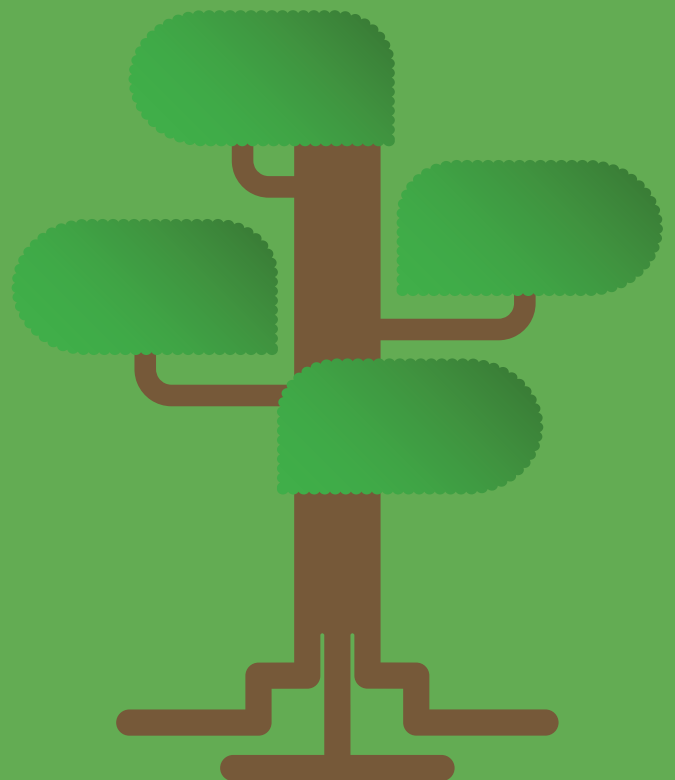


4

# Climate Change



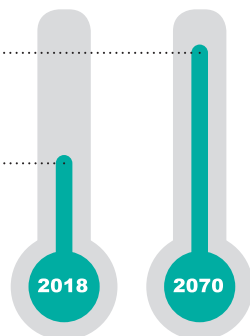
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## Winter

**+4.2°C**

Temperature  
increase  
by 2070



Rainfall  
increase  
by 2070

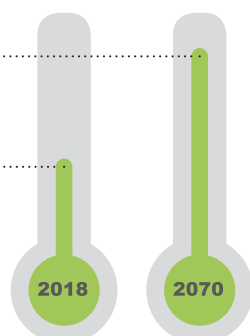
**+35%**



## Summer

**+5.4°C**

Temperature  
increase  
by 2070



Rainfall  
decrease  
by 2070

**-47%**



# Introduction

- 4.1** In the Climate Change theme, we set out policies to reduce the impact of development on climate change, and to adapt development to its impacts.

## How community engagement helped shape the climate change policies

- 4.2** Through consultation feedback you told us that climate change was your highest priority theme. Setting ambitious targets for carbon reduction to help deliver net zero carbon was supported. Our plan also needed to be flexible to respond to changing technologies. There was concern about development putting pressure on scarce water resources and impacting on our precious chalk streams.

---

## Our strategic priority for our climate change policies

- 4.3** **Strategic Priority:** Help Greater Cambridge transition to net zero carbon by 2050, by ensuring that development is sited in places that help to limit carbon emissions, is designed to the highest achievable standards for energy and water use to reduce environmental impacts, adapts to and mitigates against climate change, and is resilient to current and future climate risks, including flooding.
- 
- 4.4** The UK has a legally binding requirement to achieve net zero carbon by 2050. Legislation requires local plans to include policies that ensure that development and use of land in the local planning authority's area contribute to the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.
- 4.5** Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council have both declared climate emergencies. Climate change is a key priority across the Councils' plans and strategies, but the Local Plan is a particularly important tool for implementing positive change.
- 4.6** Our spatial strategy has been informed by a carbon assessment that highlights the impact that transport emissions can have and promotes patterns of development that enable low-carbon transport modes. We have explored the issue of water availability and developed our plan to ensure that a sustainable water supply can be made available to support growth.
- 4.7** Our policies in this chapter seek to shape the form of development, to ensure it responds to the challenges climate change will create in terms of hotter, drier summers and more extreme rainfall events, but also it minimises the impact of development on the causes of climate change. The standards it sets in many cases go beyond national

standards, responding to the opportunities we have in Greater Cambridge, and our expectation that development must be of a high quality.

### **What our climate change policies do**

- Development proposals will be required to demonstrate how they have embedded the principles of climate change mitigation and adaptation into their design.
- New buildings must be energy efficient and use renewable energy to meet their remaining energy needs.
- Buildings must be highly water efficient, adhering to local water efficiency standards that seek to address the water supply issues within the Greater Cambridge area.
- Development must use sustainable urban drainage systems to manage water in as natural way as possible.
- Development must be safe from all sources of flooding and not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.
- Support renewable and low-carbon energy development projects in the right places and of the right scale, and support the development of a low-carbon heat network in Cambridge city centre.
- Enable reuse of materials and recycling during construction and when buildings are in use.
- Protect peat soils and encourage green infrastructure to support carbon sequestration.

# Policy CC/SD:

## Sustainable development and the climate emergency

### What this policy does

4.8

This policy sets out the Sustainability Statement requirements for development in Greater Cambridge. Sustainability Statements provide an important mechanism through which planning applications can demonstrate compliance with policies on sustainability and addressing the climate challenge in the Local Plan.

#### Policy CC/SD: Sustainable development and the climate emergency

1. Planning permission will only be granted for proposals that demonstrate and embed the principles of climate change mitigation and adaptation into the development. Major and minor planning applications, with the exception of householder applications, must demonstrate how applicable local and national policy requirements have been achieved through the submission of a Sustainability Statement.
2. The level of information provided within a Sustainability Statement should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposed development and it should outline the approach to a range of issues, including: a) climate change adaptation; b) net zero carbon; c) integrated water management; d) sustainable travel; e) waste management; f) nature-based design solutions; g) the use of materials; h) circular economy; and i) carbon sequestration.
3. A standalone Sustainability Statement must be submitted as part of planning applications for all types of major development. For minor development applications, the Sustainability Statement may form part of a Design and Access Statement or Planning Statement for the proposal.

### Supporting information

4.9

National planning policy requires local planning authorities to adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Climate change mitigation means taking action to reduce the causes of climate change, which can primarily be achieved through reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Climate change adaptation comprises design and construction methods that allow a development to be resilient to the environmental effects of climate change.

**4.10** The principles of climate change adaptation and mitigation are embedded within this Local Plan; Policy CC/SD provides an important foundation for other policies in the Local Plan and a mechanism through which planning applications can demonstrate compliance with various policies within the Local Plan of relevance to climate mitigation and adaptation. The policy requires applicants to submit a Sustainability Statement to demonstrate how the principles of climate change mitigation and adaptation have been embedded within the development proposal, providing details of sustainable design and construction measures proposed for the development. This will be expanded on in a Sustainability Checklist. Further technical guidance may also be provided in a future update to the Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD.

**4.11** Where relevant, the Sustainability Statement should outline how the proposed development will:

- Demonstrate high levels of energy efficiency and low levels of embodied carbon;
- Integrate the use and generation of renewable and low carbon energy;
- Promote all forms of sustainable transport, including public transport, electric vehicles, cycling or walking;
- Demonstrate sustainable waste management and integrate the principles of the circular economy;
- Support the delivery and maintenance of sites for carbon capture and sequestration;
- Manage and conserve water resources;
- Demonstrate that water management has been considered in an integrated way which protects and enhances water quality;
- Demonstrate that flood risk from all sources has been avoided or managed;
- Use layout, building orientation, design, and materials to ensure properties are not susceptible to overheating and include open space and vegetation for shading and cooling; and
- Create a better linked habitat network by conserving, creating or expanding existing habitats.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Climate Change Topic Paper (2025)

# Policy CC/DC:

## Designing for a changing climate

### What this policy does

- 4.12** This policy sets out how developments should take account of our changing climate and how design and placemaking can be used to help address the challenge of climate change, including overheating.

#### Policy CC/DC: Designing for a changing climate

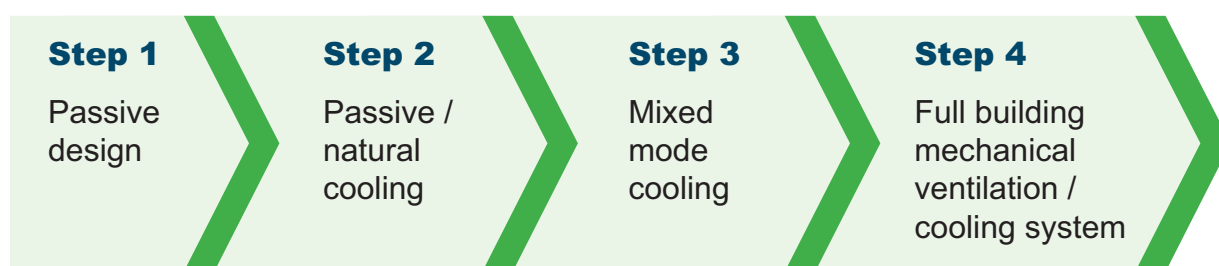
1. Planning applications must demonstrate that design solutions have been appropriately integrated that positively respond to our changing climate and reduce climate risks.
2. Development proposals should reflect the cooling hierarchy priority order to minimise the impacts of overheating in the built environment and reduce the demand for air conditioning systems.
3. All new dwellings shall be designed to benefit from cross ventilation where possible, and take passive, design-led approaches to reducing excess solar gain.

### Supporting information

- 4.13** Placemaking is a powerful tool in helping to enhance the climate resilience of communities. Early consideration of the design, layout and scale of proposals can help enhance the adaptive capacity of new development – further guidance is provided in the [National Model Design Code](#).
- 4.14** The Met Office’s UK Climate Projections highlight that even under lower emission scenarios, the UK will still see higher average yearly temperatures and an increase in extreme weather events due to historic greenhouse gas emissions. In response to these challenges, the Councils declared a climate emergency in 2019. Overheating, particularly in urban areas, is becoming an increasingly problematic consequence of climate change, which can have potentially serious impacts on human health. The Committee on Climate Change has recommended that planning policy must ensure that overheating risks in our homes and workplaces are mitigated through the early design stages.

**4.15** The cooling hierarchy priority order, as illustrated by **Figure 00**, is as follows:

1. **Prioritise passive design solutions:** Minimise internal heat generation through energy efficient design and reduction of the amount of heat entering the building in the summer and shoulder months through consideration of orientation, overhangs and shading, albedo, fenestration, insulation and green roofs. Where heat is to be managed within the building through exposed internal mass and high ceilings, provision must be made for secure nighttime ventilation to enable night purge to take place.
2. **Then look to passive/natural cooling solutions:** Use of outside air, where possible pre-cooled by soft landscaping, a green roof or by passing it underground to ventilate and cool a building without the use of a powered system. This includes maximising cross ventilation, passive stack and wind-driven ventilation, and enabling night purge ventilation. Single aspect dwellings should be avoided for all schemes as effective passive ventilation can be difficult or impossible to achieve. Windows and/or ventilation panels should be designed to allow effective and secure ventilation.
3. **Then look to mixed-mode cooling solutions:** Using local mechanical ventilation/cooling provided where required to supplement the above measures using (in order of preference): i) low energy mechanical cooling (e.g. fan powered ventilation with/without evaporative cooling or ground coupled cooling); or ii) air conditioning – not a preferred approach as these systems are energy intensive.
4. **Then look to full-building mechanical ventilation/cooling systems:** Ensuring the lowest carbon/energy options are selected and are only considered after all other elements of the hierarchy have been utilised.



**Figure 129:** The cooling hierarchy priority order (source: Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document, 2020).

**4.16** It is recommended that thermal modelling be undertaken to understand the performance of a proposed new development, with buildings designed and built to meet the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers' (CIBSE) latest overheating standards.



**4.17** Design solutions that may assist in responding positively to the climate emergency and reduce climate risks include:

- using nature-based solutions, such as green infrastructure and enhancing tree canopy cover, to contribute to reductions in the urban heat island effect;
- considering the impacts of built form on microclimate, including solar access, heat and wind flow;
- designing for the long-term implications of increased flood risk by integrating sustainable drainage systems as part of a development's landscape design to manage flood risks from more unpredictable weather and avoiding development in areas identified as likely to flood in the future;
- prioritising the use of cool materials and features such as cool roofs and pavements both in landscaping and building design;
- designing for accessible communities by minimising the need to travel, creating high-quality links with both active and public travel networks, and delivering measures that promotes sustainable travel practices (e.g. easily accessible and secure cycle storage) in line with Policy I/ST; and
- simplifying the ability to adapt buildings through internal arrangement, internal height, and resilient design such as the use of internal stud walls to allow for easier reconfiguration of internal layout and incorporation of circular economy principles.

**4.18** To consider how design can reduce excess solar gain, it is recommended that applications for new homes refer to the [Good Homes Alliance Overheating Toolkit](#). This can be used to identify early design stage approaches to mitigating risk prior to assessment via Part O of the Building Regulations.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Net Zero Carbon Study (2021)

# Policy CC/NZ:

## Net zero carbon new buildings

### What this policy does

- 4.19** This policy sets the levels of energy use that will be allowed for new development, how renewable energy should be used to meet that energy need, and how whole life carbon emissions (emissions associated with constructing buildings) should be considered.

#### Policy CC/NZ: Net zero carbon new buildings

Where appropriate new development must achieve net zero operational emissions by following a hierarchical approach of reducing heat and power demand then supplying all energy demand through onsite energy generation. Through the submission of an appropriate energy assessment incorporating energy performance calculations undertaken using a methodology capable of providing accurate predictions of total in-use energy (e.g. CIBSE TM54 or the Passivhaus Planning Package), proposed new development will demonstrate the following hierarchical approach:

### Net Zero Carbon buildings – operational emissions

#### Part A: Space heating

1. Achieve a specific space heating demand as follows:
  - All new dwellings must achieve a space heating demand of 15 – 20 kWh per meter squared per year.
  - All new non-domestic buildings must achieve a space heating demand of 15 – 20 kWh per meter squared per year.
2. All heating should be provided through low carbon fuels (not fossil fuels).
3. No new developments should be connected to the gas grid.

#### Part B: Total Energy Use Intensity (EUI)

4. EUI targets are achieved as per building type (set out in kWh per meter squared per year) as follows:
  - All dwellings must achieve an EUI of no more than 35 kWh per meter squared per year.

- Non-domestic buildings must achieve the following EUI where technically feasible and viable by building type:
  - i. Offices: Equivalent to the UK Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard 2030 targets (and sub-typologies where available).
  - ii. Schools: 65 kWh per meter squared per year.
  - iii. Multi-residential (e.g. student accommodation): Equivalent to the UK Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard 2030 targets (and sub-typologies where available).
  - iv. Retail: Equivalent to the UK Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard 2030 targets (and sub-typologies where available).
  - v. Leisure: Equivalent to the UK Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard 2030 targets (and sub-typologies where available).
  - vi. Research facility: Equivalent to the UK Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard 2030 targets (and sub-typologies where available).
  - vii. Higher education teaching facilities: Equivalent to the UK Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard 2030 targets (and sub-typologies where available).
  - viii. Light industrial uses: Equivalent to the UK Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard 2030 targets (and sub-typologies where available).
  - ix. Hotel: Equivalent to the UK Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard 2030 targets (and sub-typologies where available).

### **Part C: Energy performance/Onsite Renewable Energy**

5. Proposals must seek to maximise opportunities to generate on-site renewable energy to enable the development, where possible, to achieve all energy demands through onsite energy generation.

### **Part D: Energy Offsetting and Assured Performance**

6. Where economic viability or technical constraints prevent policy compliance, proposals must first and foremost strive to meet the space heating and total energy consumption thresholds. Proposals must then benefit as much as possible from onsite renewable energy generation. Energy offsetting should only be used as a last resort (for example where there is limited roof space to generate renewable energy). Offsetting payments must be used to invest in additional renewable energy generation to ensure that net zero carbon buildings are delivered. These offsets will primarily be delivered via developer contributions to a fund which would be ring-fenced for use only to deliver local projects that would deliver the required shortfall in renewable energy. In some cases, it may be acceptable for the developer to conduct direct delivery of these local energy offsetting projects rather than provide a financial contribution, subject to Council approval of the proposed projects based on meeting criteria around their effectiveness, suitability and guaranteed delivery timescales.

7. All applicable developments must demonstrate use of an assured performance method in order to ensure that the buildings' operational energy performance reflects design intentions and addresses the performance gap, which may be secured via condition.

## **Net Zero Carbon Buildings – construction and embodied carbon**

8. All major development must calculate whole life carbon emissions through a nationally recognised whole life carbon assessment tool and demonstrate actions to reduce up-front embodied carbon emissions (modules A1-A5 of the RICS methodology) through good design and material efficiency. This should include reducing emissions associated with construction plant.
- 

## **Supporting information**

- 4.20** The UK has a legally binding requirement to achieve net zero carbon by 2050. In June 2021, Government adopted its sixth carbon budget, which forms part of the route map to achieve net zero carbon by 2050 and requires a 63% reduction in emissions from 2019 to 2035 (78% relative to 1990).
- 4.21** Our Net Zero Carbon Study (2021) advises that new buildings need to be built to net zero carbon standards as soon as possible for Greater Cambridge to play its part in meeting the UK's carbon budgets. By considering the three elements of space heating demand, energy use intensity and onsite renewable energy together, the policy seeks to deliver low energy consumption, energy efficient, net zero energy buildings.
- 4.22** This policy deals with all of the carbon associated with new buildings. This includes carbon associated with the energy needed to power homes and commercial buildings, and the carbon associated with the processes and materials used to construct those buildings, known as embodied carbon, to promote lean design and the implementation of circular economy principles.
- 4.23** The policy also seeks to address the performance gap between designed performance and as built performance through the use of an Assured Performance Process. These are all elements that are not fully covered in other regulations such as Building Regulations. The policy is underpinned by detailed technical and viability evidence, demonstrating that the approach is feasible and viable.
- 4.24** Applicants will need to take a design approach that follows the energy hierarchy to meet these energy use requirements. Making sustainable design decisions early on, such as considering the most effective orientation, optimising the form factor of a building and taking a fabric first approach will help applicants meet space heating demand and EUI policy requirements more easily. Following this, applicants will need to supply energy efficiently, and the policy provides flexibility by not specifying how this should be achieved. In the majority of cases it is likely that heat pumps will be chosen, and the technical work underpinning the policy was undertaken on the basis of the use of air source heat pumps. Policy CC/RE and the policies map also identify areas for district

## Whole life carbon assessment information

### Whole life carbon – system boundary

#### Embodied carbon / life cycle embodied carbon

##### Upfront carbon

##### Upfront biogenic carbon

|                  |    |  |
|------------------|----|--|
| Pre-construction | A0 | Nonphysical process before construction, preliminary studies, tests and design |
| Product          | A1 | Raw material supply  |
|                  | A2 | Transport  |
|                  | A3 | Manufacturing  |
| Construction     | A4 | Transport  |
|                  | A5 | Construction and installation  |

##### In use

|    |               |
|----|---------------|
| B1 | Use           |
| B2 | Maintenance   |
| B3 | Repair        |
| B4 | Replacement   |
| B5 | Refurbishment |

##### Biogenic carbon

##### End of life

|    |                               |
|----|-------------------------------|
| C1 | Deconstruction and demolition |
| C2 | Transport                     |
| C3 | Waste processing              |
| C4 | Disposal                      |

##### Biogenic carbon

|                    |    |                    |
|--------------------|----|--------------------|
| Operational carbon | B6 | Operational energy |
|                    | B7 | Operational water  |

|             |    |                                      |
|-------------|----|--------------------------------------|
| User carbon | B8 | User activities not covered in B1–B7 |
|-------------|----|--------------------------------------|

##### Information beyond the construction works life cycle

##### Biogenic carbon

|   |    |   |
|---|----|---|
| Benefits and loads beyond the system boundary | D1 | net output flows from reuse, recycling, energy recovery, other recovery |
|   | D2 | Exported utilities, eg electric energy, thermal energy, potable water   |

**Figure 130:** Building and infrastructure life cycle stages and information modules  
(source: Whole life carbon assessment for the built environment. 2nd edition, September 2023, Version 3, August 2024, RICS).

heating (from zero emission sources), and applicants may wish to consider connection to such networks. Lastly, the policy requires onsite renewable energy generation to match the total energy demand, to achieve an on-site net zero energy balance. Again, flexibility is allowed for in terms of choice of technologies, but it is likely that integration of rooftop solar pv will be the most likely choice for new developments.

**4.25** There may be exceptional circumstances where policy requirements cannot be met in full, for example where there is insufficient roof space for renewable energy generation. In these cases, the priority should be meeting the space heating demand and EUI requirements of the policy, followed by implementing as much renewable energy generation as possible. The remaining energy balance would then be offset via payment into a fund to be used for delivery of renewable energy elsewhere within Greater Cambridge.

**4.26** Energy offsetting will primarily be delivered via developer contributions to a fund which would be ring-fenced for use only to deliver local projects that would deliver the required shortfall in renewable energy. In some cases, it may be acceptable for the developer to conduct direct delivery of these local energy offsetting projects rather than provide a financial contribution, subject to Council approval of the proposed projects based on meeting criteria around their effectiveness, suitability and guaranteed delivery timescales.

**4.27** To reduce carbon emissions from construction and embodied carbon, applicants are encouraged to align their proposals with the relevant upfront embodied carbon targets set out in the UK Zero Carbon Buildings Standard, with reference to the targets relevant at the time of application.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Climate Change Topic Paper (2025)
- Greater Cambridge Net Zero Carbon Study (2021)
- Greater Cambridge Net Zero Carbon Study updates (2025):
  - Update to Cost Modelling (Currie and Brown)
  - National policy context update
  - UK Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard Summary
  - Greater Cambridge Carbon Budget Assessment

# Policy CC/WE:

## Water efficiency in new developments

### What this policy does

- 4.28** This policy sets the levels of water efficiency that new developments must comply with, responding to the water supply pressures facing Greater Cambridge and the need to protect the water environment.

#### Policy CC/WE: Water efficiency in new developments

1. All development proposals (with the exception of householder applications) must demonstrate that there will be an adequate water supply available to serve the development. Where development is being phased, each phase must demonstrate sufficient water supply and the provision of the necessary infrastructure prior to occupation of that phase of development.
2. All development must demonstrate highly water efficient design in line with the following requirements:
  - a. for residential development of 100 or more dwellings, water usage of no more than 80 litres/person/day. To achieve this level, some form of water reuse or recycling will be necessary with dual pipe systems for potable and non-potable water, subject to amendments to relevant water legislation. Proposals that seek to deliver levels of water usage below this level are encouraged.
  - b. for residential development of less than 100 dwellings, water usage of between 90 to 100 litres/person/day. Proposals that seek to deliver levels of water usage below this level are encouraged.
  - c. for non-residential development, 5 credits for category Wat 01 of BREEAM, unless demonstrated not practicable. Also, full credits for category Wat 02 and category Wat 03 of BREEAM.
  - d. for non-residential developments that use water as part of a commercial process(es), full credits for category Wat 04 of BREEAM.
  - e. proposals involving the refurbishment or change of use of existing buildings should undertake retrofitting to increase water efficiency.
3. Details of any water reuse or recycling system must be provided in the Sustainability Statement, showing the location of infrastructure and including details of how it will be managed and maintained.



4. Each individual dwelling, including flats within a larger building, must have its own water meter to enable the monitoring of water use.
  5. All new dwellings with private outdoor amenity space should provide a water butt for collection of rainwater for outdoor irrigation. The use of rainwater should be prioritised for outdoor irrigation of shared amenity space/ landscape areas in residential developments and non-residential developments.
- 

## Supporting information

- 4.29** Greater Cambridge is one of the driest areas in the UK, and Cambridge Water's supply zone is classified as an area of 'serious water stress' by the Environment Agency. Water is abstracted from the chalk aquifer, and this has been causing environmental problems. The level of abstraction is being reduced by the Environment Agency changes to licences to prevent any further environmental deterioration and allow for the regeneration of the local area's rare chalk streams.
- 4.30** Cambridge Water's Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP24) sets out measures to reduce the demand for water by reducing leakage and the installation of smart meters and also sets out new sources of water supply (Strategic Resource Options) including a proposed pipeline that will bring in water from Grafham Water (anticipated by 2032) and the delivery of the new Fens Reservoir by 2036 (a joint scheme between Cambridge Water and Anglian Water). Due to the pressure on water resources in Greater Cambridge, a Water Scarcity Group has been established by the Government to tackle this issue.
- 4.31** For development needs to be met sustainably, it is vital that buildings are designed to be as water efficient as possible. This includes installing fixtures and fittings that use water efficiently and introducing measures that recycle water. While it is noted that the use of water recycling is currently impacted by the potable water definition, this is currently under review by Government. All development should reduce water use below current and future Building Regulations requirements through the use of water efficient fixtures and fittings. Once regulation allows for it, we would require larger developments to include water reuse/recycling measures and achieve an even greater level of efficiency. Water recycling measures could range from individual property measures through to community-level infrastructure, and include systems that recycle rainwater, stormwater, greywater or foul water and use dual pipe systems for potable and non-potable water. The best approach will depend on site-specific circumstances but planning for these measures should be considered early in the design process so that holistic opportunities for integrated water management across a site are taken. Planning conditions will be used to secure the proper implementation, management and maintenance of water recycling systems.
- 4.32** High water efficiency is required for non-residential developments based on BREEAM standards. This includes standards for domestic uses within these premises (such as kitchens/toilets/internal watering of plants) and any process water such as for industrial, laboratory, or cooling processes.



- 4.33** Shortly before publication of this draft plan the government began a consultation on revision to Part G of the Building Regulations (2010) related to water efficiency. This includes seeking views on revising the optional technical standard from 110 litres per person per day to 100 litres per person per day, and a further range of standards which could go beyond this. We consider that the 100 litres/person/day would not be sufficient to address water pressure facing the area, and that we should continue to seek a higher standard.
- 4.34** Where Government policy or legislation relating to water efficiency is more stringent or at significant variance with this policy in the future, the more stringent standard will be adopted when determining planning applications.
- 4.35** To protect the water environment, Cambridge Water is applying an enhanced assessment of new connection requests from April 2025, particularly in the lead up to major new supply infrastructure in the early 2030's. They also have an incentive scheme to promote water efficient home building and offer discounts to developers based upon the amount of water consumption reduction. Early engagement with Cambridge Water on development proposals is therefore highly recommended.
- 4.36** Applicants will be expected to provide details of the water supply infrastructure and the water efficiency measures to be introduced as part of a planning application where policy requirements are met. For major planning applications, the Local Planning Authority will expect details regarding water supply to be included as part of a Utilities Statement in line with the requirements in Policy I/ID. For minor planning applications, where required, water supply details can be provided as part of a Sustainability Statement, a Design and Access Statement, or a Planning Statement for the proposed development. Meanwhile, evidence must be provided to show how the stated water efficiency levels can be achieved by the proposed development as part of a Sustainability Statement. Conditions may also be applied seeking evidence of implementation and post occupancy water use.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Climate Change Topic Paper (2025)
- Greater Cambridge Integrated Water Management Study (2025)

# Policy CC/IW:

## Integrated water management, sustainable drainage and water quality

### What this policy does

- 4.37** This policy establishes how water management should be considered in a holistic and integrated way in new developments.

#### Policy CC/IW: Integrated water management, sustainable drainage and water quality

1. All development proposals must adopt an integrated approach to water management which considers water efficiency, sustainable drainage, water quality, flood risk and biodiversity. Water management must be:
  - a. planned at a strategic level for the whole development;
  - b. incorporated into the design process at the earliest opportunity;
  - c. designed in such a way that does not prejudice the delivery of development at an adjoining site; and
  - d. designed in such a way that makes use of nature-based solutions wherever practicable.
2. Evidence of a site-wide Integrated Water Management approach should be provided as part of a Sustainability Statement.

### Sustainable Drainage Systems

3. Development proposals must demonstrate how adequate surface-water drainage will be achieved, following the surface water drainage priority order set out below:
  - a. Firstly, surface water runoff is collected for non-potable use;
  - b. Then discharged into the ground via infiltration;
  - c. Then discharged into a waterbody;
  - d. Then discharged into a surface water sewer;
  - e. Then discharged into a combined sewer.

4. New development must incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) as part of an Integrated Water Management approach to the design of the whole site. Development will be permitted provided that:
  - a. surface water is managed close to its source and on the surface where reasonably practicable to do so;
  - b. there is no discharge from the developed site for rainfall depths up to 5mm of any rainfall event;
  - c. SuDS have been designed to take into account climate change and the impact it may have over the lifetime of the development;
  - d. opportunities have been taken to integrate SuDS in ways that create amenity, enhance biodiversity, and contribute to a network of high-quality green and blue open space, whilst also ensuring the development responds positively to the local character and site-specific constraints;
  - e. all hard surfaces are permeable surfaces where reasonably practicable and having regard to groundwater protection;
  - f. any flat roof is a green or brown roof, provided that it is acceptable in terms of its context, its relationship with the historic environment, and the structural capacity of the roof if it is a refurbishment;
  - g. SuDS have been designed to manage water quality to minimise the risk of pollution and sediment entering watercourses; and
  - h. details of the future management, maintenance and adoption of the SuDS are provided to ensure they will function effectively over the lifetime of the development.
5. The design and implementation of SuDS must be in line with the updated Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA) SuDS Manual and the National Standards for SuDS or successor documents and other best practice guidance.

