



# North East Cambridge Area Action Plan

Proposed Submission

## Topic Paper: Anti-Poverty and Inequality

Greater Cambridge Planning Service

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## Introduction

North East Cambridge (NEC) is located within Greater Cambridge, an area of strong economic growth with a global reputation for innovation and world-renowned Universities. While this contributes to the success of Greater Cambridge, like many successful cities, there are inequalities. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation UK Poverty Report<sup>1</sup> (2018) identifies possible causes of poverty, including job insecurity, low pay, low levels of education, ineffective benefits systems, discrimination, weak family relationships, childhood poverty and abuse or trauma. As a result, effects of poverty include housing problems, homelessness, crime, health problems, drug or alcohol problems, teenage parenthood, relationship and family problems and lower educational achievements.

It is a shared commitment of the Cambridge City Council (CCC) and South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) to tackle poverty and inequality. NEC has been allocated as a site set to deliver 8,350 homes and 15,000 new jobs. Policies within the NEC Area Action Plan (AAP) consider how the development relates to surrounding existing communities and highlight the need to spread the benefits of the new development, thus encouraging cohesive and equal communities. The key issues including spatial inequalities in relation to NEC, different types of poverty in Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire are detailed in this Topic Paper that has been prepared with input from Cambridge City Council's Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer, the lead on Cambridge City Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy, and with input from South Cambridgeshire District Council Officers.

## Key Documents

- National Planning Policy Framework (2021)
- Cambridge City Council Corporate Plan (2019-2022)
- South Cambridgeshire District Council Business Plan (2021-2022)
- Cambridge City Council Local Plan (2018)
- South Cambridgeshire District Local Plan Policy (2018)
- Cambridge City Anti-Poverty Strategy (2020-2023)

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<sup>1</sup> [UK Poverty 2018 | JRF](#)

- Joseph Rowntree Foundation UK Poverty Report (2018)
- Public Health England Local Authority Health Profile (2019)
- Centre for Cities Study (2017)
- Index of Multiple Deprivation (2019)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Cambridgeshire, King's Lynn & West Norfolk, Peterborough and West Suffolk Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2016)
- Savills Greater Cambridge Partnership: Affordability Analysis Report (2017)
- Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council: Affordable Housing Programme (2019-2023)
- Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy (2019-2023)
- Cambridge City Council: Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2021-2026) House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee 2019: Tackling inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities Seventh Report of Session (2017–19)
- Public Health England Local Authority Health Profile (2019)
- Mental Health Foundation Study (2020)
- Cambridgeshire County Council: 'Cambridgeshire Southern Fringe: A survey of residents' (2019)

### **NEC Evidence and Topic Papers**

- Housing Topic Paper (2021)
- Health Facilities and Wellbeing (2021)
- Open Space and Recreation (2021)
- Education Topic Paper (2021)
- Employment Topic Paper (2021)
- Community Safety Topic Paper (2021)
- Skills, Training and Local Employment Opportunities Topic Paper (2021)
- Climate Change, Energy, Water and Sustainable Design and Construction Topic Paper (2021)
- Smart Infrastructure: Digital Infrastructure (2021)
- Transport Topic Paper (2021)

## National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

The National Planning Policy Framework<sup>2</sup> (NPPF) discusses several issues relating to poverty and inequality. Paragraph 62 states: ‘the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, Travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes)’.

Further, Paragraph 63 states: ‘where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required and expect it to be met on-site unless: a) off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be robustly justified; and b) the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities’.

Access to jobs is covered within the NPPF in paragraph 73 (part b) that highlights the need for large scale developments to ‘ensure that their size and location will support a sustainable community, with sufficient access to services and employment opportunities within the development itself (without expecting an unrealistic level of self-containment)’. Other issues surrounding anti-poverty and inequality in the NPPF include achieving healthy and safe communities. Paragraph 92 promotes ‘social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages’. Additionally, in this paragraph, ensuring places are ‘safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion’ and the aim to ‘enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs.

Paragraph 93 emphasises ‘to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

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<sup>2</sup> [National Planning Policy Framework](#)

- a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sport venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;
- b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;
- c) guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs;
- d) ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community; and
- e) ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.'

