumptions in this and other notes does not prejudice those decisions.
- 1.6 The Councils' working assumption preferred option is a blended strategy including a number of broad supply locations. To ensure that the preferred option is tested against reasonable alternatives, an assessment of the preferred option blended strategy has been completed, against:
- the strategic spatial options tested last year
 - other reasonable alternative blended strategies.
- 1.7 Some of the spatial options tested last year were blended strategies and others not. The Councils reviewed the strategic spatial options tested in November to see whether these included a range of reasonable alternative blended strategies, noting that they don't need to test every possible reasonable alternative. The conclusion to this assessment was that the only alternative blended strategy not yet tested was one including development at Edge of Cambridge: Green Belt. The Councils therefore identified a blended strategy development distribution for this

spatial option, which is directly comparable to the preferred option and broadly comparable to the strategic spatial options from November 2020.

1.8 The spatial options to be tested are therefore:

- Preferred option growth level: preferred options spatial strategy
- Preferred option growth level: Blended Strategy including Edge of Cambridge: Green Belt

Methodology

1.9 This Supplement Report assesses the above spatial options using the same methodology as completed for the [Greater Cambridge Local Plan Strategic Spatial Options Assessment: Employment](#). See that report for further detail.

3. Commentary on levels of growth

- 1.10 Following consideration of the November 2020 strategic spatial options evidence bases and Sustainability Appraisal, Greater Cambridge Shared Planning have determined that the medium level of homes associated with the central employment scenario represents the objectively assessed need for homes in Greater Cambridge. Having determined this, the previously assessed alternative growth options of minimum and maximum are no longer considered to represent reasonable alternatives.
- 1.11 Drawing on the above, we are testing the new spatial options of preferred option and Blended Strategy including Edge of Cambridge: Green Belt based on the medium (central scenario) employment growth level, and have not assessed the impacts of the previous alternative growth levels in relation to these new spatial options.
- 1.12 The central scenario in the Employment Land Review is equivalent to the jobs (and therefore homes) in the preferred option in the Local Plan options. The current level of employment commitments in the Greater Cambridge land supply would provide enough B1a and B1b employment land to meet the needs generated under the central scenario if the mixed B1 supply components include a sufficient amount of B1b in particular. There would be a shortfall in industrial and warehousing needs.

4. Commentary on spatial options

Spatial Scenario 9: Preferred Option

1.13 This approach involves a limited provision of additional employment land within the Plan period. For the Plan period and beyond 2041, employment land supply is concentrated at:

- Focus on Densification of existing urban areas (North East Cambridge, NEC)
- Edge of Cambridge non-Green Belt (Cambridge Airport)
- Edge of Cambridge Green Belt (Cambridge Biomedical Campus, CBC)
- Western Cluster (Cambourne)

1.14 Limited provision is made at rural employment locations notably Babraham and for B2/B8 on A14 corridor (in vicinity of Swavesey junction).

Labour force accessibility, availability and proximity

1.15 NEC: Within Cambridge, employment is anticipated to provide highly accessible employment opportunities to a significant labour pool in the city with short and sustainable modes of commuting. Cambridge North Station provides a highly accessible access node.

1.16 Cambridge Airport: This is anticipated to provide a good level of accessible employment to a significant labour pool in the city with short and sustainable modes of commuting. However connectivity via public transport mode (ie via train) is not currently on offer although bus services exist and can be enhanced, and the Greater Cambridge Partnership Cambridge Eastern Access scheme Phase B would provide high quality public transport provision if delivered as part of the development.

1.17 CBC: Edge of Cambridge employment (Green Belt) at CBC is anticipated to provide a good level of accessible employment to a significant labour pool in the city with short and sustainable modes of commuting. However connectivity via public transport mode may depend on further investment in infrastructure which is

understood to be coming forward via Cambridge South East Public Transport Scheme and Cambridge South Station.

- 1.18 Cambourne: Employment located at transport nodes around Cambourne will broadly enable good labour market accessibility to employment locations and support economic growth. East West Rail and the Greater Cambridge Partnership's Cambourne to Cambridge Public Transport Scheme are likely to significantly improve accessibility, enhancing commutability.

Suitability for future economic growth sector land uses

- 1.19 NEC: In this location, development will be well suited to higher density offices and 'dry lab' research type space. However more land hungry use classes such as wet lab research spaces and light industrial or warehousing are unlikely to be suited to NEC due to the high land and rental values and competition for land with housing and other uses.
- 1.20 Cambridge Airport: This location will be well suited to higher density offices and 'dry lab' research type space. The volume of land available at the airport is also anticipated to be able to provide for some of the more land hungry use classes such as lower density R&D spaces and light industrial / industrial or warehousing.
- 1.21 CBC: Edge of city development will be well suited to higher density offices and 'dry lab' research type space as well as more land hungry use classes such as wet lab research spaces.
- 1.22 Cambourne: Employment at transport hubs at Cambourne is likely to be suitable for a range of employment premises including offices, labs, industrial and warehousing. Higher density uses would typically locate in closest proximity to public transport accessibility nodes, albeit competition with the city market for prime offices is expected to temper growth.