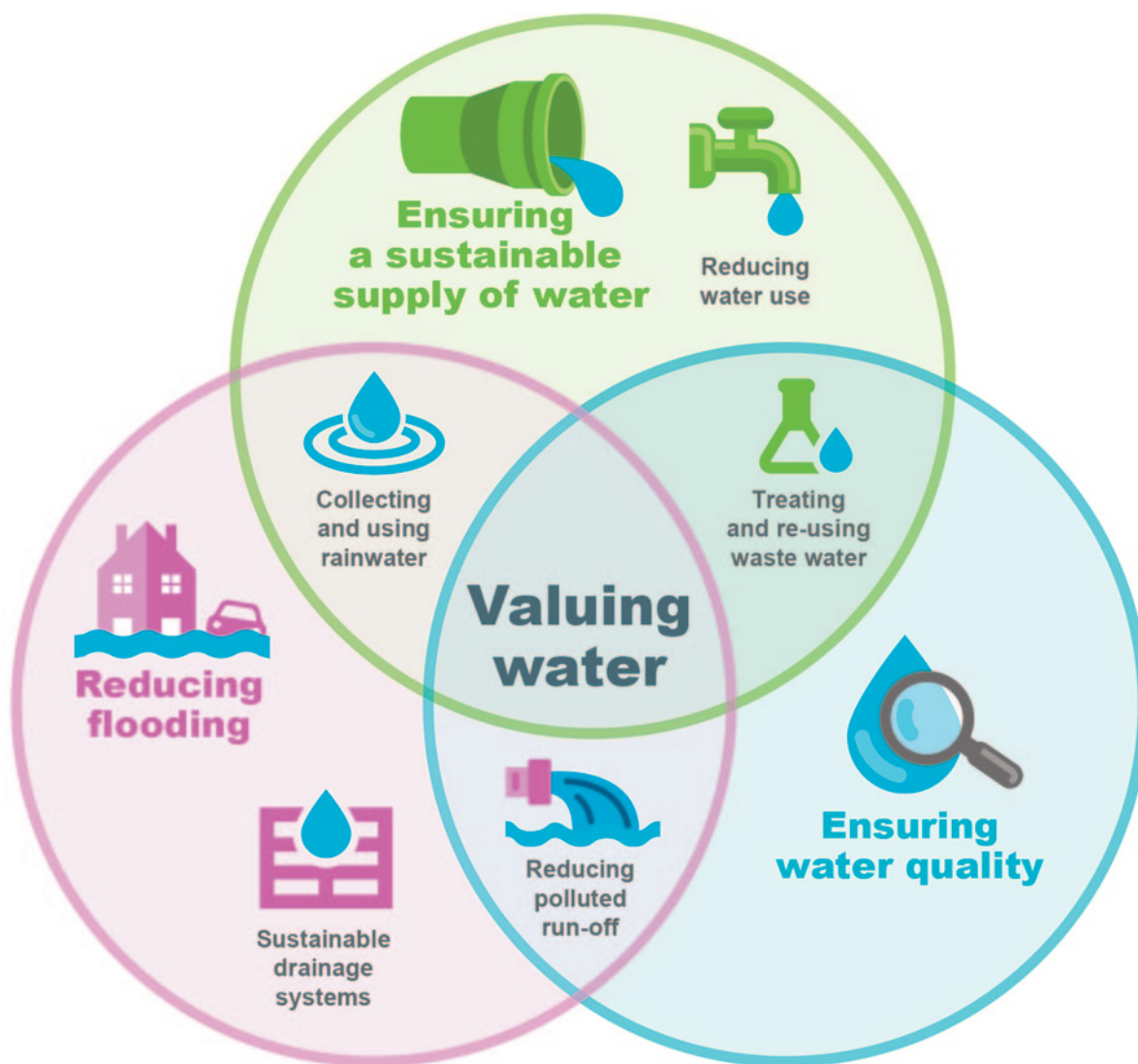
## **Water quality**

6. To protect and enhance water quality, all development proposals must demonstrate that:
  - a. there is capacity for wastewater treatment and adequate wastewater conveyancing infrastructure to serve the whole development, or an agreement is in place with the relevant service provider to ensure the provision of the necessary infrastructure prior to the occupation of the development (where development is being phased, this must be demonstrated for each phase before first occupation);
  - b. appropriate water treatment and pollution control measures have been incorporated into the proposed foul and surface-water drainage systems to minimise the risk of water pollution; and

- c. the quality of ground water and water bodies will not be harmed by the construction or operation of the development, and that opportunities have been explored and taken to maintain or improve water quality, including through nature-based solutions.
  7. Foul drainage to a public sewer should be provided where possible. Where it is demonstrated that this would not be feasible, alternative facilities may be allowed provided they do not pose an unacceptable risk to water quality or quantity for the lifetime of the development.
- 

## Supporting text

- 4.38** Integrated Water Management (IWM) is a holistic approach to water management that considers water supply, wastewater, flood risk and water quality in a coordinated way with the aim of ensuring the long-term sustainability of water resources and ecosystems. The concepts of 'water smart communities' and 'sponge cities' have similar aims. A sponge city is designed to mimic natural processes by absorbing, storing and gradually releasing rainwater, much like a sponge soaks up water. Green infrastructure is used to manage rainwater runoff to prevent flooding and improve water quality.
- 4.39** The diagram overleaf shows the interlinked components of an effective IWM system (see **Figure 128**). Weather pattern changes and the increasing occurrences and intensity of flooding and drought events, all of which are being influenced by global climate change, are making effective IWM increasingly important for both urban and rural environments. Therefore, it is crucial that IWM is considered at an early stage in the design process of any development. Appropriate water management measures for a particular development will depend upon the scale and nature of the development, but even at a small scale, measures such as permeable paving, green roofs and water butts can slow down the discharge of water, enable the reuse of water, and enhance biodiversity. The policy requires suitable flat roofs to be green or brown roofs. This should include garage and cycle sheds.
- 4.40** The surface water drainage priority set out in the policy begins with the collection of rainwater for non-potable use, which is in line with the requirements of this plan to make developments as water efficient as possible. However, the surface water drainage network must be designed without taking this into account as a form of attenuation, because at times rainwater storage could be at capacity, for example during the winter months. Infiltration should be maximised on site by way of sustainable drainage systems (see below) before moving further down the priority order where this is not possible.
- 4.41** Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) are a key component of IWM. SuDS re-create the benefits of natural drainage systems, allowing infiltration and storage of water and reduce the rate and volume of water entering fluvial systems following storms therefore reducing peak flood levels. They also provide other benefits such as water filtration, which can improve water quality. Infiltration SuDS help to recharge aquifers which support the baseflows of the chalk streams and reduce the flow peak and volumes



**Figure 131:** Integrated Water Management (IWM) approach

entering the Fens, which is increasingly important due to climate change. They also provide biodiversity and amenity enhancements, which can have positive implications for both human and environmental health. Ensuring that there is space for SuDS and the creation of blue and green infrastructure needs to be considered early in the design process for new developments. Details of the management, maintenance and adoption of SuDS will be required to ensure that they function effectively over the lifetime of the development. This will include removal of debris and sediment to ensure that there are no areas of standing water which will lower the risk of vector borne diseases associated with climate change.

- 4.42** Guidance on the design of SuDs and surface water management can be found in the [SuDS Manual](#), [National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems](#), Cambridgeshire County Council's [Surface Water Planning Guidance](#) and the [Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD](#). These documents (or their successor documents) should be referred to when designing an appropriate drainage strategy for a new development. For major development on land with surface water drainage issues, Cambridgeshire County Council, the Lead Local Flood Authority, must be consulted.

**4.43** To further protect and enhance water quality, the policy also requires that development proposals demonstrate that there is adequate wastewater infrastructure to serve the development over its lifetime. Applicants will need to secure a connection with the service provider, Anglian Water. Appropriate water treatment and pollution control measures will need to form part of the surface drainage system / SuDS to prevent contamination of water on the site or downstream during the construction and operation of the development.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Climate Change Topic Paper (2025)
- Greater Cambridge Integrated Water Management Study (2025)

# Policy CC/FM:

## Managing flood risk

### What does this policy do

- 4.44** This policy establishes how flood risk from all sources and taking into account climate change will be avoided and managed when planning new developments.

#### Policy CC/FM: Managing flood risk

1. Flood risk from all sources will be managed using the sequential, risk-based approach set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, taking into account the impacts of climate change. Development proposals will be supported where:
  - a. the sequential test and, if necessary, the exception test have been passed and demonstrate that the development is acceptable, having regard to actual and residual flood risks (this is not necessary if the proposal is on an allocated site and consistent with the allocated use);
  - b. built development has been sequentially located within the site to avoid any areas of flood risk;
  - c. the development does not lead to an increase in flooding elsewhere and where possible reduces overall flood risk;
  - d. there is a safe access and egress route for future users of the development;
  - e. the development does not affect the integrity of existing flood and surface water management assets;
  - f. the ongoing maintenance and management of any necessary flood defences or flood mitigation measures have been agreed with the relevant bodies and the necessary agreements are in place;
  - g. the peak rate of run-off over the lifetime of the development, allowing for climate change, is no greater for the developed site than it was for the undeveloped greenfield site. Betterment must be provided on previously developed sites;
  - h. the post-development volume of run-off, allowing for climate change over the development's lifetime, is no greater than it would have been for the undeveloped site (if this cannot be achieved, then the limiting discharge is 2 litres/sec for all events up to the 100-year return period event);
  - i. the development is designed so that the flooding of properties in and adjacent to the development would not occur for a 1 in 100-year event, plus an allowance for climate change and in the event of local drainage system failure; and



- j. finished floor levels are 300mm above the 1 in 100-year flood level (plus an allowance for climate change), and, where appropriate and practicable, 300mm above adjacent highway levels.

## Flood Risk Assessments

2. A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) appropriate to the scale and nature of the development will be required for the following:
    - a. all sites that include land within Flood Zones 2 and 3;
    - b. sites within Flood Zone 1 with a site area of 1ha or more;
    - c. sites within Flood Zone 1 in locations that are identified as being at greater flood risk in the future, taking into account the effects of climate change;
    - d. sites within Flood Zone 1 where there is a risk of flooding from surface water, or are designated as an area with critical drainage problems;
    - e. sites with land that may be subject to other sources of flooding, where its development would introduce a use of higher flood risk vulnerability.
  3. The FRA should consider all forms of flooding and include an assessment of flood risk to and from the proposed development. FRAs should also demonstrate how the development will be made safe for its lifetime, including, where appropriate, the mitigation measures that will be incorporated on-site to manage residual flood risk.
- 

## Supporting information

**4.45** The NPPF (2024) requires a sequential, risk-based approach to flooding, to avoid development in areas at high risk of flooding and steer development to areas at lower risk. All types of flooding should be considered, including fluvial (from rivers), surface water, groundwater, and sewer and reservoir flooding. Development projects also need to consider both current flood risk and future flood risk, which may be greater because of climate change. As well as minimising risk to the development itself, development should not increase flood risk elsewhere and, where possible, reduce the risk of flooding downstream, such as by reducing run-off rates using sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). Development represents an opportunity to plan for climate change adaptation by making space for water, safeguarding land expected to flood in the future, considering the use of green infrastructure in managing flood water, and by enlarging the active floodplain away from vulnerable land uses. Developers are encouraged to work with flood risk management authorities early in the design process to identify and support opportunities to make Greater Cambridge more resilient to flooding.



- 4.46** The Councils have produced a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), which identifies areas in Greater Cambridge that are at risk of flooding from all sources and considers the anticipated impact of climate change. The SFRA has been used to inform the selection of sites for allocation for development by following a sequential approach and avoiding high risk areas.
- 4.47** When assessing the flood risks that may impact a particular development, applicants should refer to the maps in the latest SFRA and data published by the Environment Agency on their [Flood Map for Planning](#) which covers fluvial and surface water flooding and their [reservoir flood maps](#) which may provide more up-to-date information on the different sources of flooding that can impact a site or a development proposal. The [Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD](#) and the Government's national planning practice guidance on [Flood risk and coastal change](#) provides further guidance on when a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) should be undertaken and how it should be carried out – these documents (or their successor documents) should be referred to when preparing a planning application.
- 4.48** The appropriate responsible bodies, including the Environment Agency, Cambridgeshire County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority, Internal Drainage Boards and Anglian Water, should be consulted as appropriate early in the design process for any new development or redevelopment.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Climate Change Topic Paper (2025)
- Greater Cambridge Integrated Water Management Study (2025)

# Policy CC/RE:

## Renewable energy projects and infrastructure

### What this policy does

- 4.49** This policy provides requirements for the development of renewable and low-carbon energy infrastructure. It also allocates a heat network zooming study boundary in recognition of work to establish a low carbon heat network in Cambridge city centre as well as ongoing work to consider wider heat network zones in the city linked to Heat Zoning Regulations.

#### Policy CC/RE: Renewable energy projects and infrastructure

1. The Councils encourage proposals for renewable and low-carbon energy generation and associated infrastructure at all scales, including domestic schemes. Proposals for development that generate energy from renewable and low-carbon sources, including associated infrastructure, grid connections and storage, will be supported, provided that they do not cause unacceptable impacts, including cumulative and cross-boundary impacts, on:
  - a. landscape, tranquillity and sensitive views, with regard to the Greater Cambridge Landscape Sensitivity Assessment. Part 2 – Renewable Energy Development (2021);
  - b. biodiversity and geodiversity, including irreplaceable habitats, protected habitats and species, and ecological networks;
  - c. water quality and flood risk;
  - d. the best and most versatile agricultural land;
  - e. the historic environment (including archaeological remains) and the setting of heritage assets;
  - f. the Green Belt;
  - g. aviation apparatus and air traffic safety;
  - h. highways safety, and the safety of active transport infrastructure and rail movements; and
  - i. residential amenity, including potential impacts caused by noise, vibration, dust, odour, air quality and shadow flicker.

2. Proposals must seek to avoid, minimise and mitigate adverse impacts during construction and operation, wherever possible. Where any localised adverse impacts remain, these will be considered against the wider sustainability benefits of the proposal.
3. Where energy generated is not used for on-site needs, provisions must be made for the development to be connected directly and efficiently to existing national energy infrastructure, community energy infrastructure, or uses associated with the renewable energy development. Proposals should demonstrate how options for energy storage, smart grids, and energy sharing networks have been explored to reduce the need for grid capacity upgrades.
4. Proposals for renewable energy development must plan for the decommissioning of the site at the end of its life, including the removal of the technology and restoration of the site to its original or accepted use and condition, and that materials will be re-used and recycled where practical.
5. Any ecological enhancements and biodiversity net gain that have been achieved on-site should be retained in the decommissioning process.
6. Proposals involving the provision of solar PV panels and canopies on existing buildings or above car parks will be strongly supported where they do not conflict with other policies in the Development Plan.

## **Community-led renewable and low-carbon initiatives**

7. Community-led renewable and/or low-carbon energy initiatives are encouraged and will be given positive weight in decision making. Evidence of community support should be demonstrated, alongside any additional social and community benefits.

## **Connection to district heating**

8. Development proposals in the 2025 Heat Network Zoning Study boundary, as shown on the Policies Map, should connect to existing heat networks or networks under development within this area, unless evidence is provided that demonstrates a connection would impact on the technical feasibility or viability of a proposal.
  9. Subject to compliance with other policies in the Development Plan, proposals for new, low-carbon district heating infrastructure outside of the 2025 Heat Network Zoning Study boundary will be supported, particularly in heat network zones that have been designated once the Government's heat network zoning policy is live.
-

## Supporting information

- 4.50** Increasing the use of renewable and other low-carbon energy technologies will be a key means of achieving the emissions reductions targets set by the Government and meeting increased energy demands. All proposals are required to satisfy a variety of criteria that will ensure that adverse impacts upon the environment and amenity of Greater Cambridge are avoided or adequately mitigated. The Local Planning Authorities will be particularly supportive of community-led renewable and low-carbon energy initiatives where the wider social benefits are presented, such as reductions in local fuel poverty and increased local uptake of renewable energy.
- 4.51** As part of the consideration of renewable energy development in plan-making, a strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (LSA) was prepared to provide an initial indication of landscape sensitivity to the different scales of wind and solar development. The LSA's landscape sensitivity layers will be available alongside the digital policies map for applicants to reference when preparing development proposals. Proposals will more likely be supported if they are situated in areas of lower sensitivity for the relevant development scale and mitigation is used to limit the potential landscape harm. The LSA should be used to guide developments away from the most sensitive landscapes. However, the LSA should not be interpreted as defining the suitability of individual sites for a particular development and. It does not replace the requirement for a more detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) for any proposed development. Pockets of land within Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) may exist with higher or lower landscape sensitivity to a given renewable development scenario and will only be revealed through detailed LVIA work at the planning application stage.
- 4.52** The Local Planning Authority will expect applicants to submit an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) to satisfy the ecological requirements of this policy. The EclA will need to be proportionate to the scale of development and potential impacts, but, amongst other requirements established within the Development Plan, they should include:
- An assessment of the potential impact on all protected habitats, protected ecological sites, and any irreplaceable habitats;
  - An appraisal of potential impacts on migratory bird species, wintering bird species, and ground-nesting bird species; and
  - An appraisal of potential impacts on protected species, including commuting and foraging bats.
- 4.53** Applicants intending to pursue wind energy schemes are advised to refer to the RSPB's [Onshore Wind Sensitivity Map](#) and the [Onshore Wind Opportunity Showing Sensitivity and Constraints Map](#) when considering migratory bird species and bird migration pathways. Applicants are advised to consult the Government's guidance on [Construction Near Protected Areas of Wildlife](#) to determine whether any additional assessment work will be needed to clarify the acceptability of any renewable energy proposals, particularly where sites fall within the Impact Risk Zones for Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

- 4.54** The need for renewable energy generation will need to be finely balanced with the need for agricultural land in food production. Proposals should avoid the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3a), unless significant sustainability benefits are demonstrated to outweigh any such loss. Proposals that affect agricultural land are more likely to be supported where applicants demonstrate that agricultural uses can still operate around the proposed renewable energy development, or the proposal forms a diversification exercise that complements and will help to maintain the viability of the agricultural holding's primary agricultural operations.
- 4.55** Renewable energy infrastructure can also present risks to aviation safety and highways safety if they are poorly designed or sited. Tall structures, such as wind turbines, can present collision risks or create radar interference. Meanwhile, reflective surfaces, such as solar panels, can create glint and glare that can obscure the vision of drivers and pilots, which would need to be addressed by a Glint and Glare Assessment. Therefore, developers should engage with the relevant highways and air traffic authorities to determine site-specific safety considerations and whether any potential air traffic and highways safety concerns can be mitigated.
- 4.56** In assessing renewable energy proposals, any heritage harm will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, giving great weight to the preservation and enhancement of any identified heritage assets. Proposals will be more likely to be supported where they minimise or avoid conflict with heritage assets in line with national planning policy and guidance.
- 4.57** Proposals must not create significant adverse impacts on residential amenity. The details needed to demonstrate that residential amenity impacts can be appropriately mitigated will vary depending on the nature, scale and siting of the proposed development, but planning applications may need to include:
- An Air Quality Assessment
  - A Glint and Glare Assessment
  - A Noise Impact Assessment
  - An Odour Impact Assessment
  - A Shadow Flicker Impact Assessment
- 4.58** For projects that require an EIA, applicants are advised to engage in pre-application discussions with the Local Planning Authority to determine whether any assessment requirements can be included as and addressed by a chapter of the Environmental Statement, or whether standalone assessment reports would also be needed as part of a planning application.
- 4.59** A 2025 Heat Network Zoning Study boundary, is shown on the Policies Map, continuing the approach of the 2018 Cambridge Local Plan district heating zone. This is in recognition of work currently underway to establish a low-carbon heat network in the city centre, powered by heat pumps as well as ongoing work to consider wider heat network zones. New development proposals within this boundary, including redevelopment of existing buildings, should seek to connect to existing heat networks or networks under development. The Government are also bringing forward heat

network zoning, which will look to designate geographic zones where heat networks are expected to provide the lowest cost solution to decarbonising heat. Through heat network zone regulation, certain types of building and low carbon heat sources would be required to connect to a network within a prescribed timeframe. Work is currently underway to determine what heat zoning may mean for Cambridge and in the future heat network zones will be designated in the city.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Climate Change Topic Paper (2025)
- Greater Cambridge Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Part 2 – Renewable Energy Development (2021)
- Greater Cambridge Net Zero Carbon Study (2021)

# Policy CC/CE:

## Supporting a circular economy and sustainable resource use

### What this policy does

4.60

This policy sets out how circular economy principles (minimising waste and maximising resource efficiency by keeping products and materials in use for as long as possible) should be considered and demonstrated in development proposals across Greater Cambridge. This includes requirements for operational waste management, including recycling storage and collection, and support for innovative approaches to resource use and management. It also seeks to prioritise the retrofit and reuse of existing buildings rather than demolition.

### Policy CC/CE: Supporting a circular economy and sustainable resource use

### Circular Economy principles in construction and demolition

1. All development proposals should, where practical and viable, take opportunities to reduce the development's embodied carbon content through the careful choice, use and sourcing of materials.
2. To avoid the wastage of embodied carbon in existing buildings and to avoid the creation of new embodied carbon in replacement buildings, there is a presumption in favour of repairing, refurbishing, and re-using existing buildings over their demolition. Proposals that result in the demolition of a building (in whole or a significant part) should be accompanied by a full justification for the demolition. Demolition will only be acceptable where it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority that:
  - a. the building proposed for demolition is in a state of such disrepair that it is not practical or viable to be repaired, refurbished, or re-used (for reasons other than deliberate damage or neglect);
  - b. repairing, refurbishing, or re-using the building would likely result in similar or higher levels of newly generated up-front embodied carbon (modules A1-A5 of the RICS methodology) compared to demolition and re-construction, with reference to relevant requirements in policy CC/NZ for new buildings;



- c. repairing, refurbishing, or re-using the building would create a building with such poor thermal efficiency that, when considering lifecycle embodied carbon (i.e. modules A1-A5, B1-B5 and C1-C4), a lower net-carbon solution would arise from demolition and re-construction; or
- d. demolition of the building and construction of a new building would, on an exceptional basis, deliver other significant benefits that outweigh the carbon savings that would arise from the building being repaired, or re-used.

Where demolition is considered to be acceptable after these steps have been followed, proposals should seek all possible opportunities to integrate wider circular economy principles through the reuse of materials arising from demolition or make those materials available for wider reuse and recycling where possible.

## **Operational waste management**

- 3. All proposals must provide adequate and easily accessible waste storage and collection systems that encourage recycling and other forms of sustainable waste management such as composting.
- 4. Proposals should comply with the RECAP Waste Management Design Guide (or successor documents). Proposals that exceed these requirements or propose innovative approaches to waste management will be supported, subject to accordance with other requirements in the Development Plan.

## **Circular Economy Statements**

- 5. A Circular Economy Statement proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposed development must be submitted as part of a planning application for the following types of development:
    - a. Residential development of 150 or more dwellings; or
    - b. Non-residential development with a total gross internal floorspace of 15,000 square metres or more; or
    - c. Any major development proposal that involves demolition.
  - 6. For all other types of development, details proportionate to the nature and scale of development that demonstrates how circular economy principles have been integrated into the proposals must be provided as part of a Sustainability Statement.
- 

## **Supporting information**

### **4.61**

Avoiding waste and designing places in such a way that facilitates material and component reuse helps to prevent the need for the manufacture of new materials, which is an important element in achieving a net-zero carbon future. Furthermore, efficient recycling of waste places fewer demands on natural resources, thereby helping to



conserve the environment and limiting residual waste in line with the Government's Waste Hierarchy.

- 4.62** Sustainable resource use and sustainable waste management are supported by the integration of a circular economy. Circular economies have three core objectives:
- Eliminate waste and pollution (i.e. designing products, materials, and infrastructure for durability and recyclability to avoid creating unnecessary waste or pollution).
  - Circulate products and materials (i.e. keeping materials in use through reuse, repair and recycling thereby preventing them from becoming waste).
  - Regenerate natural systems (i.e. focusing on sustainable resource management and using nature-based solutions to help with day-to-day functions, for example, water treatment).
- 4.63** To achieve these objectives, the following circular economy principles should be viewed as fundamental to and taken into account during the early stages of the design process:
1. building in layers – ensuring that different parts of the building are accessible and can be maintained and replaced where necessary.
  2. designing out waste – ensuring that waste reduction is planned in from project inception to completion, including consideration of standardised components, modular construction, and reuse of secondary products and materials.
  3. designing for longevity.
  4. designing for adaptability or flexibility.
  5. designing for disassembly.
  6. using systems, elements or materials that can be reused and recycled.
- 4.64** A significant proportion of a building's whole-life greenhouse gas emissions are locked into its fabric, with emissions stemming from material manufacturing, the transportation of materials and components, and physical construction and demolition – these emissions are commonly referred to as “embodied carbon”. The effective application of circular economy principles to the built environment creates places where buildings are designed for adaptation, reconstruction and deconstruction, which reduces the need to extract raw materials and manufacture new building components. To avoid the unnecessary wastage of embodied carbon emissions in existing buildings, proposals must make every effort to refurbish, retrofit and re-use existing buildings and building materials, where possible. It is recognised that retrofit or refurbishment may not be the most sustainable option for the development of a site or may not be viable, but applicants must present a clear case that demolition and reconstruction is the only viable option for the development of the site or, in exceptional circumstances, would deliver significant public benefits.
- 4.65** The Councils will also expect applicants to use circular economy principles to shape the day-to-day functionality of a development. Developers should consult the adopted RECAP Waste Management Design Guide (or successor documents), to ensure

developments support the practicalities of waste management and promote recycling. Innovative solutions, such as underground waste management and smart waste management systems, will be encouraged and supported.

#### 4.66

Circular Economy Statements can be used to demonstrate how materials, resources, and infrastructure will be reused or recycled to reduce the environmental impact of development and provide ongoing economic benefits. Circular Economy Statements should include details of how:

- a. circular economy principles have informed the design of building(s) and/or structures, and the overall site layout;
- b. the proposal's design and construction will reduce resource demands and enable building materials, components and products to be disassembled and re-used at the end of their useful life;
- c. the local sourcing of materials has been considered and the steps taken to secure local materials and components;
- d. materials arising from demolition and remediation works will be re-used and/or recycled;
- e. opportunities will be taken to ensure as much construction waste is managed on site as possible, and how all waste will be managed in accordance with the waste hierarchy; and
- f. operational waste storage and collection systems to be introduced as part of the development have been designed such that they are easily accessible and support recycling and re-use for the lifetime of the development; and
- g. performance will be monitored and reported.

#### 4.67

For other scales of development, circular economy details should be set out in a Sustainability Statement, with the level of information proportionate to the nature and scale of development. For example, for householder and minor development this could be the reuse of existing materials on site, sustainable sourcing of materials and designing for flexibility, adaptability and deconstruction.

#### 4.68

This policy should be read alongside the adopted Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021) (or successor document), which contains policies relevant to planning applications for minerals and waste development.

### Supporting topic paper and evidence studies

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Climate Change Topic Paper (2025)

# Policy CC/CS:

## Supporting land-based carbon sequestration and carbon sinks

### What this policy does

4.69

This policy seeks to protect existing carbon sinks through protecting peat, as well as promoting the protection of soils during the construction of new developments. It also seeks to maximise the opportunities for carbon sequestration (carbon capture and storage) in new developments through the provision of green infrastructure.

#### Policy CC/CS: Supporting land-based carbon sequestration and carbon sinks

1. Where major development is proposed on land containing peat soils, a proportionate evaluation of the impact of the proposal on the soil's carbon content and an appropriate soil management plan must be submitted as part of the planning application.
2. There will be a presumption in favour of preservation of peat in situ. Proposals that will result in unavoidable harm to, or loss of, peat soils will only be permitted if it is demonstrated that:
  - a. the site is allocated for development; or
  - b. there is clear evidence of need for the development that outweighs the harm to peat soils, and that an alternative viable option is not available for the proposed development.
3. Any potential harm to peat soils associated with a development proposal must be reduced to the minimum possible level. Appropriate provision, to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, must be made for the evaluation, recording and interpretation of peat soils prior to the commencement of development.
4. For peat and other soils that are to be removed from a site, soils must be temporarily stored and used in a way that will minimise carbon loss to the atmosphere – to achieve this, the DEFRA Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites (2009) (or successor documents) should be followed.
5. Proposals to enhance peat soils and protect its qualities will be supported, as will proposals to help strengthen existing carbon sinks or create new ones.

## Carbon sequestration in new development

6. All major development proposals, especially strategic sites, should seek opportunities to enhance the carbon sequestration potential of their proposals through green infrastructure and new habitat creation. The demonstration of meaningful carbon sequestration where there is a significant net gain within a proposal through nature-based solutions will be a material consideration in the decision-making process.
- 

## Supporting information

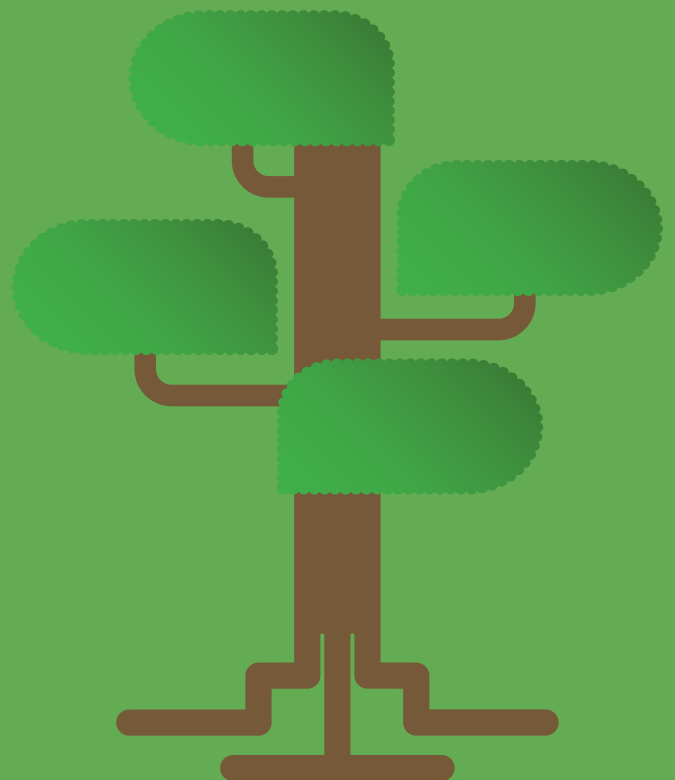
- 4.70** Land plays a significant role in climate objectives, acting as both a source of greenhouse gas emissions and a carbon sink. A carbon sink is anything that absorbs more carbon than it releases – for example plants, the ocean and soils. Peatlands are an important store of carbon, while other habitats such as woodlands and grasslands also have a role to play, as indicated in research by Natural England. There is an area of peatland in the very north of Greater Cambridge, as identified on the [England Peat Map](#) (or any successor document). Although it covers a relatively small area of Greater Cambridge, peatland should be protected, preserved and enhanced wherever possible to ensure it continues to store carbon. The protection of soils during construction to preserve their potential as a carbon sink is an important consideration in the policy and developers should refer to the [DEFRA Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites](#) (2009).
- 4.71** Other policies in the development plan protect nature sites and agricultural land, support the protection and enhancement of tree canopy cover, and support the delivery of strategic green infrastructure projects, thereby protecting land that will act as carbon sinks. Promotion of nature-based solutions, where natural systems are protected, restored and managed, can assist with the protection of carbon sinks, whilst providing benefits for biodiversity and health and wellbeing.
- 4.72** Our evidence, alongside the work of the Committee on Climate Change, shows that, even after all ambitious carbon reduction actions are taken, there will still be a proportion of ‘residual’ or unavoidable carbon emissions from the economy as a whole. As a result, land-based carbon sequestration has a role to play in offsetting these residual carbon emissions. Carbon sequestration is the long-term removal, capture or sequestration of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere to slow or reverse atmospheric carbon dioxide and to mitigate or reverse climate change. This policy also seeks to promote the consideration of carbon sequestration potential when designing landscaping and green infrastructure provision as part of new developments.

### Supporting topic paper and evidence studies

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Climate Change Topic Paper (2025)
- Greater Cambridge Net Zero Carbon Study (2021)

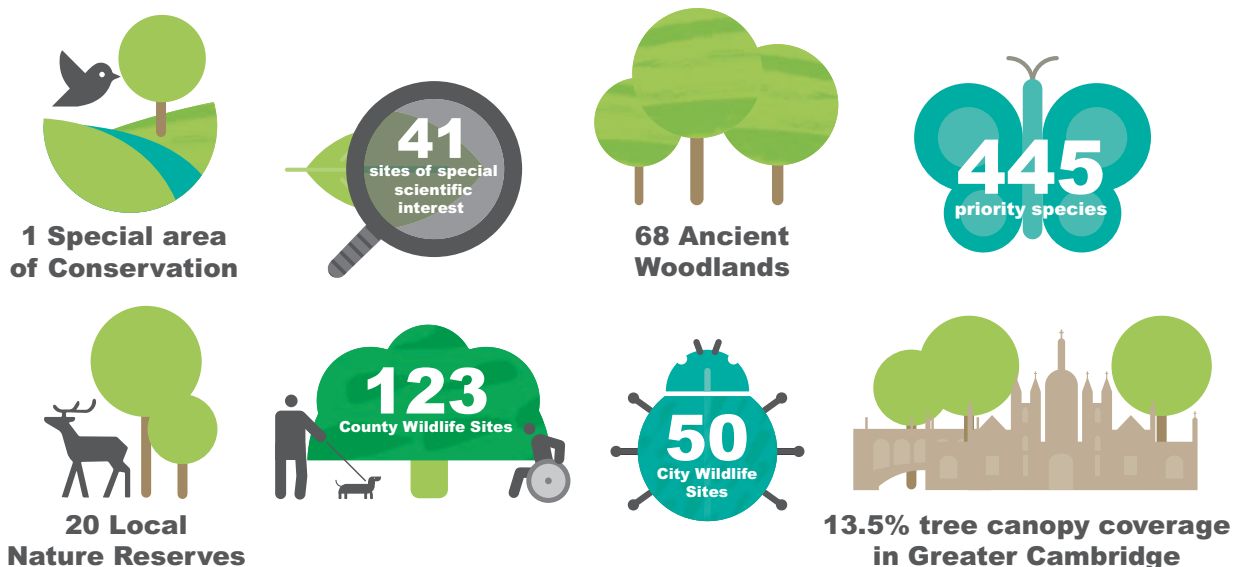
5

# Biodiversity and green spaces



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# Introduction

- 5.1** In the Biodiversity and Green Spaces theme we set out policies to protect and enhance biodiversity, and improve the network of green spaces in Greater Cambridge.