The provision of open space and recreation and the importance for the health and well-being of communities is highlighted in Paragraph 98, complemented by Paragraph 106 (part a) where policy should 'support an appropriate mix of uses across an area, and within larger scale sites, to minimise the number and length of journeys needed for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities'.

### **Cambridge City Council Corporate Plan<sup>3</sup> (2019-2022)**

Cambridge City Council's vision is "One Cambridge - Fair for All", in which economic dynamism and prosperity are combined with social justice and equality. Part of the description of what this means is of "A city which believes that the clearest measure of progress is the dignity and well-being of its least well-off residents, which prioritises tackling poverty and social exclusion, recognising that greater social and economic equality are the most important pre-conditions for the city's success."

To accompany the vision, the Cambridge City Council (CCC) Corporate Plan sets out five strategic-level objectives. Objective one and two reflect the issues highlighted in this topic paper. Objective one: 'Helping people in Cambridge who have the greatest need' aims to implement the current Anti-Poverty Strategy, deliver

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<sup>3</sup> [Cambridge City Council Corporate Plan](#)

the Housing Strategy and support vulnerable members of the community. Objective two aims to achieve sustainable development through: 'Planning for growth and ensuring our new communities are successful'.

### **South Cambridgeshire District Council Business Plan (2020-25)**

South Cambridgeshire District Council's Business Plan<sup>4</sup> includes a commitment of "building homes that are truly affordable to live in". It states that SCDC will "Build vibrant communities in locations where people have good access to facilities and transport links, so they can genuinely afford to lead a happy and healthy life." The plan includes a list of measures that will be undertaken to help achieve this, with the action to increase the number of Council homes each year to support people on lower incomes. These will include high energy standards and renewable energy. Additionally, create and continue to run liaison meetings and forums where significant new developments are being planned to minimise disruption and help new residents settle in.

Alongside the actions deliverable in 2021-2022, are ongoing objectives including supporting the delivery of more affordable housing, focus on health and wellbeing of our communities (explored further in the Health and Wellbeing Topic Paper), providing advice and support to prevent homelessness and help vulnerable people, provide dedicated support to people in receipt of Universal Credit and other welfare support, and to support the needs of refugees and asylum seekers.

### **Cambridge City Anti-Poverty Strategy<sup>5</sup> (2020-2023)**

The Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources approved the first Cambridge City Council Anti-Poverty Strategy in 2015. This first strategy identified a basket of high-level indicators that can be used as a barometer for poverty in Cambridge. While a number of the indicators have improved since 2014, poverty remains a significant issue in Cambridge. The most recent Anti-Poverty Strategy 2020-2023 aims to improve the standard of living and daily lives of residents in Cambridge experiencing poverty through several objectives:

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<sup>4</sup> [Our Business Plan - South Cambs District Council](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Anti-Poverty Strategy - Cambridge City Council](#)

- Helping people on low incomes to maximise their income and minimise their costs
- Strengthening families and communities, including supporting groups of people that are more likely to experience poverty
- Promoting an inclusive economy, by raising skills and improving access to a range of employment opportunities for people on low incomes
- Addressing the high cost of housing, improve housing conditions, and reduce homelessness
- Improving health outcomes for people on low incomes

### **South Cambridgeshire District Council Equality Scheme (2020-2024)**

The purpose of the South Cambridgeshire District Council's Equality Scheme<sup>6</sup> is to set out the approach to embedding equality within Council services, contributing towards the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Equality objectives relevant to the NEC, include:

Objective 1 - Understand the diversity that exists within the South Cambridgeshire population and identify, prioritise, and deliver actions that will narrow the gap in outcomes between disadvantaged groups and the wider community

Objective 3 - Protected groups are included and have their voices heard in discussions about the future shape of the district.

### **Cambridge Local Plan (2018)**

Within Cambridge City Council's Local Plan<sup>7</sup>, 15 strategic objectives are set out. The objectives aim to create and maintain inclusive communities alongside promoting social cohesion through provision of sports, recreation, community, and leisure facilities. Other objectives discuss the promotion of affordable housing, accessible innovative economic areas whilst ensuring centres and shopping facilities are within reach for people living, working, and studying in the city.