Proximity to existing clusters

- 1.23 NEC: The city has a well established professional services offer with a cluster of technology orientated firms at Cambridge Science Park and a range of firms at Cambridge Business Park. North East Cambridge is likely to be able to build on the success of nearby premises in developing an office / technology offer. However, it may be less attractive to lifescience orientated businesses due to their lower density requirements.
- 1.24 Cambridge Airport: The existing employment offer is more limited at the edge of the city around the airport. However, this is unlikely to present an issue due to the level of demand expected for the site. As a result it is feasible that in the medium term the development of an employment centre could be successful, having a relationship with the existing city centre offer as well as Science Park area tech / professional services and some life sciences / advanced manufacturing.
- 1.25 CBC: CBC is a well established employment cluster. The development of a new employment location is likely to be successful given existing sector strengths, levels of demand and forecast employment growth in Greater Cambridge.
- 1.26 Cambourne: Cambourne has historically been slow to develop as an employment location, with strong competition from the city office market and lacking an institutional investment in lifesciences. It has however gained traction as a secondary office location in recent years for professional services and ICT. The location in itself and distance from other clusters is unlikely to present an inherent barrier to growth given the success of a range of employment locations around Greater Cambridge, although the south / south east (of South Cambridgeshire) is preferred by life sciences.

Deliverability / market response

- 1.27 NEC: The occupier and investment market will be attracted to in city development such as North East Cambridge. It is likely to be primarily targeted at prime office / lab space as previously achieved in the city due to the desirability of the location.

An increase in supply may temper rental values. Mid-market rental premises and non-office based activities are expected to see lower levels of market interest.

- 1.28 Cambridge Airport: The occupier and investment market is anticipated to be attracted to edge of city development such as Cambridge Airport. Prime office / lab space is anticipated to be achieved over time however there might be a lead-in to achieving a more critical mass. Mid-market and SME premises are anticipated to be attracted here. A major employer / institutional investor interest would kick start the location's desirability in employment terms.
- 1.29 CBC: The occupier and investment market is anticipated to be attracted to edge of city development. Prime office / lab space is anticipated to be achieved. Mid-market and SME premises are anticipated to be attracted here. Major employers / institutions are already located in the area.
- 1.30 Cambourne: Spreading employment outside of the city will be contrary to prime office market preferences for the city centre and city fringe locations. Secondary offices and lab development is likely to be successful around Cambourne with improved accessibility. Industrial and warehousing tend to have a greater reliance on strategic road access rather than public transport and would benefit from the A428 connection.

Option issues

- 1.31 Under the preferred option level of growth ('medium' in ELR terms), there is considered to be sufficient office and R&D space to meet the Plan requirements. As a result only limited provision is required in Plan. Post Plan, provision at NEC, Cambridge Airport, CBC and Cambourne and will be beneficial.
- 1.32 It will be necessary to ensure that B2/B8 provision is brought forward in Plan and post Plan at the sites on A14 corridor to ensure adequate supply. Limited elements at other proposed locations would also be beneficial.

Spatial Scenario 10: Green Belt hybrid

- 1.33 This approach involves a limited provision of additional employment land within the Plan period. For the Plan period and beyond 2041, employment land supply is concentrated at:
- Focus on Densification of existing urban areas (North East Cambridge, NEC)
 - Edge of Cambridge non-Green Belt (Cambridge Airport)
 - Edge of Cambridge Green Belt (Cambridge Biomedical Campus, CBC / other non specific location)
- 1.34 Limited provision is made at rural employment locations notably Babraham and for B2/B8 on A14 corridor (in vicinity of Swavesey junction).
- 1.35 Of note, the main difference between scenario 1 (Preferred Option) and scenario 2 the Green Belt hybrid is that the second scenario does not include employment expansion at Cambourne, but rather provision at a non specific Green Belt location, and at lesser quantum than the Cambourne extension. The quantum is of limited materiality given that it is in the post Plan period running beyond the quantitative assessment of the 2020 Employment Land Review.

Labour force accessibility, availability and proximity

- 1.36 NEC: Within Cambridge, employment is anticipated to provide highly accessible employment opportunities to a significant labour pool in the city with short and sustainable modes of commuting. Cambridge North Station provides a highly accessible access node.
- 1.37 Cambridge Airport: This is anticipated to provide a good level of accessible employment to a significant labour pool in the city with short and sustainable modes of commuting. However connectivity via public mode (ie via train) is not currently on offer although bus services exist and can be enhanced , and the Greater Cambridge Partnership Cambridge Eastern Access scheme Phase B would provide high quality public transport provision if delivered as part of the development.

- 1.38 Edge of Cambridge – Green Belt: Employment at CBC or in other Green Belt locations is anticipated to provide a good level of accessible employment to a significant labour pool in the city with short and sustainable modes of commuting. However connectivity via public transport may will depend on further investment in infrastructure which is understood to be planned at a number of locations around the city.