## **How community engagement helped shape the biodiversity and green spaces policies**

- 5.2** Through consultation feedback you told us that biodiversity and green spaces were a high priority. You were concerned about the pressure development could put on the network of green spaces. You wanted us to protect existing green spaces, but also deliver new spaces that could support the needs of people as well as wildlife.

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## **Our strategic priority for our biodiversity and green spaces policies**

- 5.3** **Strategic Priority:** Increase and improve our network of habitats for wildlife, and green spaces for people, ensuring that development leaves the natural environment better than it was before.

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- 5.4** Cambridge City Council and South Cambridge District Council declared a biodiversity emergency in 2019, in recognition of the pressures facing our natural world, both locally and internationally. Working as part of the Local Nature Partnership, we want to double nature by 2050. We also want to play our part in implementing Cambridgeshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy, which is being prepared by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.

- 5.5** To inform the overall strategy for the plan we considered the best locations to restore our area's habitat networks and provide more green spaces for people to enjoy. The local plan has identified 14 strategic green infrastructure initiatives to help achieve this. The developments the plan identifies will deliver green infrastructure directly, but we will also secure planning contributions where funding can be used to enhance the wider network.

- 5.6** Reflecting our 'doubling nature' ambition, our policies seek a higher level of biodiversity gains from new development than the national requirement. We have followed Natural England's new Green Infrastructure Framework, to develop standards that would ensure places include green spaces, trees, and places for people as well as wildlife.

## **What do our biodiversity and green spaces policies do**

- Protect important sites for biodiversity, and require new developments to contribute to gains in biodiversity, setting a standard above the national requirement.
- Ensure development is designed to incorporate green spaces and helps to expand the wider green infrastructure network.
- Enhance tree canopy cover, acknowledging the benefits that can have for urban cooling as well as biodiversity.
- Control development on our river corridors balancing the many roles our watercourses have including for recreation, wildlife habitats, and drainage.
- Protecting and enhancing important open spaces in our communities.



# Policy BG/BG:

## Biodiversity and geodiversity

### What this policy does

- 5.7** This policy controls the biodiversity impacts from development, including the approach to biodiversity net gain (BNG) which requires developers to ensure habitats for wildlife are enhanced and left in a measurably better state than they were in before development. The policy also controls development affecting sites and species of biodiversity and geodiversity importance.

#### Policy BG/BG: Biodiversity and geodiversity

### Biodiversity net gain

1. All development must deliver statutory biodiversity net gain (BNG), providing a minimum of 10% BNG against the baseline, unless exempt under the Environment Act 2021, to be provided on-site in line with guidance.
2. Major development in Greater Cambridge must provide a minimum 20% biodiversity net gain (BNG), (unless exempt under the Environment Act 2021), to be provided on-site where this is feasible and effective.
3. Where onsite options for BNG have been evidenced to be exhausted as agreed with the Local Planning Authority (LPA), BNG should be delivered offsite via the purchase of biodiversity credits from a registered strategic habitat bank provider as listed on the Defra Biodiversity Gains Sites Register, or through a bespoke scheme on a site registered on the Defra Biodiversity Gains Sites Register, or through the purchase of statutory biodiversity credits, or a combination of the above. The Local Planning Authority will encourage delivery of replacement habitat within areas identified within the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy priority areas.
4. Planning applications subject to mandatory BNG will require a biodiversity plan to be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the LPA prior to commencement of development.
5. Habitat enhancement and creation measures, including their establishment and ongoing management and monitoring, will be prescribed and secured through conservation covenants, planning conditions and / or obligations.

## Protection of biodiversity and geodiversity

6. For proposals where development may affect biodiversity (including sites of biodiversity importance, habitats and species of principal importance) or sites of geodiversity, prior to the determination of an application, applicants will provide survey information and site assessment that is proportionate to the likely severity of impacts.
  7. Development proposals which have a direct or indirect adverse effect on sites of biodiversity or geological importance (as identified on the Policies Map) will not be permitted. Exceptions will only be made where the benefits of the development significantly outweigh any adverse impacts. In such cases where development is permitted, proposals must demonstrate that the mitigation hierarchy has been implemented, and the intrinsic natural features of particular interest must be safeguarded and enhanced having regard to:
    - a. The international, national or local status and designation of the site; and,
    - b. The nature and quality of the site's features, including its rarity value; and,
    - c. The extent of any adverse impacts on the notified features; and,
    - d. The likely effectiveness of any proposed mitigation with respect to the protection of the features of interest; and,
    - e. The need for compensatory measures in order to re-create, on or off the site, features or habitats that would be lost to development.
  8. Development must protect and enhance irreplaceable habitats within Greater Cambridge. Development negatively impacting irreplaceable habitat will not be permitted unless wholly exceptional circumstances are demonstrated, and a bespoke compensation strategy is provided.
  9. Development will mitigate evidenced recreational impacts on designated biodiversity and geodiversity sites, including providing Strategic Alternative Green Space for development proposed within Natural England's Impact Risk Zones for Sites of Special Scientific Interest.
- 

## Supporting information

- 5.8** BNG has been identified as a mechanism for the restoration of biodiversity across the UK. National planning policy sets out a requirement for developments to achieve biodiversity net gain and the Environment Act 2021 sets a mandatory statutory minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain above the ecological baseline for the application site. Cambridgeshire currently has one of the smallest areas of land managed for nature of any county in the country, relative to its size.
- 5.9** The local need for biodiversity restoration is also recognised within the Cambridgeshire Doubling Nature vision, aiming to increase land managed for nature from around 8% to 16% (the national average). Considering this, together with the relatively low level of

designated sites and priority habitats that Greater Cambridge has compared with other English areas, highlights the need for development to bring further net gains beyond the 10% required nationally.

- 5.10** The opportunity for smaller sites to deliver meaningful BNG can be constrained by size and available open space, with these sites having fewer opportunities to deliver biodiversity net gain. Private gardens' classification within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric as low-value habitats post-development, (i.e. vegetated garden) and also, the inability to count tree planting, small ponds or creating wildlife-friendly gardens as biodiversity gain can lead developers to have to look for off-site units or statutory credits to deliver BNG, even when delivering a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain. Therefore, requiring smaller sites to deliver 20% biodiversity net gain would be unreasonable, and may impact viability. However, where opportunities to secure BNG on exempted sites arise, this is encouraged.
- 5.11** Current best practice is to deliver BNG onsite, (rewarded through the Defra Statutory BNG metric) and as per the Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy (BGH) which emphasises prioritising onsite measures before exploring off-site options, ensuring developments make the most effective contributions to local biodiversity. Offsite BNG allows for strategic delivery of BNG but may be a less desirable option in some cases as it is removed from the immediate impact of the development on both local biodiversity and the local community.
- 5.12** Green Infrastructure (GI), an important element including trees, accessible natural greenspace and soft edges, should typically always be included in all new developments (see policy BG/GI). While GI does count toward BNG scores, it is recognised that onsite BNG invariably forms part of a multifunctional GI space and may not be the primary function, for example existing alongside recreational space or Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDs); this can lead to compromises in habitat creation and long-term value of the new habitats and in these circumstances offsite BNG provides a more sustainable option.
- 5.13** The NPPF (2024) states that to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them, along with areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation.
- 5.14** Greater Cambridge has a range of important sites and habitats for biodiversity, recognised through designations, from international to local importance. Some of these are also of geological importance. Sites of Biodiversity or Geological Importance are identified on the Policies Map and these represent a tiered network for the conservation of biodiversity and geodiversity within Greater Cambridgeshire. These sites include:
- statutorily protected international Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and,
  - national Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and,

- Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), Local Geological Sites (LGS) (worthy of protection for their Earth Science or landscape importance but are not already protected as SSSIs), County and City Wildlife Sites (CWSs and CiWSs), and Protected Road Verges (PRV) are non-statutorily protected sites of local importance (sites without statutory protection designated at a local level).

**5.15** European sites (SACs and SPAs) are protected by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulation 2017 as amended (the Habitats Regulations) and the Councils must carry out a habitats regulations assessment (HRA) to test if a plan or project proposal could significantly harm the designated features of a European site. Natural England will be consulted on any planning application in or adjacent to a European Site, or any such candidate site.

**5.16** At present the only site of international importance within Greater Cambridge is the Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC (the SAC is shown on the Policies Map). The site provides a habitat for a breeding colony of the Barbastelle bat, one of the rarest bats in Western Europe. The bats have been recorded at a small number of other sites up to eleven kilometres from the Woods. The area of particular interest for the bats' flight and feeding areas is shown within the Greater Cambridge Biodiversity SPD (2022).

**5.17** There are a number of other sites within the surrounding districts, which are considered as part of any Habitat Regulation Assessment carried out by the Councils, because of their proximity to Greater Cambridgeshire and/or the nature of their conservation interest:

- Ouse Washes SAC and SPA
- Fenland SAC (Woodwalton Fen, Chippenham Fen, Wicken Fen)
- Portholme SAC
- Devil's Dyke SAC
- Breckland SAC and SPA

**5.18** SSSIs are statutorily protected by their designation under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Natural England will be consulted on any planning application in or adjacent to a SSSI. The Council will not normally grant permission for any proposal which causes significant harm to a SSSI.

**5.19** Cambridge City Council has declared 12 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) on land that it owns and manages, including a number of the city's commons, and Cambridgeshire County Council has declared 5 LNRs on land that it owns and manages in South Cambridgeshire. LNRs are statutorily designated by local authorities under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. County Wildlife Sites (CWSs) and City Wildlife Sites (CiWSs) (which also include a number of the city's commons) have been selected as sites of substantive nature conservation interest, against published criteria, as a result of surveys undertaken initially by the local Wildlife Trust for the Council and maintained by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre (CPERC).

- 5.20** Other undesignated green spaces also make up the ecological network of sites across the city and would be subject to this policy, if they are identified as meeting the criteria for city or county wildlife site status following the County Wildlife Sites System.
- 5.21** Local Geological Sites (LGS) are selected through the candidate LGS system and for mapping on the county records system held by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre (CPERC).
- 5.22** The policy encourages the delivery of offsite BNG within areas identified within the LNRS priority areas. Where BNG is delivered offsite within the identified priority areas, the 'strategic significance' multiplier can be applied within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. This will increase the value of those habitat credits over and above credits created outside of these strategically important areas.
- 5.23** When considering local BNG proposals the LPA will seek to ensure that the BNG is the primary use of the space and is ecologically viable. Proposals will require agreement by the LPA's ecologist that they provide a long-term benefit to local biodiversity that is compatible with other site uses such as recreational space or sports pitches. To ensure the delivery of BNG measures, the Councils will secure off site habitat creation and its long-term management (minimum 30 years), through planning obligations, or, where BNG is provided on land outside of the applicant's control, by obligations.
- 5.24** Where off-site habitat measures are required, applicants must provide UK habitat assessment surveys to agree a baseline metric of the existing offsite habitats, conform to BNG CIEEM/IEMA/CIRIA-Good Practice Principles for Development and seek to deliver BNG as close as feasible to the impacts of the development. The Defra Biodiversity Metric trading rules should also be observed. Submission of a completed Statutory Biodiversity Metric (SBM) will be required to evidence how biodiversity net gain will be achieved upon submission of development proposal.
- 5.25** The full biodiversity gain plan will be submitted either with the planning application or after the permission is granted, but before development has commenced. Delivery of off-site biodiversity gains through statutory biodiversity credits is the last resort for development which is unable to meet BNG requirements onsite or off-site.
- 5.26** Prior to the determination of any development application (unless exempt under the Environment Act 2021), survey information and site assessment that is proportionate to the likely severity of impacts must be provided by applicants. Submitted documentation should be produced having regard to the best practice guidance published by Natural England (BS42020, 2013 or predecessor), should demonstrate that the mitigation hierarchy has been implemented and should evidence how the intrinsic natural features of particular interest are to be safeguarded or enhanced.
- 5.27** Submitted ecological reports are expected to explain how the mitigation hierarchy has been embedded into the design of the development and to set out the steps to be followed in order of priority when delivering BNG. Where impacts on habitats and species cannot be avoided, a clear explanation of why alternative sites are not feasible, and what proposed mitigation and compensation measures are necessary to address all likely significant adverse effects is needed.

- 5.28** In exceptional cases, national planning policy allows for the development need and benefits to demonstrably outweigh the loss of irreplaceable habitat within Greater Cambridge (including (but not confined to) ancient woodlands; ancient and veteran trees; and lowland fens). These considerations and the application decision is the responsibility of the local planning authority for applications within Greater Cambridge.
- 5.29** Any exceptionally permitted development proposals which have a direct or indirect adverse effect on sites of biodiversity or geological importance (SSSIs and other designated nature sites are identified on the policies map) and including irreplaceable habitat (as defined by The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024) must seek to minimise adverse impacts and will be required to agree a bespoke compensation strategy, with the local planning authority.
- 5.30** Where development resulting in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees is exceptionally permitted, compensation measures will not be considered as part of the assessment of the development proposal and, will only be considered once the existence of exceptional circumstances has been ascertained. Any proposals which would lead to the creation of new woodland, or the restoration or improvement of ancient woodland should follow the UK Forestry Standard.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic paper 3: Biodiversity and Green Spaces
- Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Baseline Report (2020) Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Final Report (2021)
- Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Strategy – Volume 1 – emerging strategy and standards (2025)
- Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Strategy – Volume 2 – Supporting Evidence (2025)



# Policy BG/GI:

## Green and blue infrastructure

### What this policy does

- 5.31** This policy sets out green infrastructure provision and green infrastructure design standards for new development to adhere to. The policy also identifies and protects the existing green infrastructure network, and the strategic green infrastructure initiatives intended to enhance the green infrastructure network. This policy requires developments to support the delivery of identified strategic green infrastructure initiatives through either on-site provision or financial contributions.
- 5.32** Green infrastructure is the network of green spaces and routes, landscapes, biodiversity, water bodies and heritage, which provide a range of benefits for people, wildlife and the planet.

#### Policy BG/GI: Green and blue infrastructure

1. All development must demonstrate how it protects and enhances green and blue infrastructure appropriate to the development's scale and location.
2. Major residential and commercial development must demonstrate how green and blue infrastructure has been integrated into the design approach at an early stage, to ensure that on-site green and/or blue infrastructure is:
  - a. Multifunctional – individual features in combination contribute to a network of multiple benefits
  - b. Connected – provides or fills a missing natural link in the landscape for the benefit of nature and people
  - c. Sympathetically placed – reflects and/or creates a sense of place, considerate to the context and character of the local environment and priorities of its people and wildlife
  - d. Resilient – responds to the climate emergency in a positive, contributory way
  - e. Responsibly managed – has a sustainable mechanism to support its life-long function and benefits
  - f. Environmentally sensitive – mitigates its own local impact and improves the quality of the immediate natural environment

3. Strategic development will be encouraged to seek accreditation under the Building with Nature Standards.
4. All major residential development proposals, or proposals that are predominately residentially led, must meet a minimum Greening Factor of 0.4. All major non-residential development, or proposals that are predominately non-residentially led, should aim to meet a Greening Factor of 0.3. Where the Greening Factor cannot be met on site, then the Local Planning Authority will work with applicants to identify offsite opportunities to enhance local green infrastructure, to be secured by planning conditions and/or obligations and delivered in line with locally identified needs.
5. The following strategic green infrastructure initiatives are identified priorities for enhancing strategic green infrastructure across Greater Cambridge.
  1. Revitalising the chalk stream network
  2. River Cam Corridor
    - 2a. River Cam Corridor (North East Cambridge to Waterbeach)
    - 2b. River Cam Corridor (through Cambridge City)
    - 2c. River Cam Corridor (south of Cambridge City)
  3. Gog Magog Hills and chalkland fringe
  4. Enhancement of the eastern fens
  5. The Great Ouse fenland arc
  6. North Cambridge green space
  7. West Cambridge Green Infrastructure buffer – Coton Corridor
  8. Western gateway multifunctional Green Infrastructure corridor
  9. Pollinator corridors

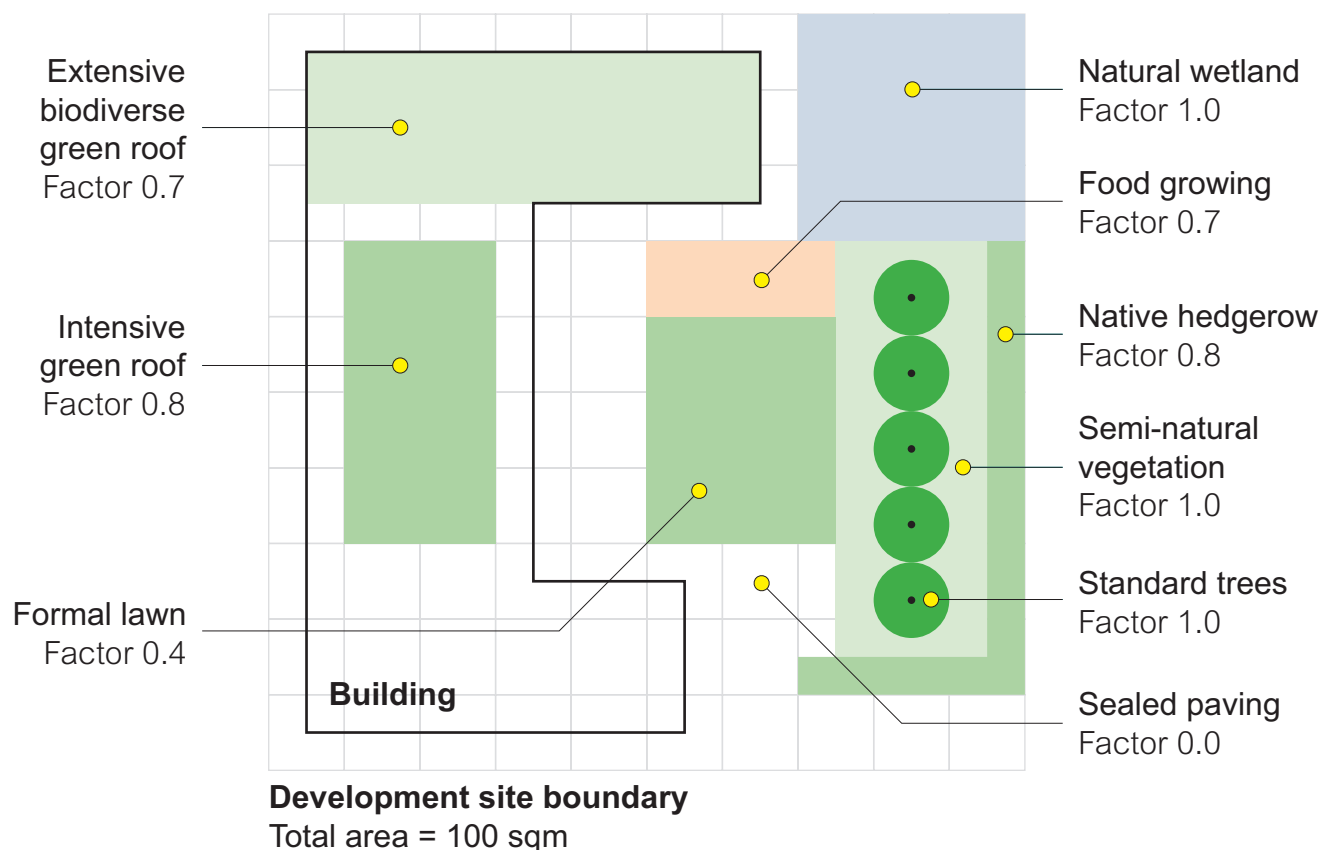
### **Dispersed initiatives**

10. Expanding Greater Cambridgeshire's 'urban forest'
    11. Woodland expansion and resilience
    12. Urban greening and 'de-paving'
    13. Allotments and community gardening
    14. Environmentally friendly farming
  6. Major development located within an area identified for one of the strategic green infrastructure initiatives must demonstrate how the design of on-site green infrastructure has had regard to the relevant initiative's objectives. Major development located elsewhere should provide financial contributions to projects that will deliver on the objectives of one of the green infrastructure strategic initiatives, including relevant for establishment, enhancement and the on-going management costs.
-



## Supporting information

- 5.33** The term green infrastructure encompasses a wide range of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which can deliver a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits. Green infrastructure includes, but is not limited to, parks, playing fields, other areas of open space, woodland, allotments, private gardens, sustainable drainage features, green roofs and walls, street trees and 'blue infrastructure' such as streams, ponds, canals and other water bodies.
- 5.34** The Councils have been working to translate Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework (NEGIF) at a local level to develop a suite of green infrastructure standards applied through the policies in this Local Plan theme to ensure the quantity, accessibility and quality of green infrastructure provided through development. Published in 2023, the NEGIF offers a new and innovative way to plan for GI. Its complexity means that we are still working to confirm a locally justified approach that is clear and proportionate to different scales of development. At this draft plan stage, the policy set out here forms a work in progress position; further work will be done to confirm a refined position for the Proposed Submission stage.
- 5.35** All development is expected to protect and enhance green infrastructure. Planning applications for major development will be expected to submit a Green Infrastructure Plan; this can be submitted as a standalone document or as part of a design and access statement.
- 5.36** The Councils continue to explore the use of Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework and also Building with Nature standards to be applied to different scales of development in a way that is clear and proportionate to the scale of development. The list of GI principles set out in the current draft policy are the Building with Nature Core principles which align but go further than the Natural England Green Infrastructure standards. For strategic-scale developments, achieving external accreditation via full Building with Nature accreditation will demonstrate excellence in integrating green infrastructure into its design.
- 5.37** Urban greening means the incorporation of plants, trees, and other natural elements into urban environments to create more sustainable, liveable, and resilient places. The Councils continue to explore how to deliver urban greening through development, alongside other policy tools. The current draft policy proposes applying an Urban Greening Factor (UGF). An Urban Greening Factor provides a figure for the proportion of urban greening in comparison to the total area of the development site. It is calculated by multiplying the area of each surface cover type by its "factor" – a weighting factor from 0.0 to 1.0 assigned to each cover type reflecting its environmental and social value in urban greening; its functionality in providing ecosystem services, including improving permeability; and its benefit in supporting biodiversity and habitat creation. Each figure is then added together and divided by the total area within the development site. The resulting score is then compared with the target UGF score for the development site set by the planning policy and the score indicates whether the urban greening proposals achieve, exceed or fail to meet the defined target.



**Figure 132:** Theoretical site plan showing UGF scores from the Natural England Urban Greening Factor for England User Guide (2023)

- 5.38** The target scores in the draft policy are taken from Natural England's Infrastructure Framework, and would be applied using guidance informed by Natural England's Urban Greening Factor for England User Guide, alongside local evidence.
- 5.39** Drawing on extensive engagement with partners and local groups, our Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Final Report (2021) identified fourteen area-specific and dispersed long term priority enhancements to this network – described as strategic initiatives – helping to provide the wide-ranging benefits that green infrastructure brings. The Councils continue to explore how they can best support delivery of these through the policies of this plan as a part of the emerging suite of green infrastructure standards referred to above. As such the current draft policy approach may be refined at Proposed Submission stage.

## **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic paper 3: Biodiversity and Green Spaces
- Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Baseline Report (2020)
- Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Final Report (2021)
- Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Strategy – Volume 1 – emerging strategy and standards (2025)
- Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Strategy – Volume 2 – Supporting Evidence (2025)

# Policy BG/TC:

## Improving tree canopy cover and the tree population

### What this policy does

5.40

This policy controls how development impacts tree canopy cover, the tree population, and protected trees and hedgerows.

#### Policy BG/TC: Improving tree canopy cover and the tree population

1. Major development proposals must demonstrate, via a Tree Canopy Cover Assessment, how it will achieve a minimum future canopy cover of 30% on site.
2. If a scheme can demonstrate significant ecological, historical, landscape or operational reasons to justify a canopy cover of less than 30% on site, an alternative percentage of canopy provision shall be agreed with the Local Planning Authority.
3. All applications for development where there are trees on, or immediately adjacent to, a development site must be accompanied by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment and a tree protection plan and/or a Hedgerow Survey that demonstrates how the proposal:
  - a. preserves, protects and enhances existing trees and hedgerows on site. Retained trees and/or hedgerows should be integrated into the development design to ensure their long-term preservation, and
  - b. ensures that there is sufficient space above and below ground, for existing, replacement and newly planted trees, hedgerows and other vegetation to mature and to be maintained in the long term.
4. Where new trees are provided, planting must:
  - a) be of species which are appropriate for the conditions of the site including consideration for climate change, and
  - b) support species diversity and incorporation of long lived trees within the treescape design
5. Development which includes planting of trees must contribute to long term maintenance via planning conditions and/or obligations as appropriate.

6. Development will not be permitted which involves felling, significant surgery (either now or in the foreseeable future), and potential root damage to trees of amenity value, unless otherwise approved by the Local Planning Authority on a case-by-case basis weighing up the impacts of removal against the benefits of development. When felling is approved, appropriate replacement planting will be required to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority.
  7. Development proposals should maintain a buffer zone of at least 15 metres from the boundary of any ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees, ancient hedgerows and any development boundary, to avoid root damage (known as the root protection area). The size and type of buffer zone will vary depending on the scale, type and impact of the development. All proposals should ensure that appropriately wide buffer strips are possible next to tree groups.
- 

## Supporting information

- 5.41** National policy and guidance recognises the many benefits provided by trees. Existing trees, woodlands and hedgerows contribute to the identified landscape character and townscapes of Greater Cambridge; their retention and proper management is essential in maintaining biodiversity, landscape, amenity, cultural and heritage value. Locally, low tree and tree canopy cover is recognised as a weakness within the ecological network, both in the rural agricultural areas typified by large open fields lacking boundary features and in more urban areas which pre-date requirements for ecological enhancement (BNG).
- 5.42** To address these challenges, the councils have identified a priority of increasing tree canopy cover in Greater Cambridge. The policy intent to increase Urban Tree Canopy Cover reflects best practice tree planting and management green infrastructure guidance (see Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Strategy – Volume 1 – Emerging Strategy and Standards Appendix E- 2025).
- 5.43** The potential effect of development on trees, whether statutorily protected (for example by a tree preservation order) or not, is a material consideration in planning decisions. To exercise this statutory duty, Local Planning Authorities need to understand the existing tree resource so that they can make an informed judgement about what might be needed/appropriate, in terms of tree impact, from developments. Where there are trees within the application site, or on land adjacent to it that could influence or be affected by the development, information will be required on which trees are to be lost/retained, including whether any are ancient or veteran. It is best practice to undertake a tree survey in accordance with BS 5837 'Trees in relation to construction – Recommendations' to determine the significance and amenity value of trees on and near the site.

## Tree canopy cover and assessment

- 5.44** Only canopy that is delivered (retained or established) within the application site boundary will be considered canopy provision for the purposes of this policy. The Councils' emerging preferred approach is to apply a tree canopy cover target for a site,

in order to support the delivery of the area-wide ambition of 20% tree canopy cover. Ahead of the Proposed Submission stage, the Councils may also explore the implications of applying an alternative policy approach of requiring a canopy cover percentage increase.

**5.45** A tree canopy cover assessment, in accordance with a Council approved calculator or metric will be required to enable assessment by the councils of tree canopy cover for major development proposals. The tree canopy cover assessment calculator is being currently developed by officers and will be published with the submission Greater Cambridge Local Plan. Illustrative best practice examples which are informing the development of the calculator are referenced within the Biodiversity and Green Spaces Topic Paper.

**5.46** Significant ecological, historical, landscape or operational reasons which would justify a canopy cover of less than 20% would be circumstances where this level of canopy cover provision would cause a significant, adverse impact upon:

- the character, context, views of or from a heritage asset, its setting and its relationship with the wider landscape
- a designated landscape or upon the physical condition of a retained historic feature
- a site(s) where aviation or the generation of renewable energy are the primary function (for instance in circumstances where new any canopy may obstruct visibility/flight paths at aviation sites or may prevent optimal outputs for solar farms)
- the balance of BNG (disproportionate canopy) or the provision of BNG.
- biodiversity (sites of biodiversity importance, habitats and species of principal importance) or sites of geodiversity
- the connectivity or enhancement of the local nature recovery network

## **Felling and significant surgery to trees**

**5.47** The councils recognise that in some specific instances felling of existing trees or hedgerows may be necessary to meet wider placemaking objectives. In order to determine whether felling or significant surgery to trees or hedgerows is acceptable, the amenity value of the tree(s) and/or hedgerows, condition and potential lifespan will be weighed against the safety from removal, the protection of other important site features or any more general benefits of a new development.

**5.48** The councils will protect trees of current and future amenity value through the imposition of TPOs (including the serving of category C TPOs) and/or, through planning conditions to ensure protection and prevent damage during the development process. A tree preservation order (TPO) can be placed on any tree, including hedgerow trees but not hedgerows themselves. Trees, groups of trees and woodland will be assessed by the Councils in accordance with the amenity assessment (Policy P2) Cambridge City Councils tree strategy (2016-2026) or successor document. When felling is approved, appropriate replacement planting will be required to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority, including the species and location of such planting.

## Design

- 5.49** Site layouts should be planned so that new and existing trees are not only a significant feature of open spaces but they are also incorporated into streets, gardens, parking courts and other publicly accessible areas. The constraints imposed by trees, both above and below ground should be considered at the outset as they will inform site layout. Trees must be given adequate space to allow for future growth of both roots and crown.
- 5.50** Proposals should support greater treescape design diversity (such as informal orchards, micro-woods, informal tree planting, woodland pasture and Hedgerow trees) and consider how large, long-lived trees can be incorporated into the design. Large, long-lived trees are species that, at maturity, generally exceed 15–20 metres in height and have a broad canopy spread, and possess a natural life expectancy of at least 100 years, often considerably longer. These trees contribute disproportionately to urban forest benefits due to their extensive biomass, ecological value, and sustained canopy cover over time.

## Tree species and diversity

- 5.51** Opportunities to plant large species trees should be maximised with the use of adequate building set-backs, efficient and combined utilities routes and root cell systems for rooting volume. Proposals should be informed by urban greening best practice guidance at the time of the application to enable appropriate tree species selection for aiding the diversification of the urban forest (see Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Strategy Appendix E).

## Hedgerows

- 5.52** Where developments are likely to affect a hedgerow, it should be surveyed and assessed against the criteria in the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 to determine if it qualifies as 'important' under the Regulations (the survey is required to cover the condition, height, spread and species content of the hedgerow.) Even when the hedgerow is deemed not to meet the criteria for classification as important, consideration should be given to its importance for biodiversity and wildlife, for example as nesting sites, migration corridors or foraging routes for bats and birds (see also Policy WS/HS).
- 5.53** Development proposals will be required to retain and protect both hedgerows themselves and the surrounding space which supports their flourishing. Development proposals should seek to incorporate established hedgerows into their landscaping schemes at an early stage of design.

## Tree management

- 5.54** The management of trees requires great care and forethought; tree constraints, tree protection and tree management plans should be provided where trees are to be retained on-site.

## Buffer zone

- 5.55** Development should buffer any ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees and ancient hedgerows it affects by providing sufficient space to afford surrounding protection and allow for future growth and expansion (where possible). Development near ancient woodland should have a minimum buffer zone of at least 15 metres from the boundary of the woodland to avoid root damage (known as the root protection area) but where assessment shows other impacts are likely to extend beyond this distance, the proposal is likely to need a larger buffer zone (for example, the effect of air pollution from development that results in a significant increase in traffic).
- 5.56** Development near ancient woodland should be in accordance with the most up to date joint Natural England and Forestry Commission Standing Advice. Precise buffers will be determined by Local Planning Authority tree officers through assessment and design proposals submitted as part of the development application. Where possible, a buffer zone(s) should contribute to the wider ecological network and be part of the green infrastructure of the area by being planted with local species.

### Supporting topic paper and evidence studies

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic paper 3: Biodiversity and Green Spaces



# Policy BG/RC:

## River corridors

### What this policy does

- 5.57** This policy controls development that has an impact on river corridors in Greater Cambridge, including in particular the River Cam and River Ouse and their tributaries.

#### Policy BG/RC: River corridors

1. Development along river corridors and their tributaries must demonstrate how it:
  - a. Protects and enhances views to and from the river.
  - b. Ensures that the location, scale and design of development protects and enhances the character, biodiversity, visual amenity and historic significance of river corridors and connected locations.
  - c. Protects, enhances and restores natural features, including:
    - i. Supporting the renaturalisation of the rivers and their processes.
    - ii. Restoring natural floodplains and integration of nature based solutions to protect communities at risk of flooding.
    - iii. Establishing riparian habitats where appropriate.
  - d. Protects and enhances the existing landscape of river corridors, referring to the Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for guidance.
  - e. Supports enhanced access to, from and along river corridors for walking and cycling, whilst balancing this with the need to protect and enhance habitats for biodiversity, including:
    - i. For the river Cam, supporting the delivery of a continuous Cam Valley Trail.
    - ii. Enhancing connections between the rivers and other green spaces.
    - iii. Providing improved wayfinding and interpretation resources.
  - f. Supports tourism and recreation associated with river corridors in appropriate locations, whilst ensuring that this does not impact negatively on the other roles of a river.

## Riparian Buffer Zones

2. To help protect water quality and watercourse habitats, development proposals should retain or reinstate a buffer zone of at least 15m from the watercourse bank top, or 10m from a ditch bank top, according to the River/Ditch definitions set out under current BNG User Guidance. Within these riparian buffer zones, no development shall be permitted except for domestic extensions, soft landscaping, small amenity areas, or proposals where it is necessary for the nature and function of the development. In these exceptional cases, details proportionate to the scale and nature of the development must be submitted for approval to demonstrate:
    - a. that the development needs to be located within the riparian buffer zone and that there are no suitable alternatives;
    - b. that the proposed development will not cause significant harm to watercourses over the lifetime of the development; and
    - c. how the riparian buffer zone will be protected.
- 

## Supporting information

- 5.58** Our rivers, and in particular the River Cam and Ouse, and their tributaries, provide a variety of critical roles in Greater Cambridge. The policy seeks to address the following key roles, challenges and opportunities for our river corridors:
- A defining role in our landscape, heritage and townscape;
  - Supporting habitats;
  - Water storage;
  - Supporting leisure, recreation and health;
  - Supporting tourism.
- 5.59** Development proposals should consider guidance from the Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Final Report and Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment which identify key features to protect and opportunities for enhancement of river corridors.
- 5.60** The policy establishes riparian buffer zones around watercourses to protect important watercourse habitats from harm that can arise from development during construction and use. Some small-scale development, such as domestic extensions or landscaping proposals, may not be inappropriate within these riparian buffer zones, whilst other types of development may need to be located within these riparian buffer zones due to their nature or function, such as marinas, moorings, river jetties, boathouses, and other types of water-reliant uses or infrastructure. In these cases, applicants are required to submit details as part of a planning application to demonstrate that the proposed development will not cause significant negative impacts to watercourse over the lifetime of the development, and how the watercourses and associated aquatic environments will be protected.

## Supporting topic paper and evidence studies

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic paper 3: Biodiversity and Green Spaces
- Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Baseline Report (2020)
- Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Final Report (2021)

# Policy BG/PO:

## Protecting open spaces

### What this policy does

- 5.61** This policy addresses how important open spaces are considered in the planning process.

#### Policy BG/PO: Protecting open spaces

1. Development proposals will not be permitted where they would harm the character of, or lead to the loss of, protected open space of environmental and/or recreational importance as identified on the policies map, or undesignated areas that fulfil the criteria used to assess protected open space, unless the existing open space can be satisfactorily replaced to an equivalent or better standard in terms of quality, quantity and accessibility.
  2. Where replacement open space is to be provided in an alternative location, the replacement site must be;
    - a. located within a suitable distance of the original site having regard to the Natural England Accessible Greenspace Accessibility Standards; and
    - b. fully available for use before the area of open space to be lost can be redeveloped.
  3. In the case of school, college and university grounds, development may be permitted on existing open space where it meets a demonstrable educational need and does not adversely affect playing fields or other formal sports provision on the site.
  4. Development will not be permitted within or adjacent to areas identified as Protected Village Amenity Areas on the Policies Map if it would have an adverse impact on the character, amenity, tranquillity of the village.
  5. Development will not be permitted within or adjacent to areas identified as Local Green Space on the Policies Map if it would adversely impact on the character and particular local significance placed on such green areas which make them valued by their local community.
-

## Supporting information

- 5.62** Our settlements contain a wide variety of open spaces. Within this policy open space types include but are not limited to, Orchards, Allotments & Community Gardens, Amenity Greenspace, Cemeteries and Churchyards, Civic Spaces, Natural & Semi Natural Green Spaces, Outdoor Sports Facilities, Parks and Gardens and Provision for Children and Teenagers. These spaces make significant contributions to the character of places but also provide important local amenities, recreational capacity and environmental value. Access to a range of open spaces for different activities, for all ages is an essential part of sustaining healthy communities, supporting the local environment, and encouraging social interaction with local people.
- 5.63** It is important that these spaces are protected from development that could have an adverse impact on these qualities. Different types of open space have differing characteristics and therefore require varying types of protection. It is recognised that in some cases the development of an open space may be appropriate if the open space has limited quality, or the development would lead to overall quality or quantity improvement.
- 5.64** Protected Open Spaces have been designated on sites within defined development extents which have been assessed to have recreational or environmental importance. The designation is broad and all-encompassing and has been applied to a variety of open space types. Not all designated protected open spaces are publicly accessible.
- 5.65** School playing fields outside the defined development extents and previously unidentified sites can qualify as protected open space if the Council assesses that the open space would meet the environmental importance and/or recreational importance criteria for designation. For the assessment of environmental importance, sites need to make an important contribution to the setting, character, structure and environmental quality of the city or local area. Sites which also contribute to the wildlife value and biodiversity of the city or local area are also assessed as environmentally important.
- 5.66** For the assessment of recreational importance, sites need to make an important contribution to the recreational resources of the city or local area. The full criteria used for assessing protected open spaces within this plan can be found in the GCSP Protected Open Space Evidence Review 2025 (see the Biodiversity and Green Spaces Topic Paper). If an application is received which affects a site that may be worthy of protection, an assessment will be made of the site against the assessment criteria.
- 5.67** Where a protected open space is to be replaced, replacement sites should be a suitable distance from the site that is to be replaced. A suitable distance will be informed by the Natural England Accessible Greenspace Accessibility Standards. A replacement site/facility must be fully available for use before the area of open space to be lost can be redeveloped; this will be enforced through the use of planning conditions.
- 5.68** Protected Village Amenity Areas (PVAAs) have been designated on sites within defined development extents in order to safeguard those areas of mainly undeveloped land within villages which are important to retain. Some of the PVAAs may have an important amenity role in providing a setting for buildings or offer tranquil areas where there is

minimum activity. Not all PVAAAs have public access as some primarily undeveloped areas which are important may be private gardens. They also vary from those which are very open to visual penetration to those which may be enclosed or semi enclosed.

- 5.69** Local Green Space (LGS) is a designation which is for green areas of particular importance to local communities which once designated can prevent new development other than in very special circumstances. A LGS must hold a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife. The green area must be in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves. It must be local in character and not be an extensive tract of land. These spaces can protect land outside of a development framework.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic paper 3: Biodiversity and Green Spaces
- Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Baseline Report (2020)
- Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Final Report (2021)
- Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Strategy

# Policy BG/EO:

## Providing and enhancing open spaces

### What this policy does

- 5.70** This policy sets out how new development should provide new and enhanced open space to meet the needs it generates.

#### Policy BG/EO: Providing and enhancing open spaces

1. New development must address the open space needs it generates, which will be secured through a mix of on-site provision and/or financial contributions for off-site open space provision, enhancement and/or management.
2. The Councils are exploring the potential to require the following standards for major residential development:
  - a. An Accessible Green Space quantity standard to be confirmed per 1,000 population, to secure provision of parks & recreation space, country parks, natural/semi-natural green space, and informal areas of open space.
    - i. As part of the Accessible Green Space quantity standard, the Councils are exploring the potential to:
      1. apply a standard for major development in higher density contexts; and
      2. secure provision and/or contributions specifically for large scale green spaces including country parks.
  - b. 0.55ha children's play space and youth space per 1,000 population;
  - c. 0.4ha food growing and allotment space per 1,000 population;
  - d. Outdoor sports facilities appropriate to the scale and location of the development, informed by needs identified in the Greater Cambridge Interim Sports Strategy and Greater Cambridge Play Strategy or successor documents.
3. The Councils will require an Accessible Greenspace standard for commercial development, likely to be applied to development in use classes E(g)(i), E(g)(ii), or E(g)(iii) for 100 employees or more (as calculated using the Councils' latest jobs density calculations). The Councils are continuing to explore the number of hectares per employee to apply within this requirement.

4. The scale and types of open space to be provided on site, and the contribution to offsite provision, must be agreed with the Local Planning Authority, having regard to:
    - a. local area provision and gaps in accessible greenspace when compared against Natural England's Accessible Greenspace Standards – size and proximity standards; and
    - b. site-specific local constraints and opportunities associated with the nature of the proposed development.
  5. Development proposals must demonstrate how any on-site or off-site open space provided will be of high quality, having regard to the latest best practice guidance for each type of open space provided. The Councils are exploring the benefits of including specific quality standards for certain typologies, including acknowledging the difference between condition and function of open spaces.
- 

## Supporting information

- 5.71** Open spaces, regardless of ownership, are a key aspect for high-quality urban and rural environments, often defining the character of an area. These spaces provide places for relaxation and socialisation, promote healthier lifestyles through opportunities for sport and informal play, and can deliver wider benefits for nature by creating habitat, contribute to cooling and play a key role in adapting to climate change. The character of Greater Cambridge is significantly shaped by its green spaces, trees, and landscape features, including the River Cam.
- 5.72** As referred to in Policy BG/GI, the Councils are continuing to develop evidence to inform the standards for the quantity, quality and accessibility of greenspace provision used within this policy, as part of seeking to implement Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework (NEGIF) at a local level. Alongside the draft plan we are publishing Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Strategy – Emerging Strategy & Standards. This document includes a set of proposed Green Infrastructure standards and also emerging approaches to developing other potential Green Infrastructure standards, as reflected in the draft policy.
- 5.73** Development proposals will be expected to at least meet the minimum standards for specific open space categories. The quantity standards can be met by direct provision of new and/or improved open spaces on and/or off-site, or through an appropriate financial contribution to off-site provision as appropriate.
- 5.74** Residential development will be expected to contribute to providing publicly accessible green space on a per 1,000 population basis. For quantity, the NEGIF proposes that Local authorities have at least 3 hectares of publicly accessible greenspace per 1,000 population and there is no net loss or reduction in capacity of accessible greenspace per 1,000 population at an area-wide scale. Greater Cambridge currently has approximately 8.7ha of publicly accessible greenspace per 1000 population, comprising Parks & Recreation Space, Country Parks, Natural/Semi-Natural Green Space, Food Growing Spaces, Informal Areas of Open Space, Burial Grounds & Churchyards, and Children & Young People Space. At this draft plan stage, the policy



set out here forms a work in progress position; further work will be done to confirm the appropriate quantity standard to apply for the Proposed Submission stage, noting that the standard will be a mechanism for securing off site contributions as well as onsite provision.

- 5.75** Residential developments will be expected to contribute to children's and play and youth space, food growing and allotment spaces, and outdoor sports facilities – we are proposing specific standards for these at draft plan stage drawing on our existing evidence. Quantity requirements for specific typologies will be excluded from the overall accessible green space standard to ensure no double counting.
- 5.76** In high density residential development where there is a limited amount of space available, the priority is to incorporate good quality doorstep scale accessible greenspace on-site, or close to the site, that enable the residents to have access to greenspace where they live. The Councils are exploring how a standard could apply to address this need.
- 5.77** The Councils are also exploring the most appropriate way for development to contribute to meeting the Greater Cambridge's evidenced need for additional strategic scale green space including for country parks.
- 5.78** To maximise opportunities for the working population to access green spaces for gathering, relaxation and informal recreation, on-site open space provision will be sought for development proposals for employment uses with E(g)(i), E(g)(ii), or E(g)(iii) for 100 employees or more. The Councils are developing evidence to determine the most appropriate standard to meet this need. The number of employees will be calculated using the Councils' latest job density calculations. Where appropriate, any provision should be made available to the wider community outside of working hours.
- 5.79** Natural England's Accessible Greenspace Standards identify required provision of different scales of green space at different distances from development. Development should demonstrate how provision of on site open spaces responds to gaps in existing provision in the locality when considered against these standards. Our Green Infrastructure Strategy includes analysis of Greater Cambridge's existing provision against the NEGIF size and proximity standards.
- 5.80** To ensure the any on-site open space provision is of a high quality, development proposals will be expected to demonstrate that any provision is of a high quality with regard to best practice guidance. This can be demonstrated through the submission of a standalone document or as part of a design and access statement.
- 5.81** Financial contributions for off-site provision will be calculated using the Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Strategy, Greater Cambridge Interim Sports Strategy and Greater Cambridge Play Strategy.
- 5.82** Contributions towards off-site facilities will be directed to enhancing existing local green space and/or delivery of schemes that support the delivery of the objectives of Greater Cambridge Strategic Green Infrastructure Initiatives identified in Policy BG/GI. Contributions will also be directed towards management of green space where appropriate.

| Green space         | Minimum size | Maximum distance |   | Maximum journey     |
|---------------------|--------------|------------------|---|---------------------|
| Sub-regional        | 500ha        | 10km             |  | 30-40 minute cycle  |
| District            | 100ha        | 5km              |  | 15-20 minute cycle  |
| Wider neighbourhood | 20ha         | 1km              |  | 35 minute walk      |
| Neighbourhood       | 10ha         | 1km              |  | 15 minute walk      |
| Local               | 2ha          | 500m             |  | 5 minute walk       |
| or Doorstep         | 0.5ha        | 200m             |  | under 5 minute walk |



**15 minute walk target**


All green spaces should be accessible by public transport or safe active travel routes

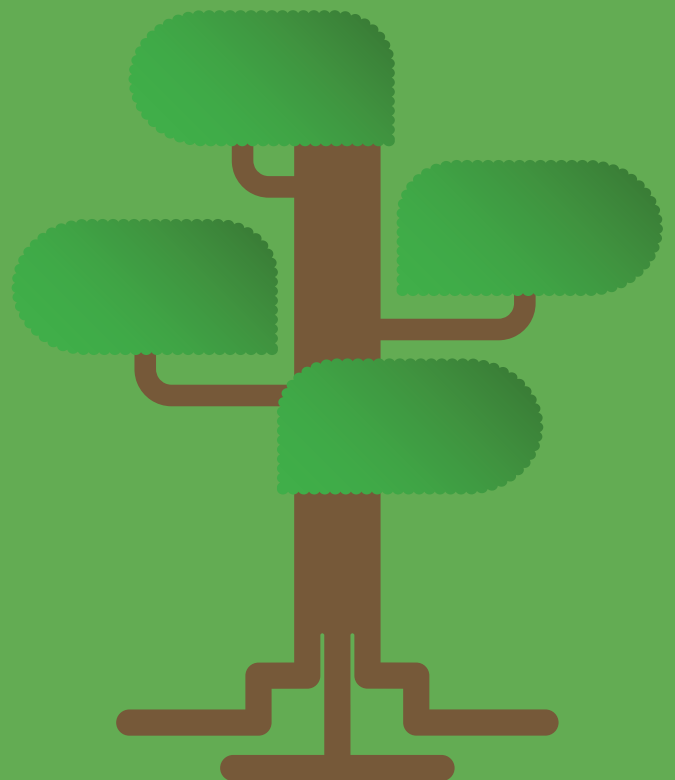
**Figure 133:** Natural England’s Green Infrastructure Standards: Size and Proximity Standards from the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework

### Supporting topic paper and evidence studies

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Biodiversity and Green Spaces Topic Paper
- Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Strategy – Volume 1 – emerging strategy and standards (2025)
- Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Strategy – Volume 2 – Supporting Evidence (2025)
- Greater Cambridge Interim Sport Strategy (2025)
- Greater Cambridge Play Strategy (2025)

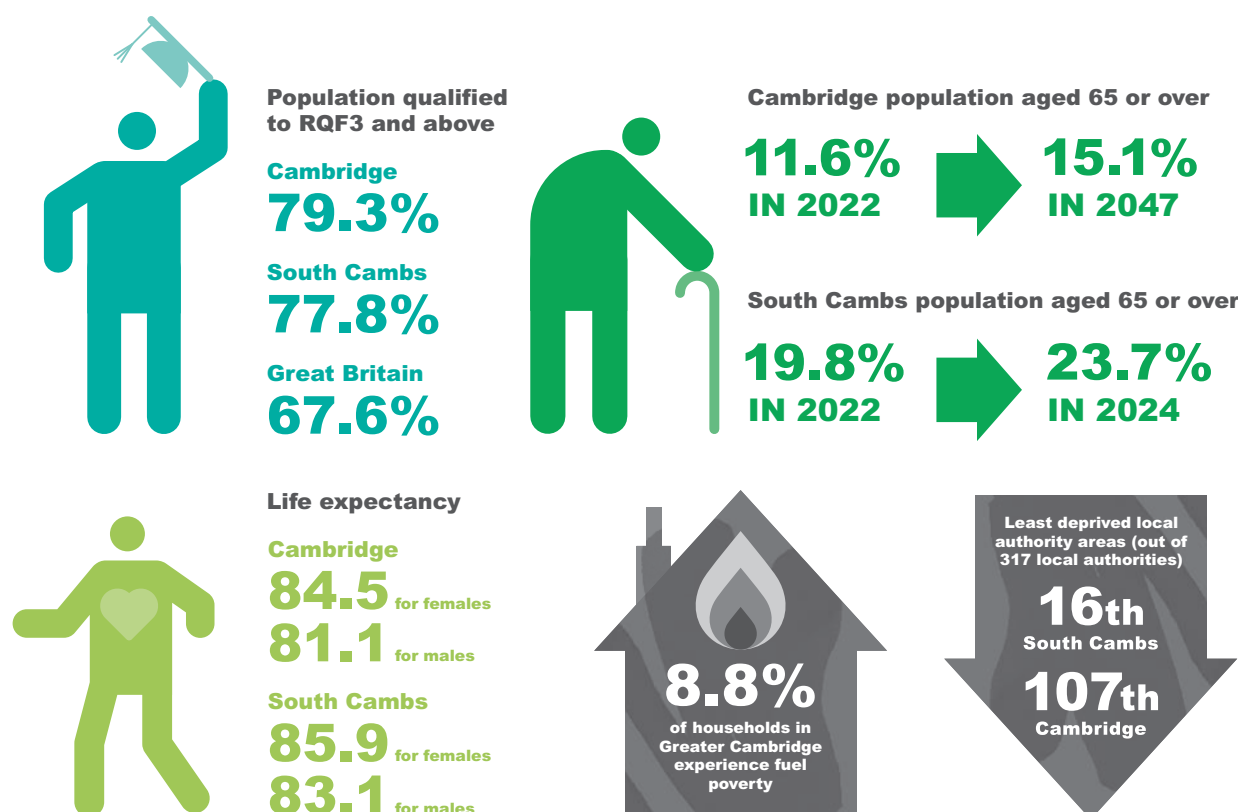
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# Wellbeing and social inclusion



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# Introduction

- 6.1** In the Wellbeing and Social Inclusion theme we set out policies to secure ‘good growth, supporting delivery of healthy and inclusive communities where needs can be met locally.

## **How has community engagement helped shape the wellbeing and social inclusion policies**

- 6.2** Through engagement so far you told us we should support communities to thrive and increase their resilience. We should be locating development in sustainable locations, where there is a range of housing types, jobs and sustainable travel opportunities. Developments should be inclusive healthy places, where people can access local services, including health, sports, and leisure facilities. We should make places inclusive, providing employment and training opportunities, and provide space for cultural activities and for social enterprise.

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## **Our strategic priority for our wellbeing and social inclusion policies**

- 6.2** **Strategic Priority:** Help improve equality of access and opportunities for people in Greater Cambridge to lead healthier and happier lives, ensuring that everyone benefits from the development of new homes and jobs.

- 
- 6.4** The Councils aspire to create healthy, sustainable and inclusive communities. Our places need to enable people to live healthy lives, where they can access the services and facilities they need locally, where people feel safe, they can have active lifestyles with access to high quality green spaces and active travel, and needs can be met throughout their lives. We want our communities to support arts, sports and leisure, with thriving centers which have facilities to support day to day needs as well as creating vibrant cultural centers.

- 6.5** Many residents of Greater Cambridge benefit from the economic success of the area, through high employment rates and high average pay rates and disposable incomes. This financial prosperity is accompanied by a high quality of life and very high levels of health and well-being. However, there are also significant numbers of people continue to experience poverty in Greater Cambridge alongside many residents who face challenges due to a high cost of living and lack of affordable housing. Both Councils have corporate priorities to help address these issues. Cambridge City Council have

developed a Community Wealth Building Strategy which looks to build an inclusive and sustainable economy whilst tackling poverty and inequality.

## 6.6

Through the Local Plan we have explored how we can share the benefits of growth with all parts of the community, and the range of policies in this theme reflect that aim.

### **What our wellbeing and social inclusion policies do**

- Ensure health is a key driver in the way places are designed, requiring developers to demonstrate how they have considered health in all aspects of the design process;
- Control the development of fast-food takeaways, particularly near to schools;
- Require planning for a range of services and facilities that will help developments become communities where day to day needs can be met locally;
- Ensure proposals for new facilities are properly located, including where they can be accessed by sustainable travel;
- Protect important local facilities including pubs from being lost unless it is demonstrated that all avenues for their continued use have been fully explored;
- Seek meanwhile uses in new developments that will be built out over a long period to ensure the needs of early residents can be met;
- Support the creation of cultural hubs, where creative or cultural activities can be focused;
- Require developers provide inclusive employment opportunities, through employment and training opportunities from construction, and opportunities for local workers when buildings are operational.
- Ensure new places are safe for the use proposed, and that they will not have unacceptable pollution impacts on surrounding areas.

# Policy WS/HD:

## Creating healthy new developments

### What this policy does

- 6.7** Place and space have a significant impact on health and wellbeing. The ability of individuals to lead healthy lifestyles is deeply influenced by the environment in which they live. This policy sets out how new development can support healthy lifestyles and promote the health and wellbeing of residents.

#### Policy WS/HD: Creating healthy new developments

### Healthy places

1. Development will be supported where it can be demonstrated that it provides opportunities for residents and workers to adopt healthy lifestyles, contributes to the creation of healthier communities and the reduction of health inequalities.  
Developments will promote health and wellbeing by:
  - a. Delivering inclusive and healthy design, in particular meeting the needs of disabled people, older people and young children (Great Places)
  - b. Requiring the delivery of community and health facilities to meet the needs generated by the development and have regard to and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being. (Wellbeing and Social Inclusion)
  - c. Providing, protecting and enhancing accessibility to green and blue open spaces for sport and recreation (Biodiversity and Green Spaces).
  - d. Providing opportunities to access healthy food, including through allotments and food growing opportunities (Biodiversity and Green Spaces).
  - e. Ensuring that development is designed to facilitate, encourage and to prioritise walking, wheeling and cycling and promote accessibility for all (Infrastructure).
  - f. Requiring that new developments are inclusive and provide for the needs of disadvantaged groups and that new houses have sufficient space for residents both inside and outside (Housing).
  - g. Ensuring that developments are designed to mitigate the impacts of climate change including measures to reduce overheating and to maximise appropriate tree canopy shade (Climate Change and Biodiversity and Green Spaces).

- h. Ensuring employment areas have the facilities for active travel (Jobs)
  - i. Minimising the adverse impacts of pollution generated by new development (Wellbeing and Social Inclusion)
2. Developers of major development proposals are required to consider wider local/regional primary care and other health strategies, as appropriate, to take into account how they can contribute to the aims and objectives of those strategies.
  3. A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) must be prepared for the following:
    - a. Development proposals between 20 to 100 dwellings or 1,000sq.m to 5,000sq.m gross internal floorspace (GIA) must undertake an extended screening or rapid Health Impact Assessment.
    - b. Development proposals of 100 dwellings or more or 5,000m<sup>2</sup> of gross internal floorspace (GIA) or more must undertake a full HIA.
    - c. Other development which is likely to have a significant impact on health and wellbeing.
  4. Proposals requiring a full HIA must demonstrate:
    - a. How negative impacts identified through the HIA will be addressed.
    - b. How the development will reflect the ten principles of creating healthy places from the Healthy New Towns programme or future equivalent.

## **Hot food takeaway**

5. Proposals for new hot food takeaways and fast food outlets will not be permitted where they are situated outside of Greater Cambridge's designated centres, and within 400m, measured as a direct line, from an existing or proposed primary school, secondary school, further education college or youth centre.
  6. Proposals for new hot food takeaways and fast food outlets must ensure no clustering or cumulative negative impact resulting in the over concentration of hot food takeaways and fast food outlets in the area. New hot food takeaways and fast food outlets will not be supported where they:
    - (a) create or add to a cluster of three or more immediately opposite or adjacent hot food takeaways; or
    - (b) create or lead to more than two hot food takeaways and fast food outlets in a continuous frontage of 10 units or less.
  7. Applications for hot food takeaways and fast food outlets will be refused where they are replacing the last community asset such as a convenience shop or public house in a village or the last convenience shop in a parade of shops that serve a residential area.
-



## Supporting information

- 6.8** Good physical and mental health is related to good quality housing and developments, well designed street scenes, well laid out neighbourhoods, quality and efficiency in transport systems, opportunities to experience community, leisure and cultural services activities and access to green and open space.
- 6.9** Ten principles for creating healthy places were developed through NHS England's Healthy New Towns (HNT) programme. The new town at Northstowe, became a demonstrator site for the programme. The principles are:
1. Plan ahead collectively
  2. Assess local health and care needs and assets
  3. Connect, Involve and empower local people and communities
  4. Create compact neighbourhoods
  5. Maximise active travel
  6. Inspire and enable healthy eating
  7. Foster health in homes and buildings
  8. Enable healthy play and leisure
  9. Develop health services that help people stay well
  10. Create integrated health and well-being centres.
- 6.10** Each principle includes a range of actions in order to create a healthy new place. Applying the principles across the Greater Cambridge Local Plan will help to address the health and wellbeing of all new residents, and will also create an opportunity to address some of the existing health inequalities that are displayed locally.
- 6.11** Health Impact Assessments (HIA) are promoted by Public Health England as a method of ensuring that positive health outcomes can be delivered through new development. A HIA is a method of considering the positive and negative impacts of development on the health of different groups in the population, in order to enhance the benefits and minimise any risks to health. A HIA includes specifically a consideration of the differential impacts on different groups in the population, because certain groups are potentially more vulnerable to negative impacts from development such as those on a low income, people involved in the criminal justice system, minority ethnic groups, young, disabled (physically and learning) and older people.
- 6.12** The health and wellbeing impacts of development can vary depending on the type, scale, and location of development. Thresholds have therefore been included within Policy WS/HD to identify when the need for a HIA must be considered. For smaller developments an extended screening stage or rapid HIA can be undertaken to determine if a full HIA is required. The extended screening includes a desk-based assessment of a development's prospective health impacts, drawing data from a literature review and analysis of relevant quantitative data. A rapid HIA requires a small steering group and often uses the approach of a participatory stakeholder workshop.

This typically involves a brief investigation of health impacts, including a short literature review of quantitative and qualitative research, and the gathering of knowledge and further evidence from a number of local stakeholders. Guidance on how to undertake extended HIA screening and a rapid HIA is available within the Greater Cambridge Health Impact Assessment SPD (April 2025).

- 6.13** A HIA may also be required for a development proposal with potentially significant health and wellbeing impacts, even if the above thresholds are not exceeded. Examples of applicable development include:
- Development proposals that include potentially hazardous uses or installations;
  - Developments in areas with limited infrastructure or facilities;
  - Developments in areas that have a higher proportion of protected characteristic groups.
- 6.14** Applicants should engage in pre-application discussions with the Local Planning Authority to determine the need and/or scope of a HIA for a particular development proposal.
- 6.15** Whilst they have an established role in the existing retail offer, where hot food takeaways and fast food outlets are within walking distance of schools and youth facilities, these uses have the potential to promote behaviour which is harmful to health. Controlling the development of hot food takeaways and fast food outlets within walking distances of places where young people gather will limit children's exposure to less healthy food choices.
- 6.16** National Planning Policy states that applications for hot food takeaways and fast food outlets should be refused outside town centres when they are in close proximity to schools and other places where children and young people congregate, unless the location is within a designated town centre or where there is evidence that a concentration of such uses is having an adverse impact on local health, pollution or anti-social-behaviour. Policy WS/HD provides further detail as to how this policy will be applied in Greater Cambridge.
- 6.17** Concentrations of hot food takeaways and fast food outlets can damage the health of local communities by reducing choice and providing a plethora of opportunities for less healthy food choices. The policy seeks to avoid clustering of these uses to ensure a balanced mix of uses within a village or shopping parade and to prevent such outlets from dominating. We are also exploring whether such controls should also be applied to other uses that have health impacts, such as betting shops, and would be interesting on receiving views on this issue through the consultation.
- 6.18** Shops and public houses within a village or shopping parade with a limited retail presence are valuable community resources that provide residents, particularly those without a car, with access to goods and services and to human contact. Protecting this use from changing to hot food takeaways and fast food outlets helps to contribute to better physical and mental health outcomes for local residents and support the vitality of local communities.

## Supporting topic paper and evidence studies

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic paper: Wellbeing and Social Inclusion

# Policy WS/NC:

## Meeting the needs of new and growing Communities

### What this policy does

- 6.19** This policy establishes requirements for the provision and delivery of new facilities to meet the needs generated by new development.

#### Policy: WS/NC: Meeting the needs of new and growing communities

### Identifying and addressing needs

1. New development will be required to include or contribute to the delivery of the services and facilities necessary to meet the needs of the development and mitigate the impact of development on existing local facilities.
2. The scale and range of facility and service provision or contribution must be appropriate to the level of need (including the specific needs of different demographic groups) generated by the development, and it must be adaptable to population growth and demographic changes. In making assessments of need and the timing of delivery of the facility or service, regard must be had to:
  - a. the capacity, quality, and accessibility of existing facilities in the locality; and
  - b. any local strategies recognised by the Local Planning Authorities that seek to improve public health, social and cultural wellbeing, and the sustainability of communities.
3. Developments of sufficient scale to generate the need for new on-site facilities will be required to do so, unless it can be demonstrated that there would be advantages in delivering the facilities off site. Acceptable provision and arrangements will be determined in consultation with service providers.
4. Proposals for residential sites of 200 or more dwellings (or groups of smaller sites which cumulatively exceed this figure) and employment development of over 5000m<sup>2</sup> must be informed by detailed assessments of community needs and include strategies that address identified needs. Submitted strategies to meet community needs must demonstrate that the local community and stakeholder groups have been engaged to guide the provision of community facilities to be introduced as part of the site-wide development strategy. Measures may be required to assist the development of a new community, such as through community development workers.

## Indoor community facilities

5. All housing developments will contribute towards the provision of indoor community facilities to meet the need generated by the development. Developments of sufficient scale to generate the need for new on-site facilities will be required to do so, unless it can be demonstrated that there would be advantages in off-site delivery. Other developments will contribute to off-site provision through planning obligations or through the Community Infrastructure Levy as appropriate. Contributions will be based on a standard of 129m<sup>2</sup> of such floorspace per 1,000 additional population.

## Implementation

6. The timely delivery of services and facilities will be required, including the provision of key services and facilities in early phases of the development. Phasing will be established through planning obligations or conditions, and this may include requirements for the use of meanwhile or temporary uses to ensure local needs can be supported until permanent facilities are delivered.
  7. As appropriate to the nature of facilities and services provided, the developer will prepare management and maintenance strategies, to be approved by the Local Planning Authority, to ensure robust and effective implementation, adoption and maintenance in the long term.
- 

## Supporting information

- 6.20 The delivery of new or improved facilities and services to support new development in a timely and phased manner will be an important element in ensuring the sustainable implementation of new growth in Greater Cambridge.
- 6.21 New large-scale major developments will need to include a wide range of services and facilities to establish successful communities. Smaller developments will not usually need to include new services and facilities on-site but may need to contribute to the expansion of existing facilities and sometimes provide land for that expansion. The provision of facilities and services will be secured via a planning obligation or through a Community Infrastructure Levy contribution (CIL).
- 6.22 Developments that are expected to attract many additional employees and, or visitors to an area should ensure that there is sufficient capacity, in terms of ancillary provision to avoid adversely affecting local amenity. This is particularly important for local sports provision. Day commuters may well want to link their commute/working day with some sort of sports activity. If sufficient capacity is not provided on-site, then off-site contributions towards public facilities should be made to support and improve local amenity.
- 6.23 Securing the delivery of services and facilities in the early phases of large-scale developments will be critical to ensure their success, helping to generate a strong sense of community belonging and connection, delivering strong community cohesion

and promoting sustainable patterns of movement from the outset. Where possible, proposals should consider where there may be opportunity for future residents to be involved in the detailed design of such proposals and services, reflecting that these will meet their needs primarily as well as those of existing nearby residents. This should also include clear proposals for the future stewardship model for such services and facilities, including ongoing maintenance, upkeep and renewal, and how residents can provide feedback or get involved. This will be key to the creation of places that people want to live and work.

**6.24** Smaller developments will not be required to provide as wide a range of services and facilities as large-scale major developments. However, consideration will need to be given to the impact of development on existing facilities and services so that the extra demands from new residents are provided for in ways that minimise impacts on the existing community. If, through consultation, a service or facility provider identifies a particular requirement arising directly from a development and a need to mitigate development impacts on the existing service offer, it would be legitimate to secure a financial contribution towards its provision or, in the case of existing facilities, its improvement or upkeep.

**6.25** The facilities and services referenced within this policy include, but are not limited to:

- Primary and secondary schools;
- Early years education and childcare facilities, including childcare nurseries;
- Meeting places;
- Health facilities;
- Libraries;
- Indoor and outdoor sports facilities;
- Commercial facilities important to community life local shops, including restaurants, cafes, and public houses;
- Provision for faith groups;
- Provision for burials;
- Provision for waste and recycling; and
- Community development including community development workers.

**6.26** An Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) has been prepared to accompany the plan. This was prepared in collaboration and consultation with local service providers, demonstrating proactive early work with our delivery partners to ensure required facilities and services needed to support the proposed development strategy are planned for from the outset. Developers bringing forward specific sites will need to build on the IDP, refining and updating evidence as detailed schemes are developed.

**6.27** It is also important for any new development proposals to take account of and be in general compliance with any relevant Council-approved strategy and/or the recommendations made by key service providers. Appropriate care is also needed to ensure new facilities and services do not undermine existing facilities. Further details

are provided below for the different types of facilities and services that should be supported by new development in Greater Cambridge:

## **Cultural infrastructure**

- 6.28** The Councils have collaborated on a joint Greater Cambridge Cultural Infrastructure Strategy, which defines the broader cultural ambitions and priorities of Greater Cambridge, and a pathway for the delivery of infrastructure to support these ambitions. The strategy builds upon a significant body of local planning policy, strategies and studies that concern the various aspects of cultural infrastructure and community life in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire.

## **Sports and leisure facilities**

- 6.29** The Councils have worked together with Sport England to produce a Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) and an Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy (ISFS) for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire to 2031. Following approaches set out in Sport England Guidance updated assessments of the need for Indoor Sports Facilities, Playing Pitches, Outdoor Courts and Rinks have been prepared to update on the existing PPS and ISFS. Wider sports facility provision, including financial contributions, and proposals that affect existing sports facilities will be considered against these strategy documents (or their successors).

## **Community facilities**

- 6.30** Cambridge City Council have a Community Facilities Strategy, which seeks to deliver facilities that provide flexible community resources and activities that can meet changing needs of the city, whilst ensuring they are financially sustainable. New facilities will need to complement existing services, and site promoters will need to engage early with service providers to explore opportunities.
- 6.31** In South Cambridgeshire the majority of facilities are owned and run by town and parish councils. The South Cambridgeshire Community Facilities Study (2025) provides an update to the Community Facilities Assessment (2009). The update provides a comprehensive audit of community facilities across South Cambridgeshire to update the Council's understanding of the quantity, quality and accessibility of existing provision, and identified needs for new or improved facilities in the district. The study found a total community facility space provision of 129m<sup>2</sup> per 1,000 population, and recommended this metric be used as a standard to secure contributions from new development. The Councils are preparing further evidence to explore the need for community facilities including community rooms for hire, to ensure that policy requirements are robust and future community provision can respond to changing needs and opportunities.



## Education facilities

- 6.32** Easy access to high-quality educational provision is needed to provide young people with opportunities, widen choice in education (in line with national planning policies), support economic growth, and develop strong sustainable communities. Developers should engage with the relevant Education Authority at the earliest opportunity to ensure sufficient education provision is provided to meet the anticipated demand from new residential development, and that educational facilities are delivered in a timely manner to support local needs. This also includes childcare facilities, such as nurseries, integrated nursery centres, playgroups, crèches, and child-minding networks. The size and type of education facilities needed will be influenced by the demand created by the development. The Councils strongly discourage the use of restrictive covenants that would restrict the ability to use homes for childminding business use appropriate to a dwelling.

## Healthcare facilities

- 6.33** It is essential that the planning process supports the provision of local healthcare facilities of the right type and in the right locations. The provision and location of healthcare facilities should aim to meet the needs of existing and new residents, which may include the need for community-based, out-of-hospital facilities. The Local Planning Authorities have engaged with the relevant health organisations in developing the IDP that accompanies this Local Plan. Developers of large-scale sites and new communities will also need to engage with health providers to understand and respond to healthcare needs.

## Community development

- 6.34** New developments take time to develop into new communities, especially if they are of a large scale. Support is needed to help people to settle and start the groups, clubs and activities found in more established neighbourhoods. The timely delivery of key services and facilities in the early phases of development is vital, and the early provision of places that can help to establish a sense of community identity and social cohesion in new developments should be prioritised. Planning obligations and conditions will be used by the Local Planning Authorities to ensure that key services and facilities are delivered in a timely manner as part of a delivery programme for the whole development.
- 6.35** In the early stages of a new development, initiatives that bring new residents together to meet each other, build new networks, and become engaged in the community's evolution will help to put in place the building blocks for the formation of a connected and resilient community and support the mental health of the new community members. Therefore, to uphold Principle 3 of the Putting Health into Place publications, contributions may also be sought to help with early community development. Depending on the needs identified, community development may include community workers, including youth workers, health workers, or community development workers, and initiatives to support their work such as community events and activities.



**6.36** In accordance with national planning policy, there is a presumption that services and facilities to be provided through planning obligations should be provided ‘in-kind’ and ‘on-site’. However, there are cases where it may be more advantageous for provisions to be made off-site, such as a new facility being in a more accessible location, the option for a better facility to be delivered off-site, or proposals that would seek to contribute to improvements to existing facilities. Where an obligation is to be provided other than ‘in-kind’ and on site, the draft Section 106 Agreement or proposed Heads of Terms should explain the reason why this is being pursued and should specify whether provision is to be made on an alternative site or by means of a payment in-lieu. The applicant should also identify the level of contribution applicable to their proposed development.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic paper: Wellbeing and Social Inclusion

# Policy WS/CF:

## Community, sports and leisure facilities

### What this policy does

- 6.37** This policy sets out policy guidelines for proposals that would deliver new community, sports and leisure facilities. It also sets out how the Local Planning Authority will consider and determine planning applications that result in the loss of existing facilities.

### Policy: WS/CF: Community, Sports, and Leisure facilities

### New or enhanced facilities

1. Proposals for new or enhanced community, sports or leisure facilities will be supported if:
  - a. there is a local need for the facility, and it is located within the catchment area it is expected to serve, having regard to any relevant Council approved strategy document;
  - b. the facility is of a scale and nature appropriate to its location, with particular regard to the settlement hierarchy and the hierarchy of retail centres;
  - c. where a proposal is a main town centre use, the proposal complies with the sequential test approach and the impact assessment thresholds set out in Policy J/RC;
  - d. it would improve the range, quality, and accessibility of facilities, and encourage the social cohesion and inclusion of people of different ages and abilities;
  - e. where possible and appropriate, the facility has been co-located with other, complementary services and uses; and
  - f. where appropriate, they include high-quality, multi-functional spaces that are open to the wider community.
2. In addition to the above, proposals for new or replacement city-wide or sub-regional community, sports or leisure facilities must also demonstrate:
  - a. evidence of need within the catchment it would support, and that it would complement and not undermine the viability of existing facilities;
  - b. that they would not have a negative impact upon the vitality and viability of the City Centre and other centres, including their evening/night-time economy;

- c. that they are provided in a sustainable location, including supporting sustainable travel; and
  - d. that, where possible, it includes facilities that are open to the wider community to enhance both accessibility and the range of facilities available.
3. New education facilities should also comply with any relevant strategy approved by the applicable Education Authority.

## **Protection of existing facilities**

4. Planning permission will be refused for proposals that would result in the loss of community, sports or leisure facilities or community services, such that the proposal would cause an unacceptable reduction in the range, quality and accessibility of facilities or services in the locality.
5. The loss of a facility or site that was last in use as a community, sports or leisure facility will only be permitted if it is demonstrated that:
- a. the proposal would deliver community, sports or leisure facilities or services of sufficient benefit to outweigh the loss; or
  - b. the facility/site would be replaced, providing an equivalent or better range and quality of facilities or services in a suitable, accessible location; or
  - c. there is an excess of provision in quantitative and qualitative terms of all the functions provided by the land or buildings to be lost, taking into account potential future demand and the impact on other facilities and planning uses in the locality. This should include consultation with local people and users, and, in appropriate cases, a marketing exercise for a sustained period in accordance with the guidance provided in Appendix G: Marketing, local needs assessments and viability appraisals.
6. The loss or redevelopment of school sites and educational facilities for other uses will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that they are not required in the longer term for continued educational use.
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## **Supporting information**

### **6.38**

Community, sports and leisure and facilities in Greater Cambridge perform vital functions in promoting healthy lifestyles, social inclusion and the development of strong community identities. Therefore, it is important that new and replacement facilities support new and existing communities, respectively. These should also facilitate the growth of Greater Cambridge by providing sufficient capacity to accommodate community needs and demands. The local community can highlight the facilities it values within its parish by applying for their inclusion on the Assets of Community Value (ACV) registers held by the Councils.

**6.39** The scale and nature of community, sports and leisure facilities can vary depending on their local context and the communities they serve. Therefore, different types of services and facilities may be required by urban communities when compared to more rural communities and village settings, which might be more sensitive to change. Illustrative examples of the different types of community, sports and leisure facilities that should be considered under this policy have been provided below, but these should not be considered exhaustive.

**6.40** **Community facilities** are those that help to meet the day-to-day needs of local residents. Community facilities may include:

- Commercial, Business and Service uses in **Class E (e)** and **E (f)**, including:
  - Provision of medical or health services (except the use of premises attached to the residence of the consultant or practitioner).
  - Creche, day nursery or day centre (not including a residential use).
- Uses in **Class F1** (learning and non-residential institutions), including:
  - the provision of education.
  - a public library.
  - a place of worship or religious instruction (or in connection with such use).

For the purposes of this policy, this does not include university teaching accommodation or associated residential uses.

- Uses in **Class F2** (local community), including:
  - a local retail unit selling essential goods.
  - a community centre, public hall or meeting place.
- The following sub-categories of **Class C2** (residential institutions):
  - hospitals, residential schools, colleges or training centres; and
  - other uses that provide either a community service, facility or a public utility such as facilities for the emergency services, public toilets, laundrettes and court buildings.
- Hot desking facilities located within dedicated spaces or within other community facilities can be used by residents who work remotely where they have difficulties working from home and/or would benefit from working in a shared space.

**6.41** **Leisure facilities** are cultural, entertainment and recreational facilities that provide space for recreation and engagement with the arts to both visitors and residents. Leisure facilities may include:

- Leisure arts and culture uses (**Class F1** and **sui generis**), including concert halls, performance venues and theatres, cinemas, punting stations, museums and galleries. Spaces that allow cultural activities to happen on a permanent or transitory basis.
- Leisure entertainment uses (**Class E(d)** and **sui generis**) including informal leisure & sport entertainment, primarily indoors. Nightclubs, indoor 10-pin bowling centres, escape rooms/immersive experiences, snooker/pool halls and 10-pin bowling alleys.

**6.42** **Sports facilities** include indoor and outdoor sports venues that allow for supervised, organised or competitive sports. Sports facilities may include:

- **Class F2, E(d), and sui generis** uses that allow for supervised, organised or competitive sports. Facilities include sports stadia, ice rinks, sports halls, boxing centres, badminton and squash courts, swimming pools (including outdoor), gymnasiums, indoor bowls centres, indoor tennis centres, and non-medical health and fitness centres.

**6.43** Some public services can successfully share facilities such as libraries, health facilities and meeting rooms. Such sharing of facilities can assist in the ensuring that a wider range of services is available to a community. The dual use of sports facilities and community spaces by the local community and the school population in village colleges is a successful part of the way of life in Greater Cambridge that should be continued in new schools. Therefore, the Local Planning Authorities will expect new and replacement community facilities to be, as far as reasonable and where possible, multi-functional spaces.

**6.44** The co-location of facilities and services can provide significant benefits for residents and businesses. Co-locating services provides focal destinations for communities, increasing convenience for users and promoting site usage, and facilitating the creation of critical masses of linked services that can improve the sustainability of day-to-day life through the creation of linked trips. Co-location can also have significant economic benefits for businesses and organisations operating within these spaces as locations containing a critical mass of key services represent strategic locations that attract funding and consumers. Examples of successfully co-located facilities include those already built in Cambourne and the Trumpington Surgery at Clay Farm.

**6.45** Proposals for new and replacement facilities will be supported where there is a local need, particularly where existing deficits in community or leisure provision have already been identified. The Local Planning Authority will expect planning applications for new and replacement facilities to be accompanied by a local needs assessment. When considering planning applications for community, sports and leisure facilities, particularly proposals that aim to deliver city-wide or sub-regional facilities, the Local Planning Authorities will consider how proposals align with Council-approved strategy documents.

**6.46** Facilities with a city-wide or sub-regional catchment should be located within the most sustainable locations in the settlement hierarchy. The relocation of facilities that serve the whole city should be retained within the city, unless it is demonstrated that a site outside the city has high quality public transport accessibility and will be easily reached by Cambridge's residents. Proposals should consider opportunities to include additional community and/or leisure facilities accessible to the public to increase the public benefit of such schemes. The Local Planning Authorities will also expect planning applications for community, sports, and leisure facilities of this scale to be accompanied by an Impact Assessment, which demonstrates that the facility will not negatively impact the vibrancy of designated retail centres and the vibrancy of settlements.

**6.47** The National Planning Policy Framework advises that plans should 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. Community assets such as

community halls and public houses, both in urban and rural areas should be recognised for their importance in adding social value to existing and emerging communities. Where proposals will result in the loss of community, sports and leisure facilities, applicants should seek to replace facilities, either on site as part of development or off-site (where considered appropriate by service providers and this can be secured through planning obligations linked to the development).

**6.48** Alternatively, applicants will need to demonstrate, both quantitatively and qualitatively, that the facilities are surplus to requirements and that the proposal will not cause significant negative impacts on the vitality of other local facilities (such as through demand pressures created by displaced users of the lost facility). In most cases, this will require a marketing exercise for a sustained period of at least 12 months to demonstrate a lack of demand; exceptions to this requirement include the loss of educational and healthcare uses as the ongoing need for these facilities will need to be determined with the relevant Education Authorities or Health Authorities. The policy is applicable to existing facilities and sites last used for community, sports or leisure purposes to avoid situations where these facilities are lost through demolition without any planned replacement facility but they are still needed.

**6.49** As part of any planning application involving the loss or replacement of an indoor sports facility, consideration will be given to outputs from Sport England's strategic planning tools, such as the Facilities Planning Model and the Active Places Power website in assessing the impact of the proposed loss. Replacement leisure facilities must comply with the relevant sports design guidance and avoid any net reduction in leisure facilities.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic paper: Wellbeing and Social Inclusion

# Policy WS/CH:

## Cultural and creative hubs

### What this policy does

- 6.50** This policy explains the requirements that need to be satisfied for new cultural / creative hubs in new and existing designated centres.

#### Policy WS/CH: Cultural and creative hubs

1. A cultural/creative hub consists of a space which brings together a mix of cultural activities and, or creative artists or creative/cultural organisations (public or commercial) that facilitate the following:
  - b. affordable creative workspace;
  - c. learning infrastructure;
  - d. networking and collaborative spaces;
  - e. affordable temporary accommodation for visiting artists attached to the hub (subject to local amenity);
  - f. cultural attractions; and
  - g. skills, networking and business support programmes for cultural activities.
2. Development proposals for new cultural/creative hubs within designated centres, as shown on the Policies Map, will be supported where it is demonstrated that:
  - a. the proposed cultural/creative hub will provide and support most of the criteria listed in paragraph 1 above, appropriately located within the centre to support its ongoing operation;
  - h. the proposed cultural/creative hub will complement the retail function of the centre, and maintain or add to the vitality, viability and diversity of the centre;
  - i. on-site infrastructure will include hosting workspaces, studios and, or cultural institutions;
  - j. on-site activities will support evening/nighttime economy uses, public realm interventions, visual identity, collaborative working, place branding, promotion and community engagement;
  - k. proposals improve and complement rather than duplicate cultural infrastructure provision and avoid competing or adversely impacting existing cultural/creative hubs, districts or quarters; and



- I. the proposed cultural/creative hub has a Management Strategy to ensure it will be viable over the long-term. This should outline, as a minimum its long-term vision, objectives, market sector within the wider cultural/creative market and financial resourcing.
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## Supporting information

- 6.51** The Greater Cambridge Cultural Infrastructure Strategy identifies the area's cultural and creative industries as a major and growing economic force, employing approximately 14,000 people. This makes up 8.5% of total employment in the sub-region. Greater Cambridge is therefore considered to be a Creative Cluster consisting of many cultural/creative hubs/districts. The area is also currently home to 9 Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisations, organisations considered by Arts Council England to be regionally or nationally significant for their cultural output, strategic role or value to their local communities.
- 6.52** The strategy also highlights the many benefits derived from culture including those related to improving everyday health and place-making. Social prescribing has become an established method of preventative care through the physical and mental health benefits of participating in culture with other people.
- 6.53** Cultural infrastructure within new and existing developments not only enhances the social fabric of areas but also contributes to long-term value creation, attracting investment and fostering sustainable growth. Beyond the standard economic benefits of other industry clusters, creative clusters are attractive for the wider benefits they can bring to places, supporting high levels of cultural activity, the evening and nighttime economy and an area's sense of place that help these spaces become more attractive to live, visit or set up a business.
- 6.54** Any proposal for a new cultural/creative hub within designated centres should be able to clearly demonstrate suitable capacity to bring together and support an ecosystem of cultural activities and, or creative artists or creative/cultural organisations (public or commercial). To act as a genuine cultural/creative hub, they should feature/host a mix of: affordable creative workspace; learning infrastructure; networking and collaborative spaces; affordable accommodation, live/workspace or affordable temporary accommodation for visiting artists; cultural attractions; and skills, networking and business support programmes. Examples include: an arts centre, a performance venue, a national and, or internationally recognised museum, a creative workspace space supporting creative businesses/artist workspaces or a community centre that supports cultural activities within the community. Increasingly, cultural infrastructure can be found in less traditional spaces, for example, public houses that provide performance venues with regular events; churches that provide space for community workshops; parks that host festivals; and offices that provide artist studios.



- 6.55** Areas with more than one cultural/creative hub – close enough to form interrelated links/activities/trips – would form a cultural/creative district. These may include several public-facing educational institutions such as art colleges and, or schools, related to cultural and creative industries; or spaces providing and supporting cultural activities including museums, theatres and other event performance spaces.
- 6.56** The scale of these districts can vary, from individual streets with high levels of cultural activity to larger mixed use regeneration schemes, to large parts of a city, to form a cultural quarter. To act as a genuine cultural/creative district, they should feature/host most of the following: workspaces and studios; cultural institutions; evening/nighttime economy uses; public realm interventions and visual identity; formal/ informal collaboration networks; place branding & promotion; and community engagement.
- 6.57** Areas with a high concentration of cultural spaces providing a broad range of cultural activities, including space for the evening and night-time economy – especially those performing an important sub-regional function – would normally be regarded as a Cultural Quarter. In Cambridge, this would comprise of the city centre’s historic central area including the proposed Civic Quarter, centred around the market area and the surrounding cultural performance spaces including the Corn Exchange along Wheeler Street, the Arts Theatre and those entertainment/performance venues/spaces in and around Trinity Street, the museums along Free School Lane and Pembroke Street, Market Passage and Sidney Street.
- 6.58** Other cultural hubs and districts across the area also make an important contribution to the area’s cultural and economic performance, by hosting a mix of public, social and private enterprises. They can also bring a unique dynamic to an area, fostering and supporting placemaking. Consequently, these cultural hubs and districts can help to develop and support the area’s high streets by adapting their appeal to changing retail and leisure trends.
- 6.59** Town centres need to be able to offer people and businesses something of interest that the internet alone cannot provide. This might include the co-location and collaboration of cultural providers and associated businesses. The space requirements for digital creative businesses often includes smaller office spaces which can be accommodated on upper floors above shops, close to larger cultural venues. Aside from attracting more employment opportunities into these centres, they are also a compatible use in area’s that host many evening/night-time venues which are often a source of noise from people visiting the area.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic paper: Wellbeing and Social Inclusion

# Policy WS/MU:

## Meanwhile uses during long term redevelopments

### What this policy does

- 6.60** This policy enables ‘meanwhile uses’ to offer opportunities for temporary uses on vacant land and buildings prior to it being permanently developed, providing an active and potentially beneficial use on what would otherwise be vacant land or underutilised buildings awaiting development.

#### Policy WS/MU: Meanwhile uses during long term redevelopments

1. As part of the phased development of large-scale development sites, and on other vacant sites or within underused buildings where a permanent use has not yet been secured, proposals will be supported for appropriate meanwhile uses.
2. Large-scale development proposals where all or part of a site may remain temporarily undeveloped for a long period of time should, where appropriate, include a strategy for accommodating meanwhile uses on the site.
3. Proposals for meanwhile uses must contribute positively to the local area, support community needs, and enhance the vibrancy and functionality of the site during the interim period.
4. Planning applications for meanwhile uses must demonstrate that a proposed meanwhile use is compatible with surrounding existing uses and will not inhibit the future permanent development of the site and the delivery of the site’s long-term development objectives.

### Supporting information

- 6.61** A ‘meanwhile use’ is the temporary use of a site or building for a duration of time before it is turned into a more permanent end state, providing an active and potentially beneficial use on what would otherwise be vacant land awaiting development. Examples of meanwhile uses include pop-up shops, markets and cafes, creative workspace and exhibitions, artists studios, short-term office units, sustainable energy generation, community meeting places and facilities, and temporary housing.

## 6.62

Some large-scale developments can take years to complete. Meanwhile uses provide an efficient use of temporarily vacant land or spaces. Providing temporary spaces, buildings and activity can help to create a sense of community to combat the ‘new town blues’ that can arise in the early stages of a development. Meanwhile uses can also provide temporary uses in vacant and underused buildings while the longer term use is being resolved. Meanwhile spaces can support ‘start up’ businesses and local businesses requiring affordable space, developing a pipeline of businesses that could potentially permanently locate in the area in the future.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic paper: Wellbeing and Social Inclusion

# Policy WS/IO:

## Creating inclusive employment and business opportunities through new developments

### What this policy does

- 6.63** This policy sets out how new development will provide training, employment and supply chain opportunities to local residents and businesses through the creation and implementation of an Employment and Skills Plan.

#### Policy WS/IO: Creating inclusive employment and business opportunities through new developments

1. New developments of 1,000sqm or more gross floorspace that fall within Use Classes E (commercial, business and service); B2 (general Industrial), B8 (storage and distribution); C1 (Hotel); F1 (learning and non-residential) ; F2 (local community) and Sui generis will be required to submit and implement an Employment and Skills Plan for both the construction and occupation stages of the development. A development that forms part of a larger development which would cumulatively exceed the 1,000 sqm threshold would also be required to deliver a Skills and Employment Plan.
2. New developments consisting of 10 or more dwellings will be required to submit and implement an Employment and Skills Plan for the construction stage.
3. An Employment and Skills Plan will be expected to include:
  - a. How and when the developer will, as a minimum, deliver the benchmarks for the development use and gross development value set out in the latest version of the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) National Skills Academy for Construction (CITB NSAfC) Client Based Approach guidance and benchmarks.
  - b. Where required by this policy, employment and training targets in the occupation stage of the development and how and when they will be delivered.
  - c. How these opportunities will be made available to local residents who have difficulty accessing the labour market and/or who would not have traditionally accessed the career paths available through the development.

- d. How procurement opportunities associated with the construction and occupational phases will be promoted to local businesses and what support will be available to them to understand the tendering process.
  4. A target percentage of all jobs created by the development will be secured for local residents.
  5. Employment and skills provision during the construction stage will be provided or facilitated directly by the developer or their sub-contractors. Occupation stage developers will agree internal protocols/ agreements with new occupier(s) that cover the targets, measures and monitoring laid out within the Employment and Skills Plan.
  6. Payments in-lieu will only be considered in exceptional circumstances where the developer can satisfactorily demonstrate that:
    - a. there are circumstances specific to the scheme such that direct provision is not operationally feasible, or
    - b. an alternative means of delivery would result in a more effective outcome.
  7. Developers will be expected to use reasonable endeavours to implement the agreed Employment and Skills Plan. The developer will be required to provide monitoring reports for review by the councils on the implementation of their Plan at agreed regular intervals.
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## Supporting information

- 6.64** This policy responds to the persistent poverty and skills gap in both Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. Despite improvements in certain indicators since 2014, poverty remains a significant issue in Cambridge, exacerbated by a "hollowed out labour market" where the dominance of higher-skilled industries limits opportunities for those with intermediate-level qualifications. In South Cambridgeshire, while inequality is less pronounced, rural deprivation is often overlooked due to its dispersed nature.
- 6.65** The construction industry, which offers considerable potential for local employment, faces a critical skills shortages with employers in this sector struggling to fill vacancies due to a lack of skilled applicants and insufficient training of young people. Given the scale of new developments planned for the area, it is both essential and valuable to create opportunities that address these skill deficits locally.
- 6.66** By implementing requirements for local employment, on-site apprenticeships, work experience, and other skills development initiatives, the policy would help equip local residents with the skills needed to meet the demands of growing sectors locally increasing social, particularly financial, inclusion. The policy will also help to foster a more self-sufficient and resilient workforce and reduces reliance on external labour.

- 6.67** Examples of the types of employment and training activities that can form part of a Skills and Employment Plan include:
- a. Recruitment of local residents through job brokerage, job centres and other local organisations;
  - b. Apprenticeships, accredited training, pre-employment support, work experience
  - c. Education initiatives linking with local schools and colleges, school talks and careers advice.
  - d. Work with the voluntary and community groups locally to support disadvantaged people.
  - e. Participation in local forums to promote sector development.
- 6.68** The Construction Industry Training Board National Skills Academy for Construction (CITB NSAfC) Client Based Approach guidance includes benchmarks for the following performance indicators:
- i. Work Experience Placements
  - ii. Job starts (including apprenticeships and people previously unemployed)
  - iii. Construction Careers Information, Advice & Guidance (CCIAG) Events
  - iv. Training Weeks on Site
  - v. Qualifying the Workforce
  - vi. Green Skills Training
- 6.69** Local residents who have difficulty accessing the labour market, include but are not limited to NEETS (not in education, employment or training), armed services leavers, refugees and asylum seekers, care leavers, people in long-term unemployment, and those with a disability, sickness, or caring responsibilities. Those who have not traditionally accessed the career paths available through the development include, for example, women in construction.
- 6.70** The policy requires a minimum target percentage of local labour during construction and operational phases. This percentage will be agreed with the Local Planning Authority prior to signing a S106 agreement. ‘Local labour’ for the purposes of this policy primarily refers to residents of Greater Cambridge and a “local business” means a business based in, or having a significant permanent physical presence in Greater Cambridge.
- 6.71** The policy seeks to support community wealth building by requiring developers to consider how they can ensure that local businesses can access procurement opportunities during both the construction and operational phases of the development. The inclusion of local procurement within the policy aligns with the broader efforts to achieve sustainable development, by reducing the reliance on external supply chains and connecting new development projects with the needs of the local community.

- 6.72** It is recommended that the developer will engage with the councils at an early stage to develop their Employment and Skills Plan. The Plan itself will need to have been approved in writing by the council by an agreed point in the development process (typically, three months prior to implementation, although exact timescales will need to be agreed as part of the detail of the planning obligations in individual cases).
- 6.73** The Employment and Skills Plan will normally be secured by means of the s106 legal agreement. This will also typically include a monitoring fee to aid the implementation of the policy. The council may provide supplementary planning guidance to provide more detailed guidance.
- 6.74** A formula for calculating potential in-lieu payments will be developed following consultation on the Draft Plan.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic paper 4: Wellbeing and Social Inclusion

# Policy WS/HS:

## Pollution, health and safety

### What this policy does

- 6.75** This policy sets out how development should take account of sources of pollution. It requires that development does not lead to, or is subject to, significant adverse effects as a result of noise, vibration, odour, and/or light pollution and where any residual adverse impact is unavoidable then it is mitigated and minimised to an acceptable level. The policy details how land contamination should be considered, to ensure that the land is suitable for the end use. It applies appropriate protection to and from hazardous installations. It requires development to be appropriate for the air quality in the area but also address impacts on air quality.

### Policy WS/HS: Pollution, health and safety

#### Light pollution

1. Development proposals that include new external lighting schemes or changes to existing external lighting will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:
  - a. it is the minimum required to undertake the task, taking into account public safety, crime prevention / security, living, operational and recreational purposes; and
  - b. upwards or intrusive light spillage and glare is minimised; and
  - c. there is no unacceptable impact to local residential amenity and landscape character, particularly at settlement edges; and/or on the surrounding countryside, and it minimises any impact to wildlife and nature conservation.
2. All major development proposals, or any other proposals which include large scale lighting schemes (such as the floodlighting of external recreational and sporting facilities/pitches), will be required to submit an assessment of the impact of new external and internal lighting or changes to existing external lighting on any sensitive residential premises both on-site and off-site as well as on the wider surrounding open spaces and, or countryside, where applicable. For certain major and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development (outline or full planning applications), a more detailed lighting impact assessment or strategy may be required at the determination stage. Any assessment should be undertaken considering guidance set out in the Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD or successor document.
3. Where necessary, conditions will be used to mitigate and control lighting, including limiting the hours of illumination.



## Noise and vibration pollution

4. Development will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:
  - a. proposals will not lead to significant adverse impacts from noise and vibration, including internal, external and cumulative effects and wherever applicable on health and amenity; and
  - b. any adverse effects/impacts from noise and vibration can be minimised to acceptable levels by appropriate reduction and/or mitigation measures secured by conditions or planning obligations, as appropriate; and
  - c. for noise / vibration sensitive development, as part of a hierarchy of noise management and mitigation measures, adverse noise effects/impacts have been minimised through the consideration of high-quality acoustic design and layout early in the design process; and
  - d. proposals are in accordance with local noise / vibration standards and requirements as set out in the Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD or successor document.
5. A Noise Impact Assessment will be required to support applications for noise sensitive and noise generating development where noise sensitive uses (existing or proposed) may be exposed to significant or unacceptable noise exposure and impacts.

## Air quality, odour, dust and other fugitive emissions to air

6. Development will be permitted where it can be demonstrated:
  - a. that it does not lead to significant adverse effects on health, the environment or amenity from polluting or malodorous emissions, dust or other emissions to air; or
  - b. where a development is a sensitive end-use, that there will not be any significant adverse effects on health, the environment or amenity arising from existing poor air quality, sources of dust, odour or other emissions to air.
7. All major and minor planning applications (excluding householder developments) must submit an Air Quality Statement. This must identify the existing air quality at the site, qualitatively identify sources of emissions to air arising from the proposed development with any likely impact on air quality and identify any mitigation measures. It must consider both the operational and the development phase. A full Air Quality Assessment will be required for applications where air quality is likely to be a significant issue.
8. Proposals for major development will be expected to minimise emissions to air and provide mitigation measures which offset emissions to air and are proportionate to the scale, nature or location of the development.
9. According to the end-use and nature of the area and application, applicants must demonstrate that:

- a. there is no adverse effect on air quality in an air quality management area (AQMA) and pollution levels within the AQMA will not have a significant adverse effect on the proposed use/users; and
- b. the development will not lead to the declaration of a new AQMA; and
- c. the development will not interfere with the implementation of, and shall be consistent with the Greater Cambridge Air Quality Strategy 2024-29 or successor document; and
- d. the development will minimise the impact on air quality, during demolition, the construction process and, during the lifetime of the completed development; and
- e. any sources of emissions to air, odours, dust and other fugitive emissions to air generated by the development are adequately mitigated so as not to lead to loss of amenity for existing and future occupants and land uses; and
- f. any impacts on the proposed use from existing poor air quality, odours, dust and other fugitive emissions are appropriately mitigated and minimised to an acceptable level by the developer.

## **Contaminated land**

10. Development will be permitted where the applicant can demonstrate that:
  - a. there will be no adverse health impacts to future occupiers due to land contamination (including gas migration) resulting from existing/previous uses of the area; and
  - b. there will be no adverse impacts to the surrounding occupiers, controlled waters and the environment from suspected/identified land contamination from existing/previous uses, caused by the development.
11. Where land contamination is suspected or known to exist, an assessment must be undertaken by a 'competent person' to quantify the risks. It may be necessary to:
  - a. undertake an intrusive investigation to identify all potential risks from land contamination, and where unacceptable risk is identified:
  - b. submit a remediation strategy and/or implement mitigation measures.
12. Proposals for sensitive developments on existing or former industrial areas will be permitted where it is demonstrated that land contamination is capable of being remediated appropriate to the proposed end use.
13. Where required, conditions and/or obligations shall be applied to secure appropriate pollution prevention or mitigation measures.

## **Hazardous installations**

14. Proposals for the development of hazardous installations/pipelines, modifications to existing sites, or new development/land uses in the vicinity of hazardous installations or pipelines, will be permitted where:

- a. it has been satisfactorily demonstrated that the amount, type and location of hazardous substances would not pose adverse health and safety risks. This includes the storage and disposal of any hazardous inputs and outputs; and
  - b. it can be evidenced that any necessary special precautions to limit potential societal and environmental risks to an acceptable degree will be in place prior to the commencement of development, to protect future users of the site and to protect any other affected land.
15. Any development in proximity to a site with a Hazardous Substances Consent must demonstrate that the design/ layout has due regard to the Hazardous Substances Consent and, that the benefits of the development outweigh the level of residual risk.

## **Environmental nuisance / pollution and the agent of change principle**

16. Development will be permitted where:

- a. it will be compatible with existing surrounding uses; and not give rise to unreasonable restrictions being placed on existing businesses and community / cultural facilities both now and in the future; and
- b. it has been clearly demonstrated how existing noise and vibration, odour, dust, lighting and other potential nuisances or other sources of environmental pollution will be avoided, mitigated, and managed by including consideration of the following:
  - i. ensuring good design avoids, mitigates and minimises existing and potential nuisances generated by existing uses and activities located in the area; and
  - ii. exploring mitigation measures either at receptor or at source early in the design stage, with necessary and appropriate provisions including ongoing and future management of mitigation measures secured through planning obligations; and
  - iii. separating new sensitive development where possible from existing noise or other pollution -generating businesses and uses through distance, screening, internal layout, sound-proofing, insulation and other design measures.

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## **Supporting information**

- 6.76** The policy is required to prevent new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of light, noise and vibration, air, water, soil pollution or land instability.

### **Light pollution**

- 6.77** The lighting of new developments, or changes to existing external lighting must be carefully designed to ensure that areas are appropriately lit, while avoiding or

minimising light pollution. Lights should be carefully selected and sited for their purpose, directed only on to the area where they are needed, and where necessary should be shielded by way of appropriate landscaping. Whilst the lighting must be adequate for the purpose, it is important that there is no significant adverse impact on the amenity of surrounding properties, landscape character (particularly at settlement edges) and on the environment (including wildlife). Where necessary, conditions will be used to mitigate and control lighting, including limiting the hours of illumination, such as: angle of lights; light levels; column heights; shielding; specification and colour; retention of screening vegetation; or use of planting and bunding.

- 6.78** Where proposals include external lighting requiring planning permission, the councils recommend that details of lighting schemes are submitted as part of the planning application to demonstrate that the proposed scheme is appropriate in terms of its purpose and setting. For all lighting proposals, the applicant should identify the purpose and use of the lights, the potential users of the lighting scheme (e.g. for recreation facilities) and the hours the lights will be in operation (summer-time and winter-time). The hours of operation will be expected to be kept to a working minimum and applicants should demonstrate this in their application. Keeping the use of the lighting to a minimum will reduce the impact the lighting may have on the environment. Details of the proposed lighting scheme, light mitigation scheme or strategy, as appropriate should be in line with the latest nationally accepted guidance available at the time of the application (including but not limited to the Institute of Lighting Professional guidance) and submitted with the planning application. However, it is acknowledged that lighting is often a detailed design matter and may not have been finalised for all applications at the submission stage.
- 6.79** The policy requires all major development proposals, or any other proposals which include large scale lighting schemes (such as the floodlighting of external recreational and sporting facilities/pitches), to undertake a lighting assessment in accordance with the Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2020) or successor document.
- 6.80** For certain major and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development (outline or full planning applications), a more detailed lighting impact assessment or strategy may be required at the determination stage. If this is the case the lighting impact assessment or strategy should be undertaken having regard to and in accordance with the Institute of Lighting Professionals 'PLG04 – Guidance on Undertaking Environmental Lighting Impact Assessments' and any additional guidance set out in the Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD or successor document.
- 6.81** Where possible and appropriate, schemes will achieve lighting levels in line with current best practice guidance on bats (see Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD) and with the [artificial lighting at night Bat Conservation Trust Guidance Note August 2023](#). If mitigation is not deemed possible (by LPA ecology officer(s) case-by-case evaluation of the proposals) then the scheme design will be required to be changed.

## Noise and vibration pollution

- 6.82** Typical sources of environmental noise within the district include transport: road, rail and air traffic; industrial; commercial and business premises; landfill operations; construction and sport and recreation / and food, drink and entertainment venues. The internal and external acoustic environment and good acoustic design in and around new noise sensitive and noise generating development should be considered as early as possible in the development management process. Any other relevant issues, for example how the acoustic design will avoid any unintended adverse consequences on other living conditions such as indoor air quality and overheating, should also be considered.
- 6.83** When possible, proposals should consider opportunities to protect, improve and enhance the acoustic environment in the immediate vicinity, including promoting positive soundscapes appropriate for the local context. Proposals for residential development near an existing noise source will be required to demonstrate that the proposal would not be subject to an unacceptable noise impacts/effect both internally and externally. Noise sensitive development or receptors are those, both existing and proposed, with human receptors that are most susceptible to adverse noise impacts. These mainly include premises where people live and or sleep overnight including dwellings (houses, flats, bungalows and maisonettes), residential institutions (hospices, residential care and nursing homes), hotels and rooms for residential purposes (including student accommodation / halls of residence, school boarding houses and hostels) and healthcare (hospitals and other medical facilities with accommodation for patients and families)
- 6.84** Prevention through high quality acoustic design is preferable to mitigation and for most development, an acoustic design statement demonstrating what good acoustic design process has been considered and followed to mitigate and minimise adverse noise impacts / effects will be required, proportionate to the noise risk. The consideration of high quality / good acoustic design and layout early in the design process is preferable to at receptor noise insulation schemes to habitable rooms and reliance on closed windows, unless otherwise justified. This must be achieved whilst also providing adequate and suitable ventilation and thermal comfort control for future occupants. Proposals should be in accordance with local noise / vibration standards and requirements as set out in any relevant Council guidance.
- 6.85** Where a Noise Impact Assessment is necessary (the Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD provides guidance on when this assessment is likely to be required), the remit and methodology will be required to be agreed in advance with the Council and shall be undertaken in accordance with the most relevant and up to date national and industry codes of practice, British Standards and technical best practice and guidance and, shall:
- identify all significant sources of noise and noise sensitive receptors either existing or proposed;
  - assess the likely short- and long-term impacts of noise generated or noise sensitive receptor exposure to noise both internally and externally in and around buildings;

- assess the suitability of the site for the development proposed, having regard to noise impact on quality of life and health both internally and externally; and
- for proposals which are identified as giving rise to unacceptable noise impact, either through noise exposure or generation, demonstrate in detail, including through good acoustic design, how the development will be designed, located and noise otherwise avoided or mitigated to reduce and minimise any unacceptable adverse impacts.

**6.86** Proposals for noise and vibration generating development (including plant / equipment or other sources, including air conditioning and handling units, plant rooms, ground- and air-source heat pumps), that would have unacceptable noise, and vibration impacts on mental and physical health and amenity, are unlikely to be supported. Other noise generating activities include uses such as nurseries, leisure and community centres.

## **Air quality, odour, dust and other fugitive emissions to air**

**6.87** Some industrial trades and agricultural / farming activities are inherently odorous by virtue of the materials they process, generate, use or store and, even with the use of best industrial practice from time to time such facilities may give rise to offensive odour emissions. In some circumstances the ability to adequately disperse or abate the release of offensive odours may be limited and therefore planning permission should not be granted for any such facility in inappropriate locations where there will be receptors sensitive to those odours. Certain uses (such as restaurants, cafes and takeaways) can create odours and fumes which can cause nuisance and harm to the amenity of neighbouring residents and businesses. Full height discharge should initially be sought (also considering the height of any building within approximately 20m of the discharge point). Where this is not possible and where there may be adverse impacts from odour and / or fumes, either at the proposed development or because of the proposed development, an odour impact / risk assessment will be required to support the application. Where it is demonstrated that adverse impacts will likely arise at neighbouring / nearby premises from odours and fumes and that adequate abatement cannot be provided, the Local Planning Authority will likely refuse the proposals unless an acceptable level of odour abatement appropriate for the location is able to be installed and maintained. Where required, conditions shall be applied to secure and ensure the appropriate maintenance of any mitigation measures.

**6.88** The National Planning Policy Framework (2024) states that planning policies should mitigate the impacts on, and where possible, take opportunities to improve air quality. It is important to ensure that development proposals contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment throughout their lifetime and take account of cumulative impact. Applications, as appropriate to their scale and nature, should support the improvement of local air quality and the key priorities of the Greater Cambridge Air Quality Strategy 2024-2029 and successor documents. Early engagement with the Council's Air Quality Officer is encouraged to help ensure the approach taken is acceptable.



**6.89** Applicants shall, where reasonable and proportionate, prepare and submit with their application a relevant air quality assessment taking into account guidance current at the time of the application). The criteria for requiring an air quality assessment, a dust risk assessment/management plan and/or an odour risk assessment/management plan and, the methods and guidance to be used are set out in the Greater Cambridge sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2020), or successor document. Air Quality assessments will need to ensure that all possible mitigation measures are integrated into the scheme to address the impacts of development, as well as considering the impacts of air quality on the development. Each site and operation will need its own separate consideration and the amount of detail required will depend upon the type and scale of the development. For Minor applications, details in simple terms of the operations to be undertaken and the dust control and mitigation measures to be adopted shall be submitted by the applicant. Each stage of should be considered through demolition, site preparation, ground works, construction as well as materials storage, transport and handling, both on and off site. This could be in the form of a written statement or a table of activities and mitigation and will be included in the Air Quality Statement if there will be demolition or earthworks. Applicants are therefore encouraged to engage with the Council at an early stage to determine whether there are likely to be predicted adverse impacts from a development on local air quality, and therefore whether what type of air quality assessment is required.

**6.90** A particular issue will be seeking to ensure cumulative development does not lead to a gradual worsening air quality and where there is an AQMA in place during the plan period that no adverse effect on air quality is allowed.

## **Contaminated land**

**6.91** Unless dealt with appropriately, historical/legacy land contamination can adversely affect both public health and impact upon the quality of controlled waters (these include rivers and streams, as well as the underlying aquifer used to supply drinking water). For the successful development and re-use of previously developed (Brownfield) sites it is essential that the potential for land contamination is assessed at the earliest stage of the development management process. This ensures that appropriate remediation measures are designed into the final development proposals for the site. Where a Contaminated Land Assessment is required, this must be completed as per the submission requirements set out in the Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2020), or successor document. The developer is responsible for ensuring that any proposed development is safe and suitable for use for the purpose for which it is intended. To fulfil this responsibility the developer will be required to undertake a process of risk assessment in order to determine the severity of any contamination and the degree of harm that it poses to future site users and to the wider environment. The National Planning Policy Framework requires this site investigation has to be prepared by a 'competent person'. Whilst the term 'competent person' has not been defined further, the developer must consider the full range of technical expertise that is likely to be required when sourcing consultants or advisors to undertake the risk assessment process.

**6.92** Remediation measures must remove all unacceptable health and pollution risks and must ensure that the site is suitable for its new use. As a minimum, the site must not be capable of being determined as contaminated land under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (as required by the NPPF). In the context of this policy, examples of sensitive developments include residential housing, schools, hospitals, and children's playing areas. Further detailed guidance is included in the Greater Cambridge sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2020), or successor document and the Environment Agency groundwater protection guides.

## **Hazardous installations**

**6.93** Hazardous installations, notifiable pipelines and licensed explosive sites are installations handling or storing hazardous materials. The siting of installations handling hazardous substances are subject to planning controls aimed at keeping them separate from housing and other land uses with which such installations might be incompatible from the safety viewpoint. The operators of such installations are required to notify the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) on certain types of development. The Council is required to consult the HSE on proposals for certain types of development within specified distances of notifiable installations. The LPA will therefore seek the advice of the HSE and other regulatory authorities about off-site risks to the public arising from any proposed development which would introduce one or more hazardous substances. The level of risk associated with hazardous installations will depend on the nature of both the development and the hazardous installation. Applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis and, in determining a planning application on land within the specified consultation zone of one of these installations the LPA will take account of advice from the HSE and other regulatory authorities.

## **Environmental nuisance / pollution and the agent of change principle**

**6.94** Development proposed in the vicinity of existing businesses, community facilities or other activities may need to put suitable mitigation measures in place to avoid those activities having a significant adverse effect on residents or users of the proposed scheme. The Agent of Change principle identifies that the party responsible for a change should also be responsible for managing the impact of that change and, places the responsibility for identifying and mitigating unacceptable adverse impacts from existing noise and vibration, odour, dust, lighting, and other potential nuisance-generating activities, environmental pollution or uses on any proposed new sensitive development. This is particularly relevant in cases where residential development is proposed near to an established sports, leisure, transport / warehouse or entertainment use.

**6.95** Established noise-generating industrial, employment and cultural venues such as theatres, concert halls, pubs, restaurants, nightclubs, community centres and other venues should be protected. This requires a sensitive approach to managing change in the surrounding area. Adjacent development and land uses should be brought forward and designed in ways which ensure established uses remain viable and can continue in



their present form without the prospect of new licensing restrictions, or the threat of statutory nuisance action which may require abatement in the form of restrictions or actions to mitigate sources of nuisance, curtail their activities or at worst closure due to complaints from new neighbours. Planning decisions will take account of existing noise and vibration, odour, dust, lighting, and other nuisance-generating uses in a sensitive manner when new sensitive development is proposed nearby. Any assessments relating to noise and vibration, odour, dust, lighting, and other nuisance-generating uses accompanying planning applications should be carefully tailored to local circumstances and be fit for purpose. That way, the characteristics of existing uses can be properly captured and assessed. For example, some businesses and activities can have peaks of noise and odour generation at different times of the day and night and on different days of the week, and any impact assessment should take this into consideration.

## **Construction and demolition**

- 6.96** In certain situations, for instance where there is a proposal for major development or an infrastructure project, a Noise and Vibration Demolition and Construction Environmental Management Plan, detailing the management and control of noise and vibration, will be required as part of planning consent (see policy I/CM: Construction Management).
- 6.97** Further guidance is included in the Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document 2020, or successor document.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic paper: Wellbeing and Social Inclusion
- Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document (2020)
- Greater Cambridge Air Quality Strategy 2024-2029

# Policy WS/PH:

## Public houses

### What this policy does

- 6.98** This policy provides guidance on development proposals involving the loss of public houses and their curtilages, and provides direction for the enhancement of existing public houses and for new public houses proposed in Greater Cambridge.

#### Policy WS/PH: Public houses

1. Proposals for new public houses will be determined on their individual merits, with consideration being given to the site's existing use and planning history, community need for the public house, neighbouring planning uses and development context, and potential amenity impacts. Proposals will require detailed Patron Management Plans to be submitted to demonstrate acceptability.
2. Proposals for public house diversification will be supported where it is demonstrated that it is complementary and subsidiary to the ongoing operation of the public house, and it will support the on-going financial viability of the public house.
3. Proposals that would result in the loss of a public house will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that all reasonable efforts have been made to preserve or re-provide the public house, and all reasonable diversification options have been explored, and:
  - a. there is no market demand on the site for a public house, as demonstrated through an up-to-date marketing exercise for a sustained period in accordance with the guidance provided in Appendix G: Marketing, local needs assessments and viability appraisals of this Local Plan; and
  - b. it has been demonstrated through the submission of a Community Needs Assessment that:
    - i. in consultation with the local community and considering the availability of alternative public house provision, there is no longer a need for the public house or its curtilage;
    - ii. no recent or emerging viable proposals for community public house ownership have been identified for the site; and
    - iii. alternative viable community service\* use of the public house and its curtilage have been fully explored and opportunities for such use(s) have been exhausted.

4. The loss of any part of a public house or its curtilage will only be permitted if:
    - a. it can be demonstrated through a needs and viability assessment that the viability of the public house use will not be adversely affected. This should include consideration of cellarage, beer garden, parking, dining, kitchen and landlord accommodation spaces required for the public house to remain viable; or
    - b. re-provision is proposed on a like-for-like basis or there is an overall qualitative improvement in the facility.
  5. Development proposals affecting public houses must preserve the building's architectural importance, ensuring that any alterations do not detract from the building's original design, character and any historic value.
- \* For the application of this policy, community services are community or village shops that have a floorspace of less than 280 square metres and there is no other such facility within 1000 metre radius of the shop's location, public houses, post offices, community centres, village halls, public libraries or public reading rooms, and museums and village archives which could be considered jointly or severally.
- 

## Supporting information

- 6.99** Public houses are an important part of Greater Cambridge's communities. They help to foster social interaction and local community life in both urban and rural areas. Public houses also play an important role in the Greater Cambridge economy, not just for the direct and indirect jobs they provide in the food and brewing industries, but in supporting an area's visitor economy and by providing meeting places. Therefore, public houses help to sustain vibrancy, economic health and wellbeing within Greater Cambridge.
- 6.100** Diversification proposals should complement the operations of the public house, and the Local Planning Authority will expect applicants to demonstrate that a diversification proposal will support the financial viability of a public house through the submission of a Business Case.
- 6.101** The loss of a public house can have a significant effect on a local community, and the character and function of an area. Therefore, before conversion or redevelopment of a public house is considered, applicants should explore all reasonable options to preserve the public house. This includes considering reasonable diversification options, such as the provision of accommodation or other ancillary functions to assist with the upkeep of the public house. Applicants should provide evidence that the public house has been marketed as a public house for a continuous period accordance with the guidance provided in Appendix G: Marketing, local needs assessments and viability appraisals, free of tie and at a market price that reflects an independent professional valuation (paid for by the developer). Proposals will only be supported where there has been no interest in either the freehold or the leasehold for the site's use as a public house.

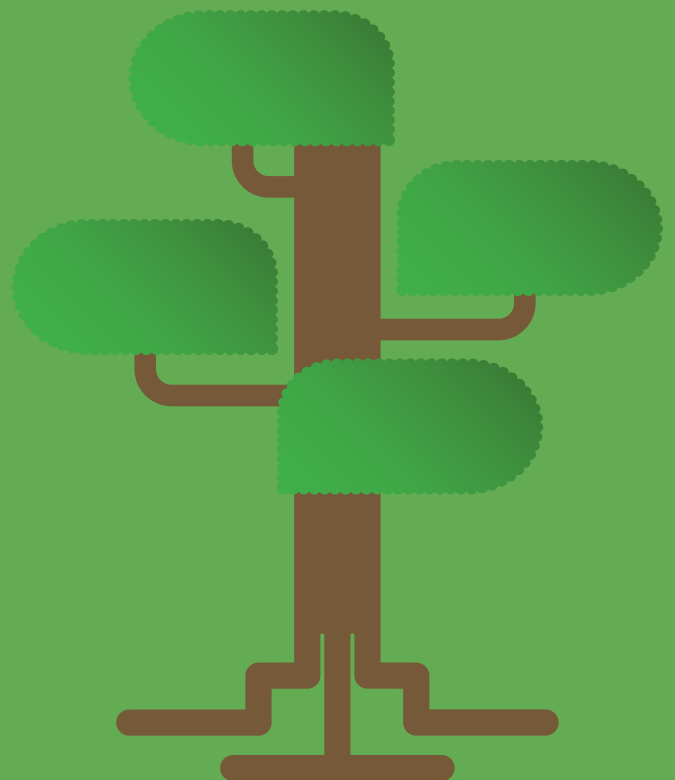
- 6.102** In addition, the Local Planning Authorities will expect applicants to demonstrate that there is no community need for the public house through the submission of a Community Needs Assessment. Demonstration of community needs should be achieved in consultation with the local community and should include an analysis of service provision in the locality, which demonstrates that accessibility to similar services and facilities will not be adversely affected by the proposal. Whether suitable alternative public house services are available in the locality will need to be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- 6.103** Public houses can be designated as assets of community value (ACVs) through the Community Right to Bid, Localism Act 2011, which grants communities the opportunity to raise finances when assets are put up for sale and bid for them. Designation as an ACV is a material planning consideration, and the Local Planning Authorities will factor any identified viable proposals for the site to be used as a public house in community ownership as part of the decision-making process for proposals that would result in the loss of a public house.
- 6.104** For proposals that seek to convert or redevelop public houses to non-community services, the Local Planning Authorities will expect planning applications to include an assessment that demonstrates the site is not viable for use as a community service. This should be an independent professional assessment (funded by the developer) prepared in accordance with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors' (RICS) professional standards on Financial Viability in Planning: Conduct and Reporting (or successor standards). The professional assessor must have a relevant accreditation from the RICS with expertise in the licensed leisure sector, and they must also not be engaged to market the property.
- 6.105** It is important that the character and function of public houses are not lost due to deliberate neglect or maladaptation, in particular those of heritage value. When considering proposals for the development of part of a public house, its car parking areas, dining areas, cellarage or pub gardens, the Council will require supporting evidence explaining how the development proposal will support and not undermine the viability of the pub. Equally, many public houses are locally important buildings that have architectural features and historic qualities that should be retained.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic paper: Wellbeing and Social Inclusion (2025)

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# Great Places



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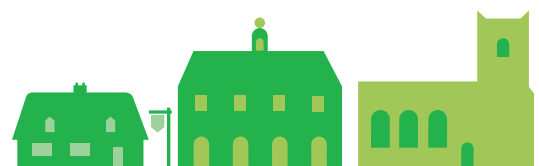
## 5 RIBA award-winning buildings in 2025 out of 14 in the East of England



**103**  
conservation  
areas



**7376**  
Listed Building  
entries in  
Cambridgeshire



# Introduction

- 7.1** In the Great Places theme we set out policies to deliver high quality and well-designed places.

## How community engagement helped shape the great places policies

- 7.2** Through your feedback you told us we should make great places that people enjoy by ensuring high quality design, enhancing local landscapes, and protecting the historic environment. You also told us that great places are more than just about the design of buildings, but creating communities with access to services, facilities, nature and open spaces as well.

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## Our strategic priority for our Great Places policies

- 7.2** **Strategic Priority:** Sustain the unique character and identities of Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, and complement it with beautiful and distinctive development, creating a place where people want to live, work, visit and play.

- 
- 7.4** Greater Cambridge has beautiful architecture and public realm, historic assets ranging from the historical colleges of Cambridge through to village conservation areas, and valued landscapes.
- 7.5** Maintaining and creating great places is crucial to sustaining the quality of the area for people who live, work, study in, and visit Greater Cambridge. Great places are valued and distinctive, accessible to all people and well-integrated with nature. Valuing place in this local plan aims to ensure that all residents' quality of life can be improved while enhancing the global excellence of its knowledge economy and the preservation of the area's heritage assets.
- 7.6** Our new developments need to protect what is special and deliver high quality and well-designed buildings and spaces that combine to form great places. We continue to use the Cambridgeshire Quality Charter for Growth to provide a clear and consistent basis for securing quality new developments. Themes covering the four 'C's' of Community, Connectivity, Climate and Character have been used to provide an understanding of what needs to be considered when creating and assessing high quality design.
- 7.7** Given the strong track record of delivering high quality design in the Greater Cambridge area, evidenced through award winning schemes and overall growth delivery, the themes from the Charter have been used to structure policies in the Great Places chapter.

## What our great places policies do

- Set design principles around the Cambridgeshire Quality Charter for Growth.
- Provide quality guidelines that development must meet to deliver good design.
- Ensure that land is used effectively in delivering appropriate housing density.
- Establish how proposals for taller buildings and their impact on the skyline will be considered.
- Require developments to deliver high quality landscape and public realm.
- Protect and enhance landscape character.
- Provide a strategy for the historic environment, setting out the approach to considering impacts on designated and non-designated heritage assets.
- Ensure that development protects and enhances the significance of archaeological sites.
- Support the adaptation of heritage buildings to climate change.
- Outline requirements for new and existing shopfronts.



# Policy GP/PP:

## People and place responsive design

### What this policy does

7.8

This policy will set a strategic vision for achieving high quality design in Greater Cambridge for both urban and rural areas. This provides a clarity of expectation around understanding the context of development proposals, both in terms of impact on the place around them and the needs of users.

#### Policy GP/PP: People and place responsive design

1. Development proposals are required to sustain and enhance the unique qualities of their local context and the Greater Cambridge area. Development proposals will be supported that:
  - a. Respond to Greater Cambridge's communities by:
    - i. Identifying and responding positively to their context, including existing physical features and characteristics of natural, historic, social or local importance.
    - ii. Meeting the principles of inclusive and healthy design, and in particular meeting the needs of disabled people, older people and those with young children.
    - iii. Being designed to remove the threat or perceived threat of crime and improve community safety, especially for those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act.
    - iv. Empower people and communities through community engagement to inform design decisions.
  - b. Improve Greater Cambridge's connectivity by:
    - i. Being well connected to, and integrated with, the immediate locality and wider area including existing or planned social, environmental, and transport infrastructure.
    - ii. Maximise active travel through new and improved walking and cycle routes.
  - c. Support the climate emergency response by:
    - i. Being designed to be long lasting and low impact in delivery and maintenance without compromising design quality.

- d. Enhance the character of Greater Cambridge by:
    - i. Having a positive impact on their setting in terms of location on the site, height and skyline, scale and form, townscape and landscape impacts and available views, to create a legacy of high-quality buildings and spaces in Greater Cambridge.
    - ii. Using appropriate local characteristics to inform the siting, massing, scale, form, materials and landscape design of new development.
    - iii. Ensuring that proposals for any tall buildings are of exceptional quality and ensure that the character or appearance of Cambridge, as a city of spires and towers emerging above the established tree line, is maintained.
- 

## Supporting information

- 7.9** The NPPF states that, ‘The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.’ Greater Cambridge has a strong history of delivering well designed places with many award-winning schemes in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. Since 2008, the core themes covering Community, Connectivity, Climate and Character set out in the Cambridgeshire Quality Charter for Growth, have been used to clearly identify the expected quality of new developments.
- 7.10** Greater Cambridge is a place of varied and subtle character, from the historic core of the Cambridge urban area to emerging business clusters, the biodiverse fen landscapes to the north and rolling countryside to the south, the historic villages and new towns. Aiming for design excellence is crucial for all types of development, whether buildings or open space, regardless of tenure, use or ownership. Innovative, high quality design must be realised to ensure that new development respects and integrates with existing character, assets and settings, while also constituting high quality architecture. This is a key factor for successful placemaking as well as a key challenge.
- 7.11** Where appropriate planning applications must include a design and access statement, relevant to the scale and context of the proposed development, that addresses the relevant policy requirements.
- 7.12** The National Design Guide and National Model Design Code stipulates that local planning authorities should prepare area-based character assessments, local design guides or codes, consistent with these and tailored to the circumstances of the local area following community involvement to reflect local character and design preferences. The Councils have a range of design guidance already in place, ranging from policies on tall buildings and skyline included in the Cambridge Local Plan, the South Cambridgeshire District Design Guide, to individual village design guides. We will be considering how we update our guidance to reflect the new approaches introduced nationally.

### 7.13

To help meet this challenge, Greater Cambridge has established The Greater Cambridge Design Review Panel formed from reviewing existing Design Review services at both Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Councils, to support its aspirations to raise design quality across the Local Plan area, and has conducted a site typologies study to understand, protect, utilise and enhance the valued characteristics of different areas in the plan. These should ensure that the key aspects and qualities of the built form and varying contexts across the Greater Cambridge area.

#### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic Paper 5: Great Places
- Cambridgeshire Quality Charter for Growth

# Policy GP/QD:

## Achieving high quality development

### What this policy does

- 7.14** This policy sets out our requirements for the design quality to be achieved by new developments, and alterations and extensions to existing development. Criterion requires development to be designed with communities in mind, with the creation of local connections, climate positive and contribute and respond to local character.

#### Policy GP/QD: Achieving high quality development

1. The Local Planning Authority will support locally distinctive and high-quality design that clearly demonstrates an understanding of key features in local character and seeks to enhance features through innovative and creative means.
2. Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they have addressed the following design principles and requirements:
  - a. Demonstrate a clear understanding of the character of the built, historic and natural environment, using this understanding to inform design that complements local character and distinctiveness;
  - b. Take account of important landscape or topographical features, retaining and/or enhancing existing landscaping and natural or semi-natural features on site including trees or hedgerows during and post construction;
  - c. Use high-quality building materials and architectural detailing that is appropriate to the local context, that will age well, and that either complement or successfully contrast with the existing form of a building in cases of extension or alteration;
  - d. Create safe open spaces and active streets, by providing highway layouts that incorporate well-integrated car parking and landscaping. Proposals should avoid the perception of a car-dominated environment and prioritise safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle movement;
  - e. Ensure that buildings are orientated to provide natural surveillance and maximise opportunities for active ground floor uses and frontages onto public spaces. Entrances and windows of habitable rooms should be located next to streets where appropriate;
  - f. Create attractive and appropriately scaled built frontages, considering both the individual elements of a building and the overall development in relation to its

surroundings, in order to positively enhance streets and public spaces in both urban and rural settings;

- g. Provide a comprehensive and accessible design approach that ensures the successful integration of buildings, routes and spaces with surrounding topography, townscape and landscape, supported by suitable hard and soft landscaping;
  - h. Protect the amenity of neighbouring uses and provide a high standard of amenity for future occupiers. Design should minimise adverse impacts including loss of privacy, overlooking, overshadowing, poor daylight/sunlight access, microclimate effects, artificial lighting, noise, vibration, fumes, odours, and other forms of pollution;
  - i. Ensure the layout and design of development successfully incorporates functional needs such as waste storage, recycling and bicycle parking, in a way that does not negatively impact on neighbouring amenity;
  - j. Ensure all building layouts, including commercial and employment uses, feature layouts that are convenient, safe, and accessible for all users including entrances and exits, at all times of day and night. Lighting and security features should be successfully integrated into the overall design;
  - k. Introduce mixed-use proposals where appropriate, ensuring that different uses are compatible and that all occupants benefit from the overall layout and arrangement of the site;
  - l. Create robust and adaptable building forms that can be repurposed over time, helping to extend their lifespan and reduce the carbon impacts associated with demolition and reconstruction.
3. Proposals for advertising, street furniture and signage will only be permitted where they do not harm the character or visual amenity of the area, obstruct movement, or compromise public safety. They must have a clear purpose, avoid unnecessary clutter, and be appropriate in size, design, materials, colour, and illumination, with consideration given to their cumulative visual impact.
  4. Neighbourhood plans can, and are encouraged to, set out design principles which respond to their own local circumstances.
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## Supporting information

### 7.15

Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and has the potential to maintain and enhance existing environments, alongside bringing benefits in terms of the health and wellbeing of residents. The local planning authority is committed to securing a high-quality environment and wishes to secure design which is inspired by and reinforces the individual character of the settlements within the Greater Cambridge Area. National planning policy emphasises the need to create a robust policy framework to achieve high quality design, with this being supported through the

National Planning Practice Guidance: Design: process and tools, and the National Design Guide. The Plan provides a framework to promote high-quality, well-designed developments, and good quality housing.

- 7.16** The Greater Cambridge area has a strong history of delivering high quality design in new development and it is important that this continues. The Greater Cambridge Local Plan seeks to ensure that buildings and places are of a high quality, improve the wellbeing of our communities, and are adaptable so that they can be appreciated by future generations. In addition, dwellings built to adapt to and accommodate the needs of the occupier over their lifetime can facilitate choice, increase accessibility, help meet the needs of an ageing population, and improve quality of life.
- 7.17** High quality design goes beyond a pure aesthetic response and includes more detailed matters such as functional design and assessment of impacts on setting and amenity. Greater Cambridge is rich in landscape and heritage assets which can be sensitive to new developments and therefore the design of proposals should respond to local context. High quality design also incorporates designing places that put people first, promote health and wellbeing, are welcoming, feel safe, are enjoyable and easy to use for everyone.
- 7.18** Development proposals must seek to create safe and secure environments. Solutions should be integrated and not delivered in a way that reduces the attractiveness of places or perceived safety. Careful design which integrates crime prevention features into the overall design of a building or space rather than adding them on at the end can usually decrease the fear of crime. Solutions such as good passive surveillance, well positioned entrances, good lighting, clear circulation routes, and secure boundaries will be considered appropriate.
- 7.19** High quality building design is linked to context, in terms of appropriateness, and to place making, in terms of how the proposed development will be sited. Without imposing architectural tastes or styles, it is important that a proposed development is considered in terms of location, height, scale, and form, along with materials and detailing. It is important that the policy achieves an approach that is both appropriate to urban and rural contexts, redevelopment within existing contexts, and development in new and emerging places being created in Greater Cambridge. Materials for new buildings should also be suitable for their purpose and setting. The durability of materials and how they weather are important factors in creating long lasting and sustainable buildings.
- 7.20** All the necessary environmental services, plant, recycling and refuse storage, bicycle and car parking must be considered early in the design process and be successfully integrated into the development to form part of the overall design and not as an afterthought. Such features must be designed to be secure, located conveniently and appropriately designed to be unobtrusive.
- 7.21** Managing visual pollution is essential to delivering high quality design. Elements such as excessive signage, poorly placed advertising, satellite dishes, and street furniture can undermine the visual appeal of public spaces, harm the character of historic areas, and negatively affect quality of life and the visitor experience. This is especially important in sensitive locations like conservation areas and the historic core of the city,

where such clutter can detract from heritage assets. The Council will seek to ensure that new proposals are sympathetic to their surroundings and will work proactively, including with the highway authority, to reduce visual clutter and support the use of high-quality materials and thoughtful design.

- 7.22** The use of the Local Planning Authority's pre-application advice service is recommended to provide input at an early stage to evaluate design proposals and provide advice and observations to help improve and add value to schemes. Furthermore, the [Greater Cambridge Design Review Panel](#) offers independent advice on schemes that are significant because of their scale, site, or because of a local issue, specific impact exceptional challenge, or public benefit. The design review process can assist to improve and refine the scheme and verify the quality of a design.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic Paper 5: Great Places

# Policy GP/HD:

## Housing density

### What this policy does

- 7.23** This policy will ensure that land is used effectively when being developed for new housing. It responds to national planning policy which seeks an uplift in densities in accessible areas like town centres or areas well served by public transport.

#### Policy GP/HD: Housing density

Development proposals must make efficient use of land through applying appropriate development densities that reflect local character and context through a design-led approach. In determining an appropriate density, a development proposal will need to demonstrate the following requirements:

- a. Provides a balanced mix of housing types and sizes;
- b. Positively responds to the prevailing character of the area, topography and the wider landscape and/or townscape setting;
- c. Protects and enhances heritage assets and their setting through a thorough understanding of the impacts of development on their significance;
- d. Amenity, outlook, daylight, sunlight, noise and disturbance can be satisfactorily addressed; and
- e. Other considerations such as car and cycle parking and waste storage can be suitably provided and managed.

Subject to satisfactorily demonstrating the above, higher density development that exceeds local prevailing densities will be supported provided the site is:

- f. Within walking and cycling distance of Cambridge City Centre or a Town, District or Local Centre;
- g. In close proximity to active travel provision including high quality cycling infrastructure; and
- h. Well served by existing or proposed high quality public transport such as the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway, a transport interchange or railway station.



## Supporting information

- 7.24** The NPPF requires local plan policies to make efficient use of land. That land should be used effectively and appropriately, whilst being sensitive to local character. It also highlights that city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport provide opportunities for higher densities, promoting sustainable travel modes that limit future car use.
- 7.25** Across Greater Cambridge, the scale and character of settlements varies considerably including rural villages set within agricultural landscapes, modern new towns and the Cambridge Historic Core. The policy requires proposals to carefully consider the prevailing character and context when preparing a design led approach to development which is important for placemaking.
- 7.26** Enabling more people to live in locations that are well-served by public transport and have good access to local facilities such as city, town and local centres will support the achievement of reducing road traffic, promote a higher quality of life and create the critical mass of people to sustain local services and facilities. Making the most efficient use of land will also help to minimise, both now and in the future, the need to release parts of the Green Belt or countryside encroachment to meet development requirements for housing. However, it is important that higher density development does not result in over-development and the policy sets out a number of criteria that need to be addressed in order to demonstrate conformity with this policy and the other relevant policies set out within the Local Plan.
- 7.27** The Councils intend to further develop the evidence for this policy, exploring how density should be applied in different locations, and including identifying specific locations where higher density development would be appropriate.

### Supporting topic paper and evidence studies

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic Paper 5: Great Places

# Policy GP/ST:

## Skyline and tall buildings

### What this policy does

- 7.28** The policy will guide the consideration of tall buildings, providing guidance on how their impact on the skyline will be considered.

#### Policy GP/ST: Skyline and tall buildings

1. Proposals for taller buildings will be supported where they are appropriate to their location and demonstrate a positive response to the wider setting. Developments that break or cause significant change to the existing skyline and/or significantly taller than the surrounding built form (as defined by the local context heights in Appendix H: Skyline and tall buildings guidance), will be assessed against the following criteria:
  - a. Location, setting and context – applicants must demonstrate through visual appraisals, with supporting accurate visual representations, how the proposals fit within the existing landscape and townscape and provide a clear assessment of how proposals maintain or enhance the skyline.
  - b. Impact on the historic environment – applicants must demonstrate and quantify the potential harm of proposals to the significance of heritage assets or other sensitive receptors (view of, backdrop and setting), assessed on a site-by-site basis. These will include impact on key landmarks and viewpoints (identified in Appendix H: Skyline and tall buildings guidance) including from main streets, local vantagepoints (such as bridges) and open spaces as well as, dynamic views from roads and, where applicable, The River Cam corridor. For Cambridge, proposals must ensure that the character and appearance of a city of spires and towers emerging above the established tree line, remains dominant from relevant viewpoints.
  - c. Scale and massing – applicants must demonstrate using scaled drawings, sections, accurate visual representations and models, how their proposals will deliver a high-quality addition to the skyline. This will include assessment of the cumulative impact at both strategic and local levels with other existing or emerging proposals as well as against the baseline at the time the application is being made.
  - d. Design quality – applicants must demonstrate how their proposals create well-proportioned buildings expressing elegance, proportionality and verticality that articulate base, middle and top using high quality materials and detailing that architecturally integrates plant, lift overruns and flues. Where appropriate, proposals should introduce a mix of uses that generate activity and a human scale at street level.

- e. Amenity and microclimate – applicants must demonstrate that there is no adverse impact on neighbouring buildings and open spaces in terms of the diversion of wind, overlooking or overshadowing, and that there is adequate sunlight and daylight within and around the proposals.
  - f. Suicide prevention – applicants must demonstrate how their proposal incorporates appropriate mechanisms to reduce access to means of suicide. Design will be determined by the structure of the buildings and its surroundings.
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## Supporting information

- 7.29** Cambridge will seek to maintain and enhance the overall character and qualities of its skyline as the city and surrounding district continue to grow. The city and its surroundings are largely free from clusters of modern high-rise buildings but pressures to intensify sites often result in increased bulk and massing which needs to be carefully assessed to understand cumulative impacts on the skyline. Proposals for tall buildings within South Cambridgeshire will need to demonstrate how they can successfully fit into the overall rural character of the district. Further advice on skyline and tall buildings, along with the requirements of the assessment criteria for proposals is set out in Appendix H: Skyline and tall buildings guidance.
- 7.30** The skyline of Cambridge is characterised by a cityscape of spires and towers rising above a well-established tree canopy. Subtle variations in topography contribute to a skyline defined by a series of ‘incidents’, where prominent buildings punctuate an otherwise consistent lower-scale built form. Within the historic core, larger ‘set piece’ college buildings provide a striking contrast to more modest ‘background buildings’, which typically range from three to five storeys. In the suburbs, building heights are generally lower, although they tend to increase along key approach routes and at major junctions. Notable exceptions to the prevailing scale and massing occur at the city’s fringes, including the hospital complex at Addenbrooke’s, the hangars at Cambridge Airport, and the Research Parks situated both at the edge of the city and within South Cambridgeshire. These areas accommodate larger-footprint buildings designed to meet contemporary research and clinical needs.
- 7.31** Development in South Cambridgeshire is typically lower in density and domestic in scale, with church towers and spires rising above mature tree canopies to create visual connections between settlements. Larger-footprint research and development facilities, along with smaller-scale industrial buildings, often present a contrasting character to their surroundings. The emerging new towns at Northstowe and Waterbeach introduce the potential for buildings of greater height and massing than those found in existing villages.
- 7.32** Given the large number of designated heritage assets within the historic core of Cambridge, including a significant number of highly graded heritage assets of great national importance, the potential impact that a proposal for a tall building may have on the significance of those assets will be a critical factor in the consideration of the proposal. For this reason, it is very unlikely that there would be many instances or scope

for introducing new tall buildings in or around the historic core. The impact on the setting of heritage assets should be assessed in accordance with the guidance set out in [The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 \(Second Edition\)](#) and [Tall Buildings: Historic England Advice Note 4](#) or any successor documents.

**7.33** Developers bringing forward proposals for tall buildings should refer to Appendix H: Skyline and tall buildings guidance of the plan, which sets out the required approach, methodology, and assessment criteria for considering skyline and tall buildings within Greater Cambridge.

**7.34** When submitting planning proposals for tall buildings developers should refer to part 3 of the [Preventing suicides in public places – A practice resource](#) published by Public Health England which sets out interventions to prevent suicide. It sets out actions that developers can implement to restrict access to the means of suicide such as implementing interventions through measures such as fencing with a minimum height of 2.5m in tall buildings, inwardly curving fences to make it difficult to climb out. Design of intervention in tall buildings will be determined by the nature of the structure and its surroundings.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic Paper 5: Great Places
- Cambridge Skyline and Tall Building Strategy
- [Preventing suicides in public places – A practice resource](#)

# Policy GP/QP:

## Establishing high quality landscape and public realm

### What this policy does

- 7.35** The policy sets requirements for development proposals to enhance the public realm, promote connected and healthy communities and deliver climate change resilient streetscapes. The policy aims to provide high quality places to gather and socialise, whilst creating well connected, accessible and climate responsive streets and landscapes.

#### Policy GP/QP: Establishing high quality landscape and public realm

1. Development proposals are required to deliver high quality landscape and public realm by:
  - a. Enabling local communities:
    - i. Ensure new and enhanced existing routes are designed inclusively, prioritising a pedestrian led movement hierarchy including generous and level footways that avoids street clutter;
    - ii. Create a range of open spaces that provide comfortable formal and informal places to rest, socialise and play, provide drinking water fountains, shade and shelter, bicycle parking, street lighting, signage and public art, designed in a coordinated and needs-led approach that is accessible and age appropriate for its user;
    - iii. Parking should not reduce the functionality of open spaces, and if on-street parking should be inset, an expanded footway is required for pedestrian movements when not occupied.
  - b. Enhancing connectivity:
    - i. Ensure that new and existing public realm and green infrastructure seamlessly connects, is accessible for all intended users and that the quality and function of existing routes are enhanced. Street furniture should not obstruct the public realm or create street clutter;
    - ii. Establish streets and open spaces that are well defined, and which clearly demarcate public and private space;
    - iii. Create streets that respond to their levels of use while not allowing vehicular traffic to dominate.

- c. Responding to climate change:
  - i. Be landscape led, by retaining and enhancing existing features including trees, natural habitats, boundary treatments such as hedgerows, and historic street furniture and/or surfaces that positively contribute to the quality and character of an area;
  - ii. Enhance biodiversity using native planting and/or species capable of adapting to our changing climate;
  - iii. Seek opportunities to incorporate street trees into the public realm and where possible position them to provide additional benefits, such as solar shading and cooling, to both external and internal spaces;
  - iv. Integrate surface water management through design to enable pedestrian accessibility and planting, retaining existing natural features where possible and incorporating the use of permeable paving and features;
  - v. Factor microclimates into design proposals and ensure public spaces receive adequate sunlight whilst avoiding wind funnelling effects.
- d. Integrating with local character:
  - i. Respond to its context and relate to the character and intended function of the spaces and surrounding buildings using high quality and well detailed materials that are easily maintained;
  - ii. Ensure that the right growing conditions and future management regimes for landscape schemes are secured as part of any planning permission granted and implemented across the agreed timeframe, and ensure that space for trees and other planting is incorporated that is appropriate to the scale of buildings;
  - iii. Preserve historic design, detailing and materials, and use high quality, durable materials that are appropriate to the historic context, resulting in reinforced local distinctiveness;
  - iv. Provision of public art will be required on all major development proposals and will make a significant contribution towards the appearance of the scheme. Public art should be developed through a three-way partnership between the developer, an art consultant and the Local Planning Authority, in consultation with the local community.
- e. Being accessible to all:
  - i. Ensure that open spaces are suitable for different users throughout the year, with consideration being given to the needs of all public realm users, including people with disabilities.
  - ii. Provide clearly navigable places, which are easy for users to understand, utilising legible, permeable and inclusive design principles.
  - iii. Seek to remove any barriers, both actual and perceived, in public realm improvements, minimising barriers to accessibility and inclusion of users including those wheeling and skateboarding.

- iv. Provide adequate lighting; lamp columns and lanterns should be carefully considered, well-designed and appropriately located, in order to minimise intrusive lighting and reduce light pollution.
  - f. Promoting health and wellbeing:
    - i. Use open spaces in flexible ways such as for allotments, concerts, performances, exercise classes, event spaces, and fetes that offer physical and mental health benefits. To support the flexible use of open spaces and any meanwhile uses, design should consider access to power and water.
    - ii. Encouraging walking, wheeling including by skateboard, cycling and active travel.
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## Supporting information

- 7.36** Public realm helps to define the character and experience of great places, whether within Cambridge or one of the surrounding villages, and it is crucial that these positive qualities are maintained into the future. The importance of creating and protecting high quality streets and open spaces, both public and private, is a key part of adapting to climate change pressures, supporting biodiversity, and promoting active and healthy lifestyles.
- 7.37** The public realm acts as a way of siting buildings in their context. The spaces between, around and within buildings, streets, squares, parks and open spaces all play a key role in supporting public life and fostering social interaction. Greater Cambridge's landscape spaces and public realm are key to creating a sense of place and play an important role in enhancing communities' quality of life and health and wellbeing and can even play a role in boosting the local economy. In addition to this, the public realm has many functions including providing space for recreation and social interaction, space for nature, supporting movement, climate change mitigation and adaptation and utilities provision.
- 7.38** The long-term development of the Greater Cambridge area requires careful consideration of how the design, delivery and management of new and improved public realm is coordinated. Proposals must ensure the design of the public realm is considered early in the development design process and that consideration is given to the integration of the public realm with the surrounding built form and that it responds to local context and character.
- 7.39** Component parts of the public realm should be integrated with the wider townscape and should be delivered to provide an uncluttered environment. Developers will need to work collaboratively to deliver a coordinated range of materials, finishes and details that respond to and enhance local character. Durability will be key within the high-density environment such as within the city centre and materials will that are adaptable and sustainable will play a key role in delivering distinctive and resilient places. Proposals should not use hostile architecture such as spikes, uneven surfaces, harsh angles, or large bollards in the public realm that undermine the public space as a shared resource



and prevent inclusive use such by homeless people, older and young people using the space to rest or socialise, and skateboarders.

- 7.40** To support well designed public realm, the Local Planning Authority promotes the removal of paving in front gardens. When considering paving for front garden, it is encouraged that permeable paving is used. Planning permission will be required to hard pave in front of the principal elevation, if the area is greater than 5 square metres. However, you can pave without the need for planning permission if you use porous materials for paving, or provision is made to direct run off water from the hard surface to a permeable or porous area or surface within the curtilage of the dwellinghouse.
- 7.41** Proposals should define how they will support the activation of the public realm including the location of positive and active frontages to support natural surveillance and the positioning of seating or other elements of street furniture to encourage social interaction. These elements should be situated within appropriate locations of publicly accessible open spaces, town centres and other locations with good levels of direct sunlight.
- 7.42** To support social cohesion and wellbeing, new and enhanced communal facilities, including seating and play equipment, should be accessible and age-appropriate to effectively serve their intended users. The Healthy Places Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) provides an evidence base for how Cambridgeshire and Peterborough can best support the health and wellbeing of our communities. The assessment should be used as guidance when submitting planning proposals that will require new or enhanced community provision.
- 7.43** The Local Planning Authority places significant importance on the provision of public art and supports best practice in its commissioning. Successful public art demonstrates ambition, innovation and is relevant to its context, alongside providing social, economic and cultural benefits. It should genuinely engage people, including sections of the community that are hard-to-reach and contribute to local identity. Very broadly, public art can be understood as a process of engaging artists' creative ideas in the public realm and with the community.
- 7.44** Public art refers to permanent or temporary artworks in any media created for the public realm, built or natural, and is always community or site specific. Crucially, it is experienced outside of galleries or museums, ensuring wider public accessibility. The art should be original, of high quality and designed for and with community input. Public art should be developed through a three-way partnership between the developer, an art consultant, and the Council and involve consultation with the local community.
- 7.45** The Council is committed to producing an updated Public Art SPD post adoption of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan. Until such time, relevant documents such as The Cambridge City Council SPD (2010), the South Cambridgeshire Design Guide (2010) and the South Cambridgeshire Public Art SPD (2009) should be referred to when preparing and submitting planning applications for major development.
- 7.46** All forms of major development are required to make provision for public art, meaning residential developments comprising ten or more dwellings. Other developments where the gross floor space created is 1,000m<sup>2</sup> or greater, including offices, manufacturing,

warehousing and retail development should provide public art where possible. For Outline planning permission, planning applications should provide a Public Art Strategy, including indicative budget. For Full Planning and Reserved Matters applications, these should be supported by a Public Art Delivery Plan.

**7.47** Where a Section 106 agreement is required, it should include a negotiated commuted sum based on the complexity and timelines outlined in the Public Art Delivery Plan or Strategy, covering the Local Planning Authority's need for public art expertise to support delivery. National guidelines recommend allocating at least 1% of the total build cost in major developments for public art and culture to mitigate the development's impact on people and place, with 1% serving as a starting point (Full details are in the draft Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations SPD).

**7.48** Exemptions may apply where public art requirements do not meet NPPF Paragraph 58 tests or where viability is a concern, and such cases will be considered individually.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic Paper 5: Great Places
- Healthy Places Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

# Policy GP/LC:

## Protection and enhancement of landscape character

### What this policy does

- 7.49** This policy sets out how development in Greater Cambridge should protect and enhance landscape character and features. It also sets out the purpose of Important Countryside Frontages which are to be protected from development and that are identified on the Policies Map.

#### Policy GP/LC: Protection and enhancement of landscape character

1. All new development proposals must:
  - a. protect, conserve and enhance the local landscape character as set out in the Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment (2021) Part A and Part B or successor documents;
  - b. consider the cumulative effects of development to avoid incremental harm to local landscape character;
  - c. protect, conserve and enhance features that positively contribute to the quality and character of the area so that any negative impacts on the landscape are avoided, reduced or mitigated on site;
  - d. protect and enhance the setting of Cambridge within the landscape by strengthening the well defined, vegetated edges of the city and by protecting and enhancing the green corridors which extend into the city and along the River Cam corridor;
  - e. protect and enhance the setting of the villages through sympathetic landscape design of the village edges and green spaces within village boundaries.
2. Important Countryside Frontages are identified on the Policies Map and are in villages where land with a strong countryside character either:
  - f. penetrates or sweeps into the built-up area providing a significant connection between the built environment and the surrounding rural area;
  - g. provides an important rural break between two nearby but detached parts of a development framework;
3. Planning permission for development will be refused if it would compromise these purposes.

## Supporting information

- 7.50** The Greater Cambridge landscape is varied with intimate river valleys, open fens, wooded claylands and ridges, and rolling chalk hills. Cambridge is a distinctive historic university city, built around the banks of the River Cam and is surrounded by rural landscapes and the characterful villages of South Cambridgeshire.
- 7.51** The policy aims to ensure that the varied and distinctive landscape character is properly considered in planning decisions. Developments should respond positively to the local landscape character and take opportunities to enhance and reinforce the landscape character. Applicants should refer to the Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment (2021) [Part A](#) and [Part B](#) which examined in detail the physical, human and cultural influences that have shaped the evolution and character of the landscape today. The assessment identified Landscape Character Areas, each with a distinct local identity and sense of place. Detailed information is provided about each character area, including the condition of the landscape, key sensitivities and guidance on landscape management and integration of development into the landscape.
- 7.52** New development can provide opportunities to enhance the landscape on the edges of settlements. The edges of the villages are an important transition between the built environment and the wider, rural landscape and require sensitive design to protect and enhance the setting of the settlements and the countryside beyond. The River Cam corridor and other green corridors penetrate the urban area of Cambridge and are extremely important to the setting and unique character of Cambridge. Whilst these corridors are also protected by Green Belt and open space designations, all developments adjacent to these corridors must provide high quality, sensitive landscape design to protect, conserve and enhance the landscape character of these important features.
- 7.53** In many South Cambridgeshire villages there are places and features, defined as Important Countryside Frontages, where landscape with a strong countryside character penetrates the village or separates two parts of a village. Such land enhances the setting, character and appearance of the village by retaining the sense of connection between the village and its rural surroundings. The locations where this occurs are defined on the Policies Map to indicate that the frontage and the open countryside beyond should be kept open and free from development. In most cases the land adjoins the village built-up area but, in some cases, it separates two parts of the village, and the open intervening land therefore assumes an importance for the character of the entire village.

### Supporting topic paper and evidence studies

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Great Places Topic Paper (2025)
- Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment (2021) ) [Part A](#) and [Part B](#)

# Policy GP/HE:

## Historic environment

### What this policy does

- 7.54** This policy aims to ensure that development proposals that may affect heritage assets, or their settings are carefully considered. It also supports the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment through the Greater Cambridge Historic Environment Strategy detailed within the policy, ensuring that new development respects and integrates with the historic context of the area.

#### Policy GP/HE: Historic environment

1. All development proposals that have the potential to impact heritage assets or their setting must be supported by a Heritage Impact Assessment. The level of detail contained within the Heritage Impact Assessment should be proportionate to the proposed development and the number of assets affected.
2. The Local Planning Authorities will balance the need for development with the conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of the historic environment through a positive strategy to ensure that:
  - a. Proposals affecting the historic environment consider the wider social, economic, cultural and environmental benefits of conserving heritage assets, taking into account the positive contribution that conserving heritage assets can make to the sustainability of communities;
  - b. New development conserves and, where appropriate, enhances the special character and distinctiveness of Greater Cambridge. Proposals must respect the character, setting and nature of any heritage asset, with the positive contribution made by the historic environment taken into consideration and used to inform design;
  - c. Heritage assets are sustained in viable uses that are compatible with their significance.

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### Supporting information

- 7.55** Greater Cambridge boasts a rich and diverse historic environment, formed of both designated and non-designated assets. This includes a high number of nationally listed buildings, conservation areas, registered parks and gardens, scheduled monuments, and other heritage assets of local importance. Much of this heritage is visible in the distinctive

historic landscapes shaped by agricultural, academic, residential and commercial development, while other elements of the historic environment are more intangible.

- 7.56** Greater Cambridge's unique blend of historic towns, villages, and hamlets set within the countryside contribute to the local character and sense of place, whilst Cambridge, which has a varied architectural heritage, from the internationally recognised grandeur of King's College Chapel to the more modest vernacular buildings reminiscent of an East Anglian market town. Greater Cambridge's historic environment is an important resource, bringing social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits to the community, adding to the quality of life and wellbeing of residents and visitors. Important visitor attractions with historic merit include Wimpole Hall, Denny Abbey and the Imperial War Museum, Duxford and Cambridge University's Botanic Garden and Fitzwilliam Museum and colleges. Together, these features of the historic environment form an irreplaceable cultural resource that enriches the character and cultural identity of Greater Cambridge.
- 7.57** Heritage is an essential component of plan-making. A full understanding of the historic environment, including traditional materials and construction methods used in vernacular buildings, is needed to inform plans, identify opportunities for conservation and enhancement, and reinforce a local sense of place. Given the rich tapestry of Greater Cambridge's historic and natural environment and the strategic objectives of this Local Plan, the planning strategy for Greater Cambridge's historic environment requires a multi-layered approach that includes a number of interrelated actors, initiatives and local planning instruments (see **Figure 134** overleaf). The components of the Greater Cambridge Historic Environment Strategy will be added to and updated as necessary and provide tools to realise the ongoing management of the area's heritage assets. Planning decisions will be made having regard to the content of the relevant components of this Historic Environment Strategy.
- 7.58** The Councils will work with communities, partner organisations, and developers to conserve and enhance the historic environment wherever possible, and address development challenges in a balanced and sympathetic way. Pressures from development need to be carefully considered in order to ensure they do not detrimentally impact Greater Cambridge's historic environment, particularly South Cambridgeshire's special rural character and the nationally significant buildings and green spaces in the centre of Cambridge.
- 7.59** The Local Planning Authority will actively seek the protection of Greater Cambridge's designated and non-designated heritage assets. New development must respect the character, setting and nature of any heritage assets that might be affected by the proposed development. As part of the strategic approach to the Historic Environment, the Local Planning Authorities will require applications to include Heritage Impact Assessments where a proposal would impact heritage assets to ensure the effective use of available local planning mechanisms. Heritage Impact Assessments are useful tools that help developers and decision-makers to understand the importance of heritage assets that might be impacted by a proposal.

# Greater Cambridge Historic Environment Strategy

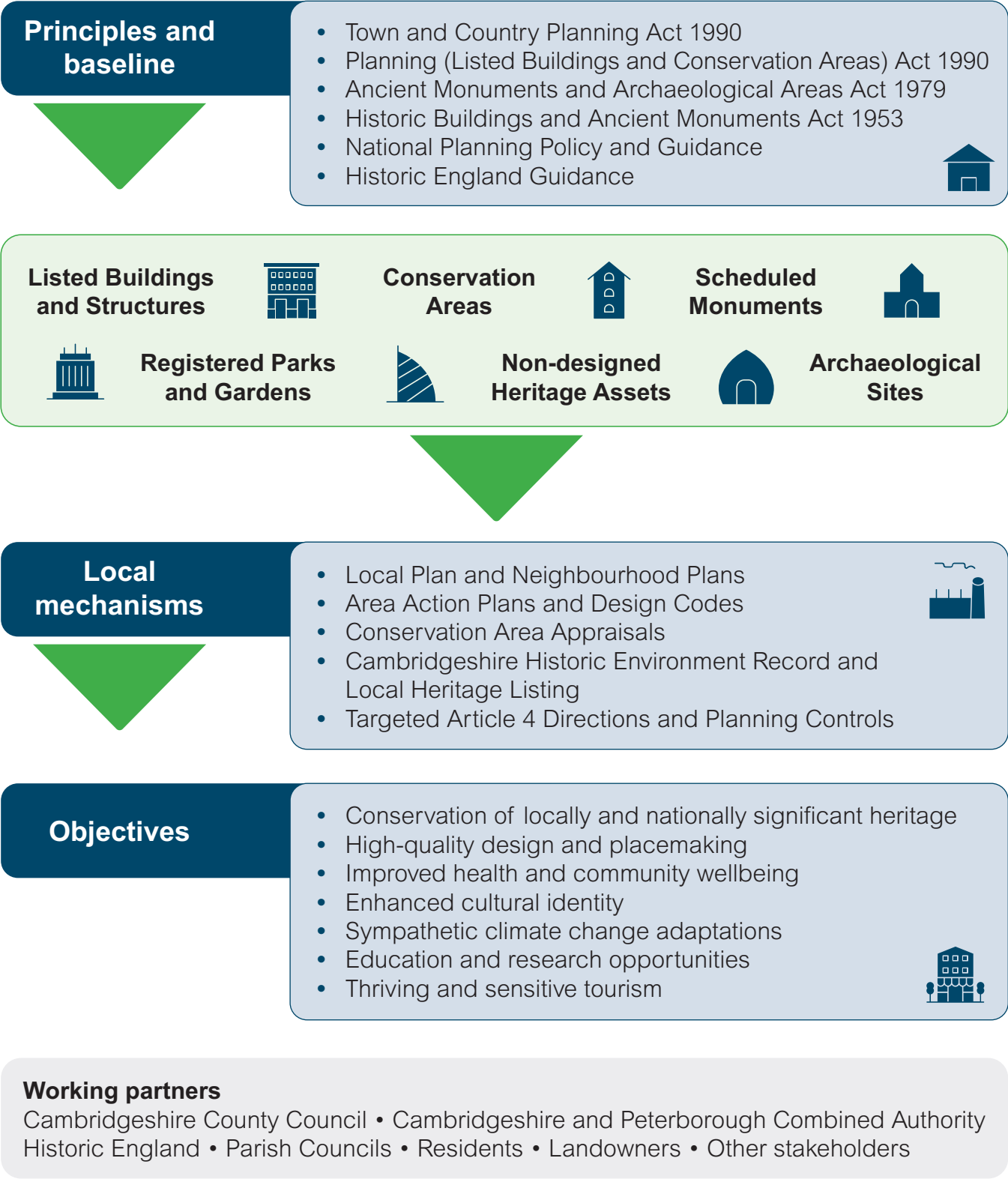


Figure 134: The Greater Cambridge Historic Environment Strategy

## 7.60

The details included within a Heritage Impact Assessment will vary depending on the nature and scale of the development, but they typically include:

- a description of the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting;
- a proportionate assessment of the potential impact that development may have on the heritage asset, their historic importance, and their setting;
- justification for works that seek to alter heritage assets and the wider historic environment;
- information on any sources that have been consulted to prepare the assessment, such as Conservation Area Appraisals and the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record;
- the expertise and experience of the person(s) conducting the Heritage Impact Assessment.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic Paper 5: Great Places
- Greater Cambridge Strategic Heritage Impact Assessment (2021)



# Policy GP/HA:

## Designated heritage assets

### What this policy does

- 7.61** The purpose of this policy is to set out how proposals to alter, extend or change the use of designated heritage assets, or development that affects their setting, will be assessed.

#### Policy GP/HA: Designated heritage assets

1. Harm to a designated heritage asset (regardless of the level of harm), will require clear and convincing justification in line with the National Planning Policy Framework's tests.
2. Development proposals that affect designated heritage assets, including alterations and extensions, retrofit or new development must:
  - a. Preserve or enhance the significance of the designated heritage asset(s) and its setting, and the character or appearance of Conservation Areas including views into, within and out of them;
  - b. Be of an appropriate scale, form, height, massing, alignment, and high-quality design that complements the built form and scale of heritage assets;
  - c. Use high-quality materials, architectural detailing and methods of construction which complement the character of the building or area;
  - d. Retain features important to the settlement form and pattern, such as the hierarchy of buildings, plot divisions, open spaces, gardens, trees, hedges and any other features that contribute to the historic character;
  - e. Respect the historic internal layouts and other internal features of importance;
  - f. Respect the setting of the designated heritage assets, including inward and outward views, and how the building is experienced and understood;
  - g. Retain important traditional features such as original doors, windows, shop fronts, street furniture and boundary treatments.
3. Buildings or structures that make a positive contribution to the special architectural or historic interest of a Conservation Areas should be retained. Demolition will only be permitted where:
  - a. the structure has been formally assessed to be unsound or in a state of such disrepair that it is not practical or viable to be repaired;
  - b. all possible measures to sustain an existing use or find alternative uses have been explored;
  - c. redevelopment would bring substantial public benefits.

## Safeguarding heritage at risk

4. Where development proposals include heritage assets that have been identified as being at risk, they should identify specific opportunities for the positive repair, regeneration, and adaptive reuse of the heritage asset.
  5. Enabling development to secure the future of a designated heritage asset will only be supported when all of the following conditions are met:
    - a. The public benefit of the preservation or enhancement of the heritage asset outweighs the disbenefits of providing the enabling development;
    - b. The scale of the enabling development is the minimum necessary to secure the future of the heritage asset and all aspects of design and layout minimise disbenefits;
    - c. The impacts of the enabling development are precisely defined at the outset;
    - d. The heritage objective can be securely linked to the enabling development through a planning agreement;
    - e. Evidence is submitted that demonstrates that, to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, financial assistance to secure the long-term future of the heritage asset is not available from any other source;
    - f. The heritage asset will be repaired or enhanced to an agreed standard at an agreed stage in the course of the enabling development, preferably at the outset and certainly before completion.
- 

## Supporting information

- 7.62** Designated heritage assets are defined as buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas and landscapes that are identified as having significance that merits consideration in planning decisions due to their heritage interest and, as a result, are afforded a high level of protection. In England, the [National Heritage List](#) serves as an official record of listed buildings and structures, which are listed in recognition of their special architectural or historic interest. The principal aim of the listing is to prevent alterations that are detrimental to the special character of the building or structure. Greater Cambridge hosts over 3,500 listed buildings and structures. Historic landscapes (including designed and other landscapes such as historic parks and gardens, churchyards, village greens and public parks) are particularly important in South Cambridgeshire where they add interest and variety to an intensively farmed countryside.
- 7.63** Listed building consent will be required for many works affecting a listed building or structure, including demolition, any alteration or extension to a listed building (interior alterations as well as exterior alterations and works to buildings or structures within the curtilage of the building that are curtilage listed), listed building consent is separate to planning permission. Control over changes to listed buildings is not meant to prevent all alterations, but to safeguard the buildings and structures from unnecessary demolition

and inappropriate modifications that could harm their historical significance. All works to listed buildings must preserve or enhance their value and significance, in line with national policy requirements.

- 7.64** A sensitive and hierarchical “whole-building” approach to design and specification is encouraged to ensure that the significance of the asset is not compromised by inappropriate interventions. Hidden historical features can also be uncovered through permitted works to designated heritage assets, which may be of historical significance and will need to be appropriately recorded. A Building Monitoring and Management Strategy may be required to monitor the ongoing impact of the implemented measures on the asset’s historic fabric and to record any hidden historical features discovered during development. Monitoring requirements will be proportionate to the significance of the asset and the scale and scope of the work undertaken. Where monitoring shows that interventions are causing harm to the significance of the asset, appropriate remediation works will be required.
- 7.65** Consent will not be granted for the demolition of a listed building or structure other than in exceptional circumstances; clear and convincing justification will be required, as well as evidence that every effort to retain building has been made. Applications for the retrofitting of listed buildings are required to be supported by a Heritage Impact Assessment demonstrating an understanding of the building’s environmental performance, the building’s current fabric and energy performance, alongside the evaluation of the impact of the proposed works on both the environmental performance and the significance of the listed building. Where designated heritage assets are to be marketed to test whether they can be brought back into viable use in line with national planning policy tests, an up-to-date marketing exercise should be undertaken in accordance with the guidance provided in Historic England’s guidance on Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (or successor documents) and Appendix H: Skyline and tall buildings guidance.
- 7.66** Historic landscapes including historic parks and gardens, churchyards, village greens and public parks are particularly important in South Cambridgeshire where they add interest and variety to the countryside. Registered parks and gardens within Greater Cambridge include the Botanic Garden and Clare College in Cambridge, and Pampisford Hall and Croxton Park in South Cambridgeshire.
- 7.67** A Conservation Area is designated under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and are designated due to their special architectural or historic interest, the character of which is desirable to preserve or enhance. The special character of an area can be derived from architectural quality and built form, architectural styles, design of open or green spaces, designated and non-designated heritage assets alongside local distinctiveness. Development located adjacent to, or even at some distance from, a conservation area can still affect its setting and, in turn, its overall significance. Proposals for development outside a conservation area that may impact its character, or setting should take into account the relevant conservation area appraisal and demonstrate how any potential impacts can be appropriately mitigated.
- 7.68** There are over 100 Conservation Areas within Greater Cambridge, with more in detail information for each area contained within the adopted Conservation Area Appraisals.

Further information on the conservation areas within Greater Cambridge can be found on the [Greater Cambridge Shared Planning website](#).

- 7.69** Grade I and II\* listed buildings or structures, Grade II listed places of worship, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens and Conservation Areas are monitored annually by Historic England. Where Historic England determines that a heritage asset is “at risk” using a series of nationally defined assessment parameters, these assets are recorded on the [Heritage at Risk Register](#). As well as safeguarding important heritage assets, the adaptive re-use and regeneration of a building or structure can result in significant carbon savings in terms of embodied carbon savings. Therefore, any development proposal relating to heritage assets “at risk” must include proposals to secure the future of that heritage asset. The level of works needed to prevent a heritage asset from being “at risk” will vary on a case-by-case basis, and each case will need to be considered individually. However, there should be a legally binding mechanism in place in all cases to secure the restoration of the heritage asset.
- 7.70** Enabling development is a development proposal that seeks to secure the long-term future of a heritage asset, that is considered in its own right and would not typically be permitted. At the heart of enabling development is an ‘exchange’ whereby the community accepts some disbenefit through the acceptance of development that would be otherwise unacceptable in return for the long-term conservation of the heritage asset.
- 7.71** Enabling development where the public benefit of securing the future of a significant heritage asset through enabling development decisively outweighs the disadvantages of breaching normal policy presumptions. In considering enabling development proposals, developers are encouraged to enter into pre-application discussions with the Local Planning Authorities.
- 7.72** Enabling development is likely to be a last resort in the preservation of a heritage asset. In specific circumstances, it may be necessary to accept some harm if there are no reasonable alternative means of delivering or designing enabling development with less or no harm. For enabling development to be supportable, development must not result in an unacceptable level of harm to the designated heritage asset it would be intended to conserve. Historic England’s guidance on [Enabling Development and Heritage Assets](#) (or successor documents) should be considered when preparing an application that involves enabling development.
- 7.73** The Local Planning Authorities will not tolerate deliberate damage to or neglect of heritage assets. Where there is evidence that an applicant has deliberately harmed a heritage asset, remediation of this deliberate harm will not be granted weight in decision making in accordance with national planning policy, and the Local Planning Authorities will exercise the enforcement powers afforded by the [Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) Act 1990](#).

### Supporting topic paper and evidence studies

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic Paper 5: Great Places
- Greater Cambridge Strategic Heritage Impact Assessment (2021)

# Policy GP/ND:

## Non-designated heritage assets

### What this policy does

- 7.74** The purpose of this policy is to set out how proposals to alter, extend or demolish non-designated heritage assets will be assessed.

#### Policy GP/ND: Non-designated heritage assets

1. The Local Planning Authority will seek to ensure the retention and enhancement of buildings or other structures identified (at application stage or otherwise) as being non-designated heritage assets.
2. When determining a planning application, the Local Planning Authority will make a balanced judgement of the potential impacts of the development on non-designated heritage assets. Consideration will be given to the significance of the asset and its setting, the extent of impact on its significance, as well as the scale of any harm or loss to the asset.
3. Prior to the loss of a non-designated heritage asset, an appropriate level of survey and recording will be expected, including archaeological investigation where appropriate (the results of which should be deposited on the Cambridge Historic Environment Record).

### Supporting information

- 7.75** Non-designated heritage assets can take many forms, ranging from buildings and structures to less tangible elements such as archaeological remains and designed landscapes. These assets must exhibit a level of historical or cultural importance that justifies their identification as non-designated heritage assets and their consideration in planning decisions. The Local Planning Authority encourages the inclusion of such assets in Neighbourhood Plans. Neighbourhood planning working groups aiming to identify these types of heritage assets within their plans are advised to collaborate with the Local Planning Authority to ensure that they meet the criteria and are warranted to be identified as a non-designated heritage asset.
- 7.76** National guidance indicates that planning authorities may establish criteria to identify buildings of heritage value that are not officially designated. To determine whether a

building or structure qualifies as a non-designated heritage asset, the Council uses a set of criteria aligned with national planning guidance. Key significance criteria include:

### **Architectural and artistic significance**

- Visual or design merit
- Designed by a known architect
- Completeness / rarity
- Local landmark quality
- Group value / contribution to a cohesive group of structures

### **Historical significance**

- Links to notable people or events
- Representativeness of a certain style or period
- Value to the local community or culture

### **Archaeological significance**

- may be in the form of buried remains, crop marks or earth works, but may also be revealed in the structure of assets or in a designed landscape.
- Inclusion in the Cambridge Historic Environment Record.

**7.77** While primarily aimed at assessing buildings and structures, the overarching policy is applicable to all types of non-designated heritage assets. Additionally, the National Planning Policy Framework offers guidance on evaluating the impact of developments on such assets. Non-designated heritage assets play a key role in reinforcing a sense of local identity and distinctiveness, and the embodied carbon emissions that would result from demolition and redevelopment compared to retention and refurbishment, and the unsympathetic alteration or demolition of such locally important buildings and structures will only be acceptable where it is demonstrated the public benefits of the proposed development would outweigh any adverse impact on the non-designated heritage asset and the adverse carbon consequences of demolition works.

**7.78** The Council's manage a list of locally important heritage assets, once on Cambridgeshire's Local Heritage List these assets become known as non-designated heritage assets for the purposes of planning decision making. When preparing planning applications, applicants are advised to consult the Local Planning Authority's Local List for further details on identified non-designated heritage assets.

**7.79** The Local List is not exhaustive and will continue to be added to. Whilst a significant way of identification, it is not the only way that local heritage assets may be identified.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic Paper 5: Great Places
- Greater Cambridge Strategic Heritage Impact Assessment (2021)



# Policy GP/CC:

## Adapting heritage assets to climate change

### What this policy does

- 7.80** The policy establishes how works to enhance the environmental performance of heritage assets will be balanced against the need to protect and enhance the character and significance of that asset.

#### Policy GP/CC: Adapting heritage assets to climate change

1. Proposals for energy efficiency improvements and climate resilience adaptations that do not harm a heritage asset's significance, setting, fabric or ongoing preservation, as informed by an assessment of the building's fabric and robust technical detailing, will be supported. Where a proposal has the potential to harm the fabric of a listed building, such proposals must be supported and informed by a thorough understanding of the building's historic evolution and construction, architectural and historic significance, and a demonstration of the building's current fabric and energy performance.
2. Where appropriate, retrofit proposals shall be designed to satisfy the standards set out within the BSI PAS 2035 (2023) framework (or successor documents).
3. Proposals that seek to undo the damage to a heritage asset caused by previous, inappropriate interventions will be supported in principle.
4. Proposals that seek to reinstate historic features that can enhance a heritage asset's climate resilience (such as shutters) will be supported.
5. Monitoring requirements will be proportionate to the significance of the heritage asset and the scale of the works proposed.

### Supporting information

- 7.81** The Greater Cambridge Net Zero Carbon Study (2021) identifies that existing buildings account for one third of all greenhouse gas emissions in Greater Cambridge. While energy efficiency standards have been introduced for new homes, we cannot meet our climate change targets without reducing emissions and energy use in all our homes and buildings. Improving energy efficiency is not only good for the climate, but it will also reduce running costs and increase the lifespan of buildings.

**7.82** Nationally, roughly 20% of our homes were built before 1919, using traditional timber-frame or solid wall construction methods and materials. Of this 20%, around 1% of homes in Cambridge and 3% in South Cambridgeshire are listed buildings. Maintaining the buildings we use is a powerful climate action as it ‘locks in’ the carbon used to build these in the first place, aligning with the circular economy to reduce waste and avoidable carbon emissions. The [Climate Change Committee](#) concluded that at least 90% of the existing buildings in the UK should have energy efficient retrofits for the UK to meet its zero carbon targets, recognising that some buildings simply cannot be adapted to eliminate all emissions.

**7.83** Acceptable interventions and works will vary depending on the impact on the significance of the heritage asset in question. Where works would harm the building’s integrity or significance, that harm will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Heritage Impact Assessments will need to assess the impacts of proposed works and detail clear and convincing public benefits. Depending on the nature of the works proposed, a planning application may also require the following information:

- Surveys of existing construction, to include walls, floors, ceilings and roofs;
- Submission of baseline energy consumption data before improvements have taken place and energy efficiency modelling;
- The national or industry performance standards being targeted and the environmental performance measures to be implemented in order to achieve the standard.

**7.84** Historic England publishes a guidance detailing how energy efficiency improvements to historic buildings can be carried out without compromising their significance. While this policy covers heritage assets, similar principles should be applied to all buildings of traditional construction. Reference to the following publications, and any successor documents, is recommended:

- [Energy efficiency and traditional homes, HEAN 14](#)
- [Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: How to Improve Energy Efficiency](#)
- [Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: Energy Performance Certificates](#)
- [Modifying Historic Windows as Part of Retrofitting Energy-Saving Measures](#)
- Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings – Application of Part L of the [Building Regulations](#) to historically and traditionally constructed buildings
- [Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency HEAN 18](#)

**7.85** For applications that have the potential to impact the fabric of a heritage asset, the Local Planning Authorities may require a programme of ongoing monitoring in the form of a Building Monitoring and Management Strategy to ensure impacts can be appropriately managed. Monitoring requirements will be proportionate to the scale of the works proposed. Planning conditions will also be used to secure appropriate remediation works where monitoring shows that interventions are causing harm to the significance of the asset. The Local Planning Authorities will expect retrofit works to be carried out in accordance with the [BSI PAS 2035 \(2023\) framework](#) (or successor documents) and Historic England guidance for energy improvements to heritage assets.



## **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic Paper 2: Climate Change
- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic Paper 5: Great Places

# Policy GP/AR:

## Archaeology

### What this policy does

- 7.86** The purpose of this policy is to set out how proposals that may affect sites of known or potential archaeological importance or interest will be assessed.

#### Policy GP/AR: Archaeology

1. Development affecting archaeological remains, whether known or potential, designated or undesignated, should take every practical and reasonable step to protect and, where possible, enhance their significance. In cases where the proposal could harm the significance of archaeological assets, the relevant National Planning Policy Framework tests will be applicable, where such harm will be required to be appropriately justified.
2. For sites with either known or potential archaeological interest, the following must be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority:
  - a. an appropriate assessment to understand the nature and significance of any impacted sites or potential sites of archaeological interest;
  - b. an appropriate level of archaeological investigation and recording to achieve preservation by record, including fieldwork, post-excavation analysis, dissemination of results, and deposition of archives at an appropriate repository.
3. Where development affects scheduled monuments or archaeological sites, there will be a presumption in favour of archaeological remains being preserved in-situ either through the modification of design, layout, drainage, landscaping or the siting and locations of foundations. Where in-situ preservation of an archaeological asset is not possible or feasible, the development will not be permitted until a programme of excavation, investigation and recording has been submitted to and agreed by the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement.

### Supporting information

- 7.87** Archaeology offers a unique insight into the history of Greater Cambridge, revealing irreplaceable evidence of former cultures, settlements, conflicts, burial sites, and other human activities. Preserving archaeological remains not only protects cultural heritage but also provides opportunities for education, research, and community engagement. Government guidance acknowledges the importance of these historic and

archaeological sites and emphasises the need to safeguard them from being lost or damaged through development, ensuring they can continue to inform and inspire future generations.

- 7.88** Archaeological work in Cambridgeshire has discovered remains from early prehistory, with significant settlement known from at least the Iron Age. Development within the city's boundaries has revealed significant archaeological remains, some of which are of national importance, and further discoveries are to be expected.
- 7.89** The Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER) is a comprehensive database of which all archaeological remains within Cambridgeshire are located, providing information relating to location and nature of archaeological sites. The CHER can also be used to identify sites that may be at risk from development. This policy requires an archaeological assessment of sites within potential areas of archaeological importance to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected and to ensure that provision is made for the preservation of important remains, particularly those of national significance. Archaeological assessment prior to determination may comprise a combination of desk-based assessment, geophysical survey and/or field evaluation.
- 7.90** Historic England have prepared an Advice Note 17 – Planning and Archaeology, which provides guidance on how archaeology should be considered as part of the planning process. Applicants are advised to refer to this guidance (or successor documents) when preparing planning applications, particularly where a development could impact archaeological assets or where archaeological assessments or investigations are required.
- 7.91** Some archaeological sites are designated as scheduled monuments, although most assets are non-designated and sometimes unknown of until development proposals come forward. There are over 100 scheduled monuments in Greater Cambridge. Scheduled monuments are nationally significant assets afforded great protection within the NPPF. The Local Planning Authorities recognise that archaeological remains are non-renewable resources, which are valuable in their own right, but also for education, leisure and tourism. Proposals affecting scheduled monuments require scheduled monument consent in addition to planning permission. Where a site on which development is proposed contains or has the potential to contain heritage assets with archaeological interest, developers should submit as appropriate desk-based assessment and where necessary, a field evaluation.
- 7.92** Proposals that physically impact scheduled monuments will require scheduled monument consent, in addition to any necessary planning permission or Listed Building consent. Applications for scheduled monument consent must be submitted to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport before any work can begin that may affect a monument, whether above or below ground.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic Paper 5: Great Places
- Greater Cambridge Strategic Heritage Impact Assessment (2021)

# Policy GP/SF:

## Shopfronts

### What this policy does

- 7.93** This policy sets out requirements for proposals for new shopfronts, signage and security measures, or alterations to existing shopfronts.

#### Policy GP/SF: Shopfronts

1. Existing historic shopfronts and features of architectural interest shall be retained where possible.
2. Proposals for new shopfronts, signage and improvements to shopfront security should:
  - a. not detract from the character or appearance of the street as a whole;
  - b. respect the scale, proportions, architectural style, character and materials of the whole building and, where appropriate, adjoining buildings and the wider streetscene;
  - c. incorporate materials appropriate to the age and character of the building;
  - d. any advertising material is incorporated as an integral part of the design;
  - e. enhance natural surveillance and activate the frontage;
  - f. have regard to the guidance on shopfronts and signage in Appendix I: Shopfront guidance.
3. Shops that are converted to residential or other non-residential uses should retain the existing shopfront and fenestration to provide natural surveillance of the street.

### Supporting information

- 7.94** Greater Cambridge has many exemplar shopfront designs ranging from 18th Century to the modern day. Shopfronts play a key role in establishing and defining the visual character of high streets and shopping parades. Historic shopfronts are a prominent feature of many of Greater Cambridge's Conservation Areas; applicants are advised to consider the impact of any changes within the Conservation Area, including alterations to shopfronts within these designated heritage assets. Some shopfronts can also form part of a Listed Building's fabric or be designated heritage assets in their own right. Where a shopfront is listed or forms part of a Listed Building, special consideration will be given to the conservation of the shopfront and Listed Building consent will be required for any changes.

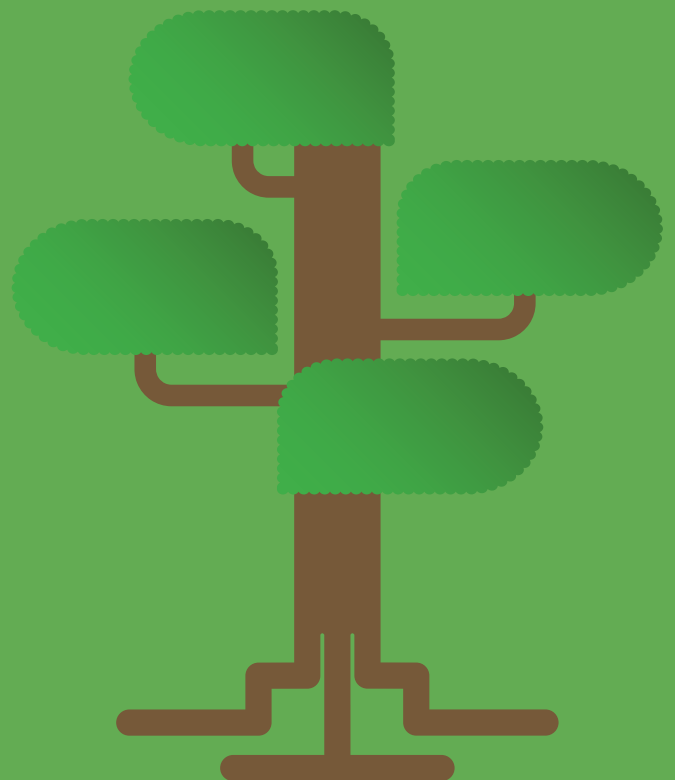
- 7.95** By requiring new shopfront proposals and improvements to align with the scale, architectural style, and materials of existing buildings, the policy ensures that development does not erode the historic or aesthetic value of the streetscape. Well-designed shopfronts and associated signage add to the character and quality of retail centres and play an important part in defining distinctive shopping areas. The integration of signage and security measures into a cohesive design helps prevent physically or visually intrusive alterations that could compromise the visual amenity of these environments and therefore signage should be subtle and complement the built environment.
- 7.96** Furthermore, the policy promotes community safety and engagement by encouraging natural surveillance and active frontages. The retention of original shopfronts and window openings helps maintain visual connectivity between private spaces and the public realm. This visibility discourages anti-social behaviour and reinforces the perception of lived-in, secure, and welcoming streets. Together, these provisions ensure that both existing and future developments contribute positively to the urban environment, preserving its historical character while supporting modern urban design principles. The architectural merit of buildings and the collective townscape qualities of the street can be eroded by poor-quality alterations or the unsympathetic replacement of shopfronts.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic Paper 5: Great Places
- Greater Cambridge Strategic Heritage Impact Assessment (2021)

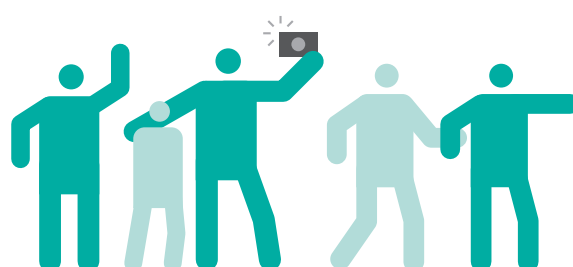
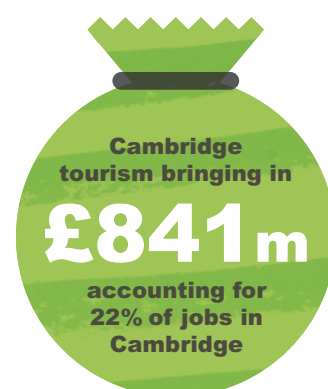
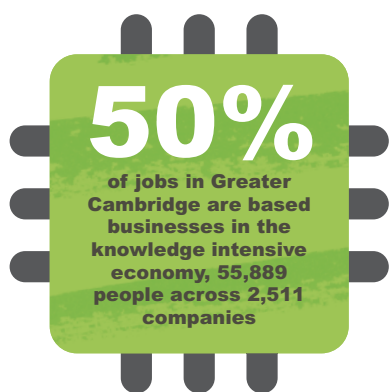
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# Jobs



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# Introduction

- 8.1 In the Jobs theme we set out policies which will guide employment development proposals.

## How has community engagement helped shape the jobs policies

- 8.2 Through consultation feedback you told us about the importance of the Greater Cambridge economy and its high technology clusters. You highlighted that it was important that the area should have a range of jobs, to help tackle poverty and inequality. You also wanted us to support our high streets, and to help them diversify. You also highlighted the importance of protecting the rural economy.

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## Our strategic priority for our jobs policies

- 8.3 **Strategic Priority:** Encourage a flourishing, dynamic and mixed economy in Greater Cambridge which includes a wide range of jobs, while maintaining our area's global reputation for education, research and innovation.

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- 8.4 The Greater Cambridge economy has a turnover of around £30 billion per year, and employs over 110,000 people. It is a globally significant innovation hub for life sciences and information and communications technology (ICT). Cambridge is also home to a world leading university and employment campuses of national and international importance. Our fast-growing economy is driven by successful partnerships between academics, business, investors and local government, and we are committed to sustainable and inclusive growth. We want economic growth to take place alongside environmental and social benefits, so that the benefits are felt by all.
- 8.5 As set out in the Strategy section of this Plan, we have explored the needs of different sectors of the economy to ensure a flexible supply of land is available in the right places and allocated a range of sites to help meet needs. The policies in this theme will guide consideration of employment further proposals, ensuring development is focused into sustainable locations. This includes supporting the rural economy and our villages, as well our towns and city.
- 8.6 We want our employment centres to flourish and provide facilities that can compete on the world stage. To do this they must be more than just employment buildings, but provide supporting facilities, green spaces, and services where people can thrive. They can help achieve the full benefits of the Cambridge cluster where ideas are developed through collaboration. We therefore include policies requiring employment proposals to demonstrate how they will achieve this.

- 8.7** Our key sectors study showed that there is a need for more start up spaces, and our Cultural Infrastructure Strategy showed the benefits of providing multipurpose spaces for creative industries. Mixing these with other uses can help create thriving places. We have therefore introduced a policy to seek an element of affordable employment to be included as part of large employment developments.
- 8.8** For a number of years retail has been changing across the country. As peoples shopping habits change our centres must also change and evolve. Outside new centres within our growth areas the need for new retail is limited, and the amount of retail space has been reducing with proposals like the Grafton Centre re-development. Greater Cambridge's cultural and creative industries are a major and growing economic force employing 14,000 people which makes up 8.5% of total employment in the region. We want Cambridge City Centre to remain a key retail and cultural destination, and our policies seek to maintain its role as the main centre for the subregion, whilst also supporting and protecting other centres to meet local needs.
- 8.9** The University of Cambridge and its 29 independent university Colleges include a significant number of faculty buildings, and they continue to evolve their estate. Sites like the New Museums site are undergoing significant change to modernise facilities and improve the public realm whilst respecting their historic setting. Anglia Ruskin University are also developing their Cambridge Campus. Our policies support development to meet the continuing needs of these important institutions.
- 8.10** Cambridge has a large tourism sector, with visitors coming from all over the world to see its colleges and museums. Visitors also come for academic research, and to visit friends and family. Reflecting growth in the area our Hotels Study has identified a need for further visitor accommodation, and the Local Plan seeks to meet this meet by supporting new hotels in key locations.

## **What our jobs policies do**

- Identify where new employment proposals of different types will be supported, to ensure they are appropriate to the location
- Supports the sustainable growth and expansion of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings.
- Protect valuable agricultural land, unless the loss is outweighed by the benefits and the development cannot be located on areas of poorer quality land.
- Protect business space in Greater Cambridge from losses to other uses unless it is justified.
- Requires a proportion of affordable workspace to be included in large commercial developments to help start ups and creative businesses.
- Requires employment parks and campuses to consider the need for services and facilities to meet the needs of workers and visitors.

- Focuses retail, leisure and other main town centre development on Greater Cambridge's network of centres to support their vitality and viability, whilst supporting local service provision.
- Identifies the need for new hotel and visitor accommodation and where it should be met.
- Supports the delivery of university faculty development in Cambridge, helping the area maintain its place as a centre of excellence.

# Policy J/NE:

## New employment development proposals

### What this policy does

- 8.11** This policy guides where proposals for employment development in urban areas, villages, and in the countryside are acceptable.

#### Policy J/NE: New employment development proposals

New employment development of an appropriate type, scale and character will be supported where it is appropriate to the location as set out below.

### Cambridge

1. Within the Defined Development Extent of Cambridge (as defined on the policies map), new employment development of an appropriate type, scale and character will be encouraged where proposals reflect the site allocation policies, opportunity areas and areas of major change included the Strategy section of this Plan. Outside these areas proposals will be considered on their own merits.

### Towns and villages in South Cambridgeshire

2. New employment development in accessible locations within the Defined Development Extent (defined on the policies map) within South Cambridgeshire's towns and villages will be supported where they are of a scale and character that reflect their location and the settlement in which they are located.

### On the edges of South Cambridgeshire's towns and villages

3. Subject to Green Belt policy, proposals for employment development will be permitted on sites adjoining or very close to the Defined Development Extent of towns and villages in South Cambridgeshire (defined on the policies map) where:
  - a. It is demonstrated that there are no suitable buildings or sites within the settlement or nearby, or suitable buildings to reuse or replace in the countryside nearby;
  - b. The site comprises previously developed land. If greenfield sites are proposed they will need to demonstrate no suitable previously developed sites are available;

- c. The proposal is justified by a business case, demonstrating that the business is viable;
- d. There is a named user for the development, who shall be the first occupant. A planning condition will be attached to any permission to this effect;
- e. The proposal is logically related to the built form of the settlement, the scale and form of the development would be in keeping with the category and scale of the village;
- f. The proposal would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area and in particular the settlement edge, and is in scale with the location; and
- g. The site can be easily accessed on foot or cycle.

### **Established employment areas in the countryside**

- 4. Within Established Employment Areas in the countryside, proposals for employment development will be permitted where they are of a scale and character that reflects their location.
- 5. The following Established Employment Areas in the countryside are defined on the policies map:
  - a. Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne;
  - b. Cambridge Research Park, Landbeach;
  - c. Brookfields Business Estate / Park, Twentypence Road, Cottenham;
  - d. Land at Hinxton Road, South of Duxford;
  - e. Eternit site, Meldreth;
  - f. Site to North of Cambridge Research Park, Landbeach;
  - g. Daleshead Foods Ltd, Cambridge Road, Linton;
  - h. Norman Way Industrial Estate, Over;
  - i. Buckingway Business Park, Swavesey;
  - j. Convent Drive / Pembroke Avenue site and Cambridge Innovation Park, Waterbeach;
  - k. TTP Campus Melbourn.

### **Expansion of existing businesses in the countryside**

- 6. Subject to Green Belt policy and excluding both employment allocations within this Plan and Established Employment Areas, the expansion of established existing businesses which are outside development frameworks will be granted where:
  - a. The proposal is justified by a business case, demonstrating that the business is viable, and has been operating successfully for a minimum of 2 years;

- b. There is a named user for the development, who shall be the first occupant. A planning condition will be attached to any permission to this effect;
