

Greater Cambridge Local Plan

Draft Plan Interim Statement of Common Ground



GREATER CAMBRIDGE
SHARED PLANNING

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 A statement of common ground is a written record of the progress made by strategic policy-making authorities during the process of planning for strategic cross-boundary matters. It documents where effective co-operation is and is not happening throughout the plan-making process and is a way of demonstrating at examination that plans are deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working across local authority boundaries. It is also part of the evidence required for local planning authorities to demonstrate that they have complied with the duty to cooperate.
- 1.2 This interim version of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan Statement of Common Ground forms part of the consultation on the Greater Cambridge Local Plan Draft Plan. It documents the outcomes of co-operation to date in preparing the local plan in order to inform and shape a positively prepared and justified strategy. In doing so, it addresses and takes account of the requirements set out in the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (in particular paragraphs 24-28) and Planning Practice Guidance ([Plan-Making - Maintaining effective cooperation](#)). It has also had regard to relevant advice produced by the Planning Advisory Service ([PAS Statement of Common Ground Advice and Template, January 2019](#)).
- 1.3 As a Draft Plan interim Statement of Common Ground, this document sets out Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council's current position regarding points of common and uncommon ground for relevant strategic cross-boundary matters.
- 1.4 The Statement will be updated in the light of relevant stakeholders' responses to the Greater Cambridge Local Plan Draft Plan consultation (see section 7- Timetable for Agreement, Review and Update for more details).

Relationship with other documents

- 1.5 The following two documents are closely related to this Statement of Common Ground and should be read alongside it:
- The Greater Cambridge Local Plan Duty to Cooperate Statement of Compliance, which sets out the process completed to date as part of the ongoing cooperation with relevant bodies regarding strategic cross-boundary matters.
 - The Greater Cambridge Local Plan Statement of Consultation, which records the formal consultation process completed to date and how consultation responses have informed the draft plan consultation.

2. Strategic geography

2.1 This Statement of Common Ground addresses strategic cross-boundary matters relating to the Greater Cambridge geography, incorporating Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire districts, as shown in Figure 1.

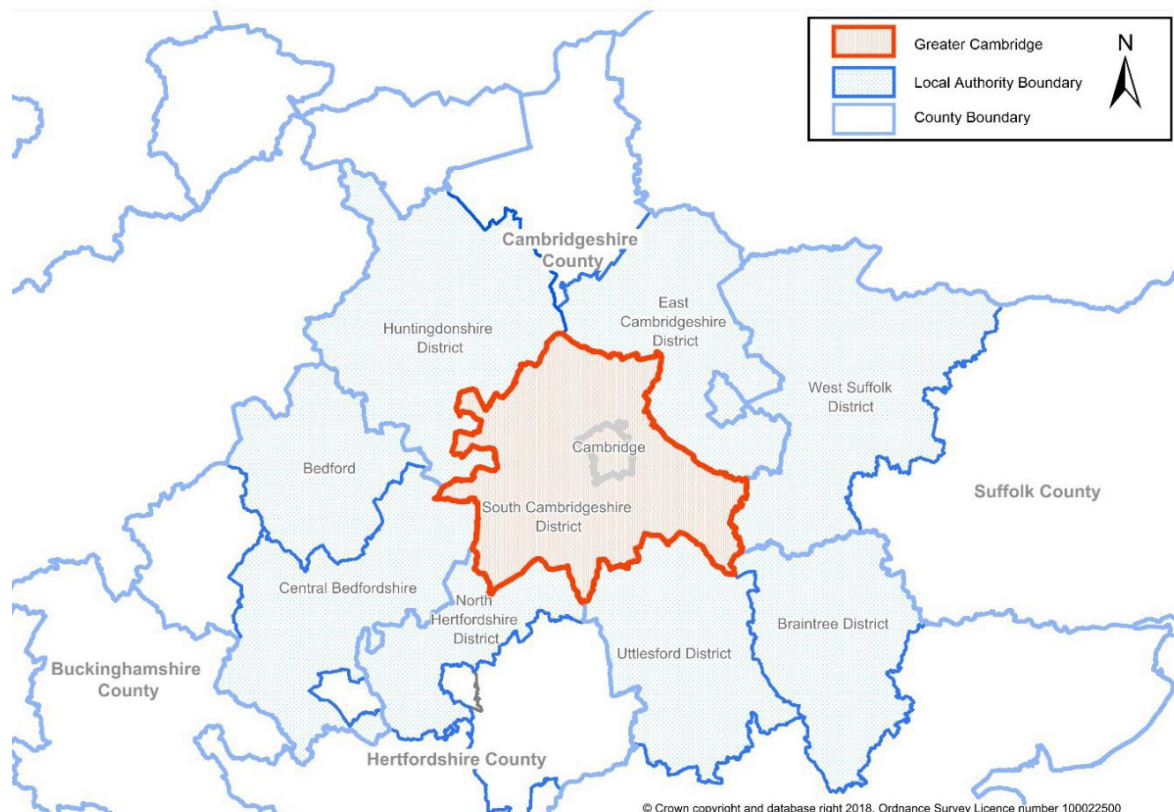


Figure 1: Strategic Geography for the Greater Cambridge Statement of Common Ground