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<sup>6</sup> [Equality Scheme - South Cambs District Council](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Cambridge Local Plan 2018](#)

Section Three of the Local Plan discusses City Centre, Areas of Major Change, Opportunity Areas and Site Specific Proposals. Policy 14 highlights the general principles of new development, stating that new sites should 'create active and vibrant places that encourage social interaction and meeting, and foster a sense of community'.

Section Five: Supporting the Cambridge Economy addresses the need to connect new developments to digital infrastructure in Policy 42. It states that integrating high quality broadband into developments will 'help communication for business and residents' and 'help address isolation'.

Section Six: Maintaining a Balanced Supply of Housing raises concern for the need to meet housing needs through several policies. Policy 45: Affordable housing and dwelling mix supports the delivery of 40% affordable housing on sites of more than 15 residential units, whilst delivering a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures.

Policy 56: Creating successful places supports development that is designed to be accessible, inclusive and safe and fosters a sense of community. Policies including Policy 73: Community, sports and leisure facilities, Policy 74: Educational facilities and Policy 75: Healthcare facilities, also demonstrate the Council's support for amenity provision that are equally accessible to all.

### **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2018)**

The SCDC's Local Plan<sup>8</sup> sets out the vision in Policy S/1 alongside the objectives of the plan in Policy S/2. The six objectives highlight the need to deliver land for housing with a range of types, sizes, tenures and costs. The objectives also present the need to support economic growth and education while providing a range of services and facilities for residents.

Policy S/5: Provision of New Jobs and Homes identifies the need for provision of housing including affordable housing in order to respond to high level needs in South Cambridgeshire.

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<sup>8</sup> [South Cambridgeshire District Council Local Plan: 2018](#)

Policy H/9: Housing Mix and Policy H/10: Affordable Housing further address the need to provide housing to 'meet the needs of different groups in the community including families with children, older people, those seeking starter homes, people wishing to build their own homes, people seeking private rented sector housing and people with disabilities'. Policy H/10 states that all developments of 11 dwellings or more should achieve 40% affordable housing on site.

Policy SC/4: Meeting Community Needs highlights the need for a range of services and facilities to be provided for new communities including Primary and secondary schools, meeting places, health facilities, libraries, sports facilities, local shops and cafes and provision for faith groups.

## **Key Issues**

### **Measuring poverty in the UK and Greater Cambridge**

Measuring poverty within the UK remains a significant challenge as there is no official measure. According to Cambridge City Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy<sup>9</sup>, the most common definition of poverty in the UK is 'relative poverty' (households with less than 60% contemporary median income after taxes and benefit) with indicators of relative poverty including pay and benefits, percentage of the working age population (16-64) who are unemployed and percentage of households in Cambridge experiencing fuel poverty.

In the Greater Cambridge context, the strategy highlights the lack of comparable data available at a local, district level, making it difficult to identify poverty in a South Cambridgeshire context in this paper. In 2017, Cambridge was identified as the UK's most unequal city by the Centre for Cities, emphasising the need for Cambridge City Council to continue to improve the standard of living and daily lives of residents in Cambridge who are experiencing poverty, and help alleviate issues that can lead households on low incomes to experience financial pressures.

Although the Council's most recent Anti-Poverty Strategy recognises that some of the indicators including pay, benefits, qualifications, and fuel poverty have improved

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<sup>9</sup> [Anti-Poverty Strategy - Cambridge City Council](#)

over the period of the first two Anti-Poverty Strategies, a number of indicators of poverty remain prevalent in Cambridge.

Particularly, unemployment, health, and housing indicators have declined since the first Anti-Poverty Strategy in 2014. Unemployment was shown to have increased from 4.2% in 2014 to 4.8% in 2019. The gap in life expectancy also increased; for women between the most and least deprived areas of the city the gap increased from 9.6 years in 2014 to 10.1 years in 2018. However, the gap between men reduced slightly from 10.0 years to 9.9 years from 2014 to 2018. The affordability of housing continues to be a key issue for those on low incomes with The Centre for Cities presenting Cambridge as the third most unaffordable housing in the UK in 2018 (based on the ratio of average house prices to average earnings). According to data presented in the strategy, the lower quartile house prices were 16.3 times lower quartile earning in March 2018 (up from 14.6 times lower quartile earnings in March 2014). The lower quartile monthly private rents increased from £563 in 2014 to £950 in 2018, highlighting issues of unaffordability (further explored in the Housing Topic Paper).

## **Affordable Housing Needs**

Data from Savills Greater Cambridge Report (2017) <sup>10</sup> highlights the lack of affordable new housing for households on income below £45,000. It finds that the lower quartile house prices are 13x the lower quartile income compared to the national average of 7.

The 2018 Local Plans plan for 33,500 new homes. Currently Cambridge City Affordable Housing Programme<sup>11</sup> aims to deliver a minimum of 500 new homes for council rent by March 2022 and the Council aims to deliver a subsequent programme of 1,000 further Council homes for rent. This is in recognition of the growing 'affordability gap' where even middle-income households are being forced out of the market with limited housing options for low-cost home ownership or the private rented sector. Of the 8,350 new homes in North East Cambridge, the AAP identifies that 40% will be affordable housing, split between, including social housing

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<sup>10</sup> [Savills: Greater Cambridge Report 2017](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Affordable housing programme - Cambridge City Council](#)

and other affordable housing options. The AAP will provide a mix of different sizes for different sized households. Annex 10 of the Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy<sup>12</sup> sets out how any affordable homes for rent and shared ownership homes should be clustered and distributed in relation to each other and also in relation to other intermediate and market tenures on any new developments, and how sizes and types of affordable homes should be grouped together to deliver fully integrated mixed housing schemes (further explored in the Housing Topic Paper).

A further issue in the city is the lack of temporary accommodation for homeless and rough sleepers, with around 1600 applicants on the housing register. The Cambridge City Council Homeless & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021-2026<sup>13</sup> highlights 6 priorities including Priority 2 aimed at improving access to and range of permanent accommodation. The approach explores how a range of tenures can be improved and may be used more flexibly to meet a wider range of needs, how to improve engagement with landlords, letting agencies and other private owners among other objectives set to improve access to and the range of permanent accommodation.

## **Transport Poverty**

According to NatGen Social Research produced on behalf of the Department for Transport<sup>14</sup> “transport is an important facilitator of social inclusion and wellbeing, which can affect economic and social outcomes, and therefore inequality. Different socio-economic have ranging levels of access and options for travel, for example, trends show that people in lower paid jobs are more dependant on bus networks and public transport and those with higher incomes tend to use cars and trains more often. In order to reduce transport poverty in NEC and the surrounding area, the Transport Topic Paper and Smart Infrastructure: Future Mobility Topic Papers consider opportunities to develop appropriate transport networks, including public transport whilst creating accessible and well-connected spaces. Alongside this, reducing transport inequality can be achieved through wider initiatives such as

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<sup>12</sup> [Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy](#)

<sup>13</sup> [Cambridge City Council Homelessness and rough sleeping strategy-2021](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Transport and inequality report - Department for Transport](#)

improving skills, training and local employment and education (see Skills, Training and Local Employment Opportunities Topic Paper).

## Fuel Poverty

A household is considered to be fuel poor if they have fuel costs that are above average (the national median level) and were they to spend that amount, they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line. The latest data for the city of Cambridge according to the Annual Fuel Poverty Statistics<sup>15</sup>, is that 11.1% of the population or just above 5,500 households are in fuel poverty, above the national average of 10.3%.

The three drivers of fuel poverty are energy efficiency, energy prices and incomes. These issues are covered in some detail in the Housing Topic Paper, Employment Topic Paper and the Climate Change, Energy, Water and Sustainable Design and Construction Topic Paper (with a desire to encourage a good range of job opportunities in the local area and the requirement to build new homes to high levels of energy efficiency).

Priority 5 of the Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy<sup>16</sup> sets out the desire for Greater Cambridgeshire 'to be a place where...homes are warm, energy and water efficient, with built in resilience to climate change and fuel poverty'. In the drive to embed resource efficiencies, which support the transition to zero carbon living - combining low-tech green solutions with high-tech smart city technology, it is critical that any interfaces must be simple and user-friendly to ensure easy access and operation for all residents. Across the UK, the very limited number of households connected to heat networks in particular, means very few people have experience of these space/water heating technologies, their operation, or the types of billing in place. This does lead to inequitable disparities in energy costs. The following points should be carefully considered for NEC and may need programmes beyond the scope of the planning system:

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<sup>15</sup> [Annual fuel poverty statistics Report 2020](#)

<sup>16</sup> [Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy](#)

- A recognition that affordable housing must be affordable from both the aspect of basic housing costs (rent or mortgage and service charges) and essential living costs (energy and water bills).
- The increased emphasis on electricity-based heating systems (and the move away from fossil fuels) should not lead to higher home energy bills.
- The inability of low-income households connected to communal heating systems to access grants or funds or financial support available to those purchasing energy directly from a supplier should be recognised.
- The installation of high-spec heating, ventilation and control systems should be undertaken using a clear design process to ensure from the initial specification that their usability by any future residents is considered and that these systems will not therefore lead to inequalities in energy costs being paid either between different residents in the NEC area or in NEC and the wider city.
- The high capital costs of installation of some heating and energy systems will be a barrier to low income families and mean they cannot receive the ongoing benefits of cheaper running costs.

## Food Poverty

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation UK Poverty Report<sup>17</sup> highlights that food and fuel prices have increased the cost of living, particularly for people in poverty. Research from 2018 shows that families needed 30% more disposable income to meet basic costs compared to 2008. The Cambridge City Council Anti-Poverty Strategy 2020-2023<sup>18</sup> highlights that food poverty is an issue in Cambridge, with the numbers of people receiving emergency food from Cambridge City Foodbank steadily increasing from 4,020 in 2013 to 8,766 in 2018. The Anti-Poverty Strategy actions to reduce food and fuel poverty include employing a Financial Inclusion Officer to support Council tenants and other low income residents, employing a Fuel and Water Poverty Officer to assist low income residents to reduce their fuel and water costs by installing energy or water saving measures in their homes among other measures.

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<sup>17</sup> [UK Poverty 2018 | JRF](#)

<sup>18</sup> [Anti-Poverty Strategy - Cambridge City Council](#)

The Cambridge City Council also have carried out work in partnership with local organisations to address food poverty in Cambridge. This includes:

- Providing funding for the Food Poverty Alliance and supporting the action plan developed by the Alliance.
- Funding Cambridge Sustainable Food to provide a programme of more than 100 cookery sessions in areas of deprivation over 3 years, helping participants to prepare healthy, low cost meals.
- Working with local churches and community organisations to provide 9,500 free lunches for families in community venues during the school holidays over a three year period. The programme has continued and extended its provision during lockdown. Cambridge Sustainable Food has prepared more than 4,000 meals at Cambridge Regional College kitchens and delivered direct to recipients homes and to local food hubs. In the north of the city meal deliveries were supplemented by a bag of fresh fruit and vegetables.
- Working with local community organisations to set up 8 local food hubs in areas of need. The food hubs have distributed more than 25,000kg of food to people experiencing food poverty as a result of lockdown. The hubs have accepted donations of food and some hubs are also exploring opportunities to work with allotments to take surplus vegetables.
- The Open Space and Recreation Topic Paper further explores the provision of innovative spaces within high density developments for the growing of food.

## Health Inequalities

According to the Local Authority Health Profile for 2019<sup>19</sup>, the city has a life expectancy gap of 12.6 years between the richest and poorest wards in the city. In existing new communities in Cambridgeshire, it has been found that there is an increased need for public services compared to neighbourhoods that have existed for a long time. In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, National research have shown that there are vast differences between ethnic groups labelled as BAME related to the

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<sup>19</sup> [Local Authority Health Profiles - PHE](#)

susceptibility to and severity of impact upon contracting the virus. Increased risk of some BAME groups relates to a complex interplay of biological, cultural, socioeconomic, employment, lifestyle, and diet factors. Therefore, it is very important that health services are prioritised and available before people move into the area. Other means to prevent ill-health for existing communities surrounding the new development and for people in the new development itself are to provide open space for sport and recreation, community gardens available for food growing, and well-placed and accessible pedestrian and cycle lanes.