Suitability for future economic growth sector land uses

- 1.39 NEC: In this location, development will be well suited to higher density offices and ‘dry lab’ research type space. However more land hungry use classes such as wet lab research spaces and light industrial or warehousing are unlikely to be suited to NEC due to the high land and rental values and competition for land with housing and other uses.
- 1.40 Cambridge Airport: This location will be well suited to higher density offices and ‘dry lab’ research type space. The volume of land available at the airport is anticipated to be able to provide for some of the more land hungry use classes such as lower density R&D spaces and light industrial / industrial or warehousing.
- Edge of Cambridge Green Belt: Edge of city development will be well suited to higher density offices and ‘dry lab’ research type space as well as potentially more land hungry use classes such as wet lab research spaces and light industrial or warehousing.

Proximity to existing clusters

- 1.41 NEC: The city has a well established professional services offer with a cluster of technology orientated firms at Cambridge Science Park and a range of firms at Cambridge Business Park. North East Cambridge is likely to be able to build on the success of nearby premises in developing an office / technology offer. However, it may be less attractive to lifescience orientated businesses due to their lower density requirements.

- 1.42 Cambridge Airport: The existing employment offer is more limited at the edge of the city around the airport. However, this is unlikely to present an issue due to the level of demand expected for the site. As a result it is feasible that in the medium term the development of an employment centre could be successful, having a relationship with the existing city centre offer as well as Science Park area tech / professional services and some life sciences/ advanced manufacturing. Edge of Cambridge Green Belt: CBC is a well established employment cluster. The development of a new employment location is likely to be successful given existing sector strengths, levels of demand and forecast employment growth in Greater Cambridge. The development of a new employment offer in other edge of Cambridge Green Belt locations is likely to be successful over time given existing sector strengths, levels of demand and forecast employment growth in Greater Cambridge, although there will be location specific sensitivities depending on proximity to other economic activity.

Deliverability / market response

- 1.43 NEC: The occupier and investment market will be attracted to in city development such as North East Cambridge. It is likely to be primarily targeted at prime office / lab space as previously achieved in the city due to the desirability of the location. An increase in supply may temper rental values. Mid-market rental premises and non-office based activities are expected to see lower levels of market interest.
- 1.44 Cambridge Airport: The occupier and investment market is anticipated to be attracted to edge of city development such as Cambridge Airport. Prime office / lab space is anticipated to be achieved over time however there might be a lead in to achieving a more critical mass. Mid-market and SME premises are anticipated to be attracted here. A major employer / institutional investor interest would kick start the location's desirability in employment terms.
- 1.45 Edge of Cambridge Green Belt: The occupier and investment market is anticipated to be attracted to edge of city development, particularly at CBC. Prime office / lab space is anticipated to be achieved. Mid-market and SME premises are anticipated

to be attracted here. Major employers / institutions are already located in the area. Outside of CBC in other Green Belt locations there may be competition with existing locations expanding their offer, so there will be location specific sensitivities depending on proximity to other economic activity and investments.

Option issues

- 1.46 Under the preferred option level of growth ('medium' in ELR terms), there is considered to be sufficient office and R&D space to meet the Plan requirements. As a result only limited provision is required in Plan. Post Plan, provision at NEC, Cambridge Airport, CBC and Cambourne will be beneficial.

- 1.47 It will be necessary to ensure that B2/B8 provision is brought forward in Plan and post Plan at the sites on A14 corridor to ensure adequate supply. Limited elements at other proposed locations would also be beneficial.

5. Conclusion

- 1.48 This report provides an assessment of the Local Plan spatial options for growth under the Preferred Option 'medium' level of growth which equates to the central employment scenario in the 2020 ELR. Under that level of growth there is limited need for offices / R&D premises within the Plan period, although there is some need for industrial and warehousing provision.
- 1.49 The spatial scenarios assessed therefore focus provision for the post Plan period at locations in North East Cambridge, Cambridge Airport, Cambridge Biomedical Campus, Cambourne and other undefined Green Belt Locations around Cambridge. Consideration is given to their ability to provide access to labour, suitability to expand required economic sectors, build on existing economic clusters and be delivered by the market.
- 1.50 Under the 'medium' option the office and lab requirements are largely met through existing supply, so growth can be achieved under almost any spatial scenario. However, for offices the supply would only just exceed forecast needs.
- 1.51 Both scenarios make post plan provision at NEC which builds on the existing cluster around Cambridge Science Park for offices and R&D. Development at the Biomedical Campus also enhances the existing cluster of R&D activities. Cambridge Airport would be a largely new employment location under both options but is expected to be successful given the strength of the commercial markets and proximity to professional services and other high value clusters.
- 1.52 Scenario 9 would seek to diversify investment to Cambourne post Plan which could reasonably deliver additional floorspace albeit this has historically been slow to come forward in the locality.
- 1.53 B1b lower density labs also largely have requirements fulfilled by current supply under the medium growth option, although further allocations could be considered under both scenarios considered here. The existing concentration is most pronounced at CBC so development here enhances agglomeration.

- 1.54 For industrial and warehousing needs, both scenarios include provision around the A14, which would be suitable.