2.2 Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire have a strong functional relationship, and the Greater Cambridge area forms the centre of the previously identified Cambridge sub-region Housing Market Area and the Cambridge Travel to Work Area. While other districts are included within these defined geographies, the strongest housing market and commuting connections are between Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. The Greater Cambridge area also forms the core part of the functional 'Greater Cambridge' economic geography identified in the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Independent Economic Review.

2.3 At this draft plan stage therefore, this statement of common ground is produced as a single document focused on the Greater Cambridge area. Ahead of the Proposed Submission stage the councils will consider the potential to produce a number of statements of common ground addressing specific strategic cross-

boundary matters with relevant duty to cooperate bodies, which could address different functional geographies.

3. Parties involved

3.1 The principal bodies that have an interest in this Interim Statement of Common Ground are those neighbouring authorities and prescribed bodies identified in the Greater Cambridge Local Plan Draft Plan Duty to Cooperate Statement of Compliance, which are:

- Neighbouring local planning authorities (identified as strategic policy-making authorities in the NPPF and PPG);
- Cambridgeshire County Council (Local Highways Authority and responsible for a range of infrastructure and services including education and social care);
- Neighbouring County Councils;
- Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (Local Transport Authority and which has a range of other responsibilities for infrastructure, strategic planning, economic growth, business support and adult education); and
- The following prescribed bodies for which substantive strategic matters are identified:
 - Environment Agency
 - Highways England
 - Natural England
 - Historic England.

4. Signatories

4.1 We propose that the central signatories to the Statement of Common Ground/s should be the three councils with relevant statutory plan-making responsibilities for Greater Cambridge, namely Cambridge City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council, together with the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (see section 7 for Timetable for Agreement, Review and Update). Additionally, we propose that those local authorities with boundaries directly adjoining Greater Cambridge should be signatories to the document where there are specific strategic cross-boundary matters of relevance to them. These are:

- Huntingdonshire District Council
- East Cambridgeshire District Council
- West Suffolk Council

- Braintree District Council
- Uttlesford District Council
- North Hertfordshire District Council
- Central Bedfordshire Council
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Essex County Council
- Suffolk County Council.

4.2 Additional signatories will be those prescribed bodies which are identified in the Duty to Cooperate Statement of Compliance as having an interest in a specific strategic cross-boundary matter. The Statement of Common Ground/s prepared for the proposed submission plan will record all individual signatories at the end of the document/s.

5. Identified strategic matters

5.1 Strategic matters were initially identified through a scoping exercise and nearby local authorities and prescribed duty to cooperate bodies were asked for their views on the identified strategic cross boundary matters. Further details are set out in the First Proposals Duty to Cooperate Statement of Compliance.

5.2 The agreed strategic cross boundary matters for Greater Cambridge are as follows:

- Strategy:
 - scale of growth, including housing need and employment;
 - pattern of growth, including Green Belt and Strategic developments on the boundary of Greater Cambridge;
 - Delivery of growth, including land supply, water supply, and wastewater treatment.
- Gypsy & Traveller accommodation needs;
- Strategic developments near to the boundary of Greater Cambridge;
- Transport;
- Wildlife habitats, green infrastructure and landscape;
- Energy, carbon offsetting and renewable energy generation;
- Social, health and community infrastructure.

5.3 For each matter, the Duty to Cooperate Statement of Compliance provides details of the relevant bodies, the joint evidence, engagement to date and the current position. For the purposes of this interim Statement of Common Ground only the current position is recorded, including any areas where agreement has not been reached to date or where there are other outstanding issues.

Strategy: pattern and scale of growth, including housing need and employment

Scale of growth

5.4 The Draft Plan consultation identifies that the Local Plan will meet the following objectively assessed needs for development in the period 2024-2045:

- Approximately 72,300 jobs
- 48,195 homes.

5.5 The objectively assessed needs are based on an understanding that the up to date Standard Method calculation outcome for Greater Cambridge supports the most likely jobs forecast for the area. This jobs forecast is primarily derived from jobs that are specifically forecast to arise in the Greater Cambridge area. As such, these jobs are not expected to be drawn from outside the area and, consequently, it is considered unlikely that there are implications in terms of limiting employment growth in other districts.

Pattern of growth

Green Belt

5.6 There are no duty to cooperate issues currently arising from the draft plan strategy with regard to the Green Belt (apart from those arising between Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, which have been fully addressed through the preparation of this joint plan).