Of importance relating to existing communities surrounding new developments is the health inequalities between Gypsy and Traveller people especially and settled communities – where life expectancy gap is between 10 and 12 years. Several submissions to the Women and Equalities Select Committee stated that Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller people, especially travelling families, tend to use emergency services such as A&E rather than any structured approach to healthcare, due to previous poor experiences. This leads to disrupted health provision and makes preventative care very difficult to administer. The provision of GP services in the form of a health hub in North East Cambridge would also benefit this neighbouring community and the building of a foot/cycleway bridge over the railway will improve the accessibility to this facility. This will improve the health of people living along Fen Road and in the surrounding area.

In existing new communities, mental health issues have been commonplace due to feelings of isolation as it can take a while for people to develop social networks of support. Services supporting people's mental health and wellbeing are very important as well as means of tackling isolation by providing amenities that are cheap and/or free for people to use for purposes of socialising. It is essential that a community centre be available for people – with a maximum of 15 minutes' walk to this in line with Cambridge's policy on planning community centre provision in the rest of the city.

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been an increase in the self-reported cases of depression compared with pre-pandemic levels. According to a

study carried out by the Mental Health Foundation<sup>20</sup> (2020), one in five adults in the UK have experienced depressive symptoms in the last quarter, compared to one in ten before the pandemic began. Women, younger people, people with less disposable income and people who are disabled or have another long-term physical health condition were more likely to report depressive symptoms. Nationally, there has also been a reported increase in people in mental health crisis who require support from emergency services. The Mental Health Foundation has found that suicidal thoughts have become more prevalent over the pandemic in the UK. 8% of adults surveyed in April 2020 said that they had thoughts or feelings about suicide in the previous two weeks and 13% in February 2021.

Further health issues are explored in the Health Facilities Wellbeing Topic Paper.

## **Educational Inequalities**

Cambridge has the second highest proportion of working age people with qualifications at NVQ level 4 and above of any UK city in 2017. But we have amongst the lowest levels of social mobility in the country, and there are significant inequalities in educational attainment. In 2019 only 43% of pupils receiving Free School Meals achieved the Key Stage 4 benchmark (Grades 9 to 4 in GCSE English and Maths), compared to three quarters (75.3%) of children not eligible for free school meals in the city. In addition, of importance to the North East Cambridge development given the proximity of the Fen Road site, national research has found that after key stage 4 a quarter of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children go into neither education nor employment.

There are opportunities for the North East Cambridge development to reduce educational inequalities. The AAP proposes 3 Primary Schools (inclusive of nursery provision) that will be accessible to new housing on site and surrounding residential areas.

The planning of access routes, amenities and open space could also help ensure that space around the already existing businesses is used that can raise awareness

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<sup>20</sup> [Coronavirus: Mental Health in the Pandemic | Mental Health Foundation](#)

of opportunities and raise aspirations and prevent these spaces from being quiet at weekends that may mean they are subject to antisocial behaviour.

The Education Topic Paper sets out more details on the proposed education provision.

## **Who is the new community for?**

The North East Cambridge Area Action Plan aims to provide a policy framework guiding mixed-use development delivering significant housing, employment, and local facilities to support the creation of a new community. The development will provide land uses expected to enable social and physical infrastructure for new residents as well as existing local residents in adjoining areas. This will allow for a lively, pedestrian and cycle friendly district comprising leisure facilities, shops, and green spaces. The AAP aims to deliver thousands of new homes and jobs designed to meet existing and future needs of people living and working in the area.

The area to the east of Milton Road will predominantly be a housing-led mix of uses, including space for business uses, and for the relocation of existing industrial uses where they can be suitably located. A range of housing typologies will be provided to allow for a mix of residents such as local workers, first time buyers, renters, and homeowners with genuinely affordable housing. This is to encourage a cohesive and inclusive community and to improve the standard of living and daily lives of residents in who may be experiencing or vulnerable to experiencing poverty. This includes people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010<sup>21</sup>, affected by poverty. The protected characteristics are age, disability, ethnicity, LGBT people, and sex (see the Equality Impact Assessment for more detail).

In existing new communities in Cambridgeshire, it has been found that there are many people of different ethnicities (for example, in the Southern Fringe developments 48 languages are spoken). The fact that there are people from a large number of different ethnicities means that there may be greater need for support to welcome them to new communities and support them in understanding how access to public services works (for instance, in other areas it has been assumed that

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<sup>21</sup> [Equality Act 2010](#)

people from other countries know about school holiday dates that has caused issues for households that work). To help welcome people of different ethnicities, one new development on the Southern Fringe, found hosting an international café was effective. This worked as a 'one-stop shop' for people to meet one another to develop social networks and ask any questions they have about living in the new community.

## **Spatial Inequalities in Greater Cambridge and their relation to North East Cambridge**

The collection of district-level data on poverty in existing new communities in South Cambridgeshire remains limited. However, the current data from the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation<sup>22</sup> (IMD) shows that the ten most deprived Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Cambridge lie in the North and North East of the city, in Abbey, Arbury, East and West Chesterton and Kings Hedges wards. The North East Cambridge development is in close proximity to East Chesterton and King's Hedges. Two of Abbey's LSOAs were in the most deprived 20% of LSOAs in the country in 2019, according to the IMD, and these will be linked to NEC via the Chisholm Trail bridge. In 2015, there were also 2 LSOAs in the most deprived 20% of LSOAs nationally, in King's Hedges ward.

The proposed boundary for the North East Cambridge development also adjoins the Fen Road community on the eastern side of the railway line. Gypsies and Travellers have the lowest rate of economic activity of any ethnic group, at 47 per cent, compared with 63 per cent for England and Wales overall. The Office for National Statistics states that the most common reasons for Gypsy or Irish Travellers being economically inactive were looking after the home or family (27%) and due to long term sickness or disability (26% - the highest proportion across all ethnic groups).

Local community groups and other stakeholders consulted as part of the development of the Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy<sup>23</sup> advised that people from low-income areas of the city, including Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller people, have felt excluded from the city centre and can often stay within the boundaries of their own

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<sup>22</sup> [English indices of deprivation 2019](#)

<sup>23</sup> [Anti-Poverty Strategy - Cambridge City Council](#)

wards or neighbourhoods. Actively engaging the Gypsy and Traveller community on Fen Road with the support from individual community development workers who have positive relations with the community will likely result in positive impacts for community cohesion. Moreover, some accommodation is likely to be built close to the existing Fen Road developments. This needs to be considered throughout the process of developing the AAP to mitigate impacts on the amenity of surrounding existing communities.

There is also opportunity to seek input from nearby communities, and especially in King's Hedges and East Chesterton, on the development of North East Cambridge to help prevent social and economic exclusion of these communities and thus contribute towards achieving the vision for the new development.

## **Preferred Approach**

To ensure the North East Cambridge development meets the needs of the new communities and supports surrounding communities while minimising poverty and inequality, the AAP requires a number of considerations. Social and community infrastructure (both indoor and outdoor) provision is key in enabling accessibility to places that benefit health and wellbeing of communities. Provision in the form of a community centre, library, outdoor space with play areas, a community garden to allow for food growing, as well as health services and schools on site will allow for accessibility and prevention of health and education inequalities.

The AAP for the new development could tackle social exclusion of low-income groups by considering:

- Placement of transport links, including pedestrian and cycle paths, from already existing communities into the development such as Kings Hedges, East Chesterton, and the Fen Road site, and ensuring that the development is permeable.
- Location of housing to ensure that there is a mixture of tenure types in any given area.
- Provision of affordable local shops, and places to socialise, which were key areas of dissatisfaction for residents of the Southern Fringe new communities in a recent resident survey.

- Provision of on-site community and cultural infrastructure for communities to use that are multi-functional for different ages and abilities. The community facilities including flexible indoor and outdoor spaces will facilitate and encourage social activity, reducing a range of inequalities.
- Provision of local services including schools and health facilities onsite or in close proximity to the development to help address educational and health inequalities.
- Space provided for food growing and community facilities with community kitchen.
- Encouragement of implementing local initiatives, support groups and governance at NEC to support communities existing and future needs.