Strategic developments on the boundary of Greater Cambridge

5.7 In preparing the draft plan, the Councils have discussed with the relevant neighbouring authorities' sites on or close to the Greater Cambridge boundary, that have been submitted to the Greater Cambridge Local Plan process, or to neighbouring local plan processes.

5.8 The Councils consider that the only site included within the preferred development strategy which has potential for substantive cross-boundary impacts is Cambourne North, relating to its transport impacts. Further evidence on Cambourne North will be prepared ahead of Proposed Submission stage; this may create the need for further engagement with the relevant neighbouring authorities (primarily Huntingdonshire, Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough) to ensure no adverse impacts.

5.9 The Councils are not aware of any strategic scale developments formally proposed by neighbouring authorities on or close to the boundary of Greater Cambridge.

Delivery of growth

Land supply

5.10 Sufficient commitments and new sites exist within Greater Cambridge to meet the identified development needs without the need to request that one or more neighbouring authorities should assist under the duty to cooperate. As such, the Councils have not asked neighbouring districts to meet their development needs; nor have we been asked to meet the development needs of other districts. We will continue to engage with all relevant organisations as we take the plan forward.

Water overview

5.11 Water issues are shaped by river basins which cross boundaries. Water supply and waste water capacity challenges, and their impacts on water quality (and associated biodiversity impacts) are the substantive relevant strategic cross boundary matters.

Water supply

5.12 Following the identification of water supply challenges at the First Proposals stage and the Development Strategy Update 2023, a range of actions were undertaken to explore and identify how the issues could be overcome. In particular, the government established a Cambridge Water Scarcity Group, to bring together all the relevant agencies and stakeholders to address shorter and longer term solutions. In the shorter term, a range of measures are being implemented to improve the efficiency of how water is used. In the medium term, to support delivery of the sites in the emerging plan, a pipeline connection to Grafham Water will boost supplies to the Cambridge area from 2032, and the Fens Reservoir will further increase supplies from the mid 2030's. The draft Local Plan responds to the issue via the phasing of development and by including policies that would require new developments to have a level of water efficiency beyond national levels. Cambridge Water Company adopted their new water plan in spring 2025, and this will be reviewed every 5 years. The Regional Water Plan identifies that in the longer term, into the 2040's and beyond, adaptive approaches and new infrastructure such as desalination will need to be applied to ensure there continues to be water available to meet needs whilst protecting the environment.

5.13 In summary, our evidence demonstrates that with the measures proposed by government and the water industry, and with the policies set out in the Plan, adequate water supply will be available to support delivery of the draft plan allocations in a way that supports the goal of reducing impacts on our chalk streams.

5.14 Drawing on the above, there are no areas of disagreement with other parties on this strategic matter.

Waste water treatment

- 5.15 The Government's announcement that it will not be funding the relocation of the Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant (CWWTP), means that there is currently uncertainty regarding the programme for future waste water treatment serving Cambridge. Assuming the CWWTP relocation does not take place, upgrades will be required to the existing CWWTP at North East Cambridge to ensure it can deal with future wastewater flows in a sustainable way, and Anglian Water have committed to exploring the alternative measures needed over the coming months.
- 5.16 We have engaged with Anglian Water and the Environment Agency and prepared a Draft Water Cycle Strategy that explores future needs. We now expect Anglian Water to consider and plan to accommodate future needs as they prepare the DWMP. We will continue to engage with relevant partners to confirm and refine the position for the Proposed Submission stage of plan-making.
- 5.17 Drawing on the above, there is further work to be completed on this strategic matter, but there are no areas of disagreement with other parties.

Summary

- 5.18 Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council agree on the approach to strategy, and there are no areas of disagreement with other parties on this strategic matter.

Gypsy & Traveller accommodation needs

- 5.19 The Greater Cambridge Accommodation Needs Assessment of Gypsies, Travellers, Travelling Showpeople and Bargee Travellers and other caravan and houseboat dwellers was published in September 2024. An Addendum report was published in January 2025 to extend the period of need considered up to 2045 to match the revised end period of the draft Local Plan.
- 5.20 The final assessment has identified a need for 157 gypsy and traveller residential pitches in South Cambridgeshire and 2 in Cambridge alongside 20 residential plots for travelling showpeople in South Cambridgeshire. No need was identified for travelling showpeople residential plots in Cambridge.
- 5.21 The draft Local Plan sets out a strategy to address needs within Greater Cambridge through a series of measures including making more productive use of existing sites, new sites for permanent pitches associated with major development sites and the assessment of windfall sites through a criteria-based policy.
- 5.22 There are no areas of disagreement on this strategic matter.

Transport

- 5.23 For the draft Local Plan, the Councils have engaged extensively with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority as Local Transport Authority and Cambridgeshire County Council as Local Highways Authority, and have engaged with other bodies as relevant including with neighbouring authorities, to form a shared understanding of strategic transport matters relevant to the Greater Cambridge Local Plan as described below.
- 5.24 Of note, the Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy currently being developed by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority will include the mitigation and infrastructure requirements necessary to promote sustainable travel as part of the Local Plan development strategy. The foundations for the Transport Strategy are improvements to key corridors, that will provide significant transport capacity to support the delivery of committed development. We are working together with these bodies to support delivery of appropriate schemes.
- 5.25 Beyond these schemes, the transport evidence supporting the draft Local Plan development strategy identifies the additional site-specific mitigation and infrastructure required to enable delivery of the new sites included within the development strategy – these are agreed by the relevant Duty to Cooperate partners. The Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy will draw on this understanding, but will also identify interventions to address strategic transport issues, including the severe congestion challenges experienced in Cambridge. The Combined Authority has published a [Statement of Intent](#) ahead of the draft Local Plan consultation. This confirms its commitment that, to support the submission of the Local Plan, the Transport Strategy will set out solutions to confirm both the transport infrastructure requirements associated with the strategic sites proposed in the Greater Cambridge Local Plan, and initiatives and policies to deal with wider transport challenges across Greater Cambridge. In combination, these site specific and strategic measures will demonstrate that the sites included in the plan can be delivered.
- 5.26 In summary, all relevant parties are committed to further collaboration and engagement to support the progression of the Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy in time to support the submission of the Local Plan; as such there are no areas of disagreement on this strategic matter.

Wildlife habitats, green infrastructure and landscape

- 5.27 The Councils are taking an ambitious approach to nature recovery in the draft plan, have engaged with the emerging Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) process, and have completed a check of the draft plan to ensure it is aligned with the LNRS. There is broad support from the

relevant bodies to the approach taken and, therefore, no areas of disagreement on this strategic matter. The Councils are committed to working with all partners to reduce the impact of water abstraction on chalk streams including in terms of habitats – see more detail above under Strategy: Water.

Energy, carbon offsetting and renewable energy generation

5.28 The councils have engaged with energy providers, neighbouring authorities and other relevant partners to ensure a coherent approach to energy and carbon issues within and outside Greater Cambridge, in particular involving these parties in the process of preparing the identified evidence base.

5.29 The councils continue to engage with relevant bodies on these issues, particularly the need for new or upgraded energy infrastructure to inform the infrastructure delivery plan to support the local plan.

5.30 There are no areas of disagreement on this strategic matter.

Social, health and community infrastructure

5.31 To date no specific duty to cooperate have arisen in relation to social, health and community infrastructure that would require substantive discussion with duty to cooperate bodies. This strategic matter will be kept under review.

Heritage

5.32 The main cross-boundary heritage implications arise from heritage assets likely to be affected by new allocations which fall within other districts, primarily between Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. The Councils have engaged with Historic England in the preparation of site-specific Heritage Impact Assessments for all allocations included within the plan to ensure appropriate mitigation of heritage impacts.

5.33 There are no areas of disagreement on this strategic matter.

6. Governance arrangements

6.1 For the Greater Cambridge authorities, sign-off of the final Statement of Common ground will include member engagement, including consultation with lead members on behalf of the two councils.

6.2 It is anticipated that the other signatories to the statement will identify the relevant person to sign the document as they see fit, whether this involves political or senior officer approval.

7. Timetable for agreement, review and update

7.1 Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council will work with relevant parties to address identified strategic matters on an ongoing basis and in relation to the output timings of relevant evidence where this is not already completed. The aim is to resolve any outstanding matters through meetings with the appropriate bodies, wherever possible. This Statement is a living document that has been, and will continue to be, reviewed and updated through the Local Plan process as follows:

- As an interim Statement of Common Ground accompanying the Greater Cambridge Local Plan Draft Plan consultation, this document sets out Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council's current understanding of points of common and uncommon ground for relevant strategic cross-boundary matters.
- This interim Statement of Common Ground, reflects our updated understanding of points of common and uncommon ground for relevant strategic cross-boundary matters, including drawing on relevant stakeholders' responses to the Greater Cambridge Local Plan Draft Plan preferred options consultation (2021).
- One or more further updated draft Statement of Common Grounds will be published alongside the Proposed Submission local plan, including drawing on relevant stakeholders' responses to the draft plan consultation. As above, Ahead of the Proposed Submission stage the councils will consider the potential to produce a number of statements of common ground addressing specific strategic cross-boundary matters with relevant duty to cooperate bodies, which could address different functional geographies.
- Following receipt of comments regarding the proposed submission local plan, we anticipate seeking signatures to final Statement of Common Grounds, confirming the formal position of relevant signatories for submission to the independent examiner as Examination documents.
- Beyond the point of submission, the Statement/s may be further updated, as necessary, should further agreement be needed through the examination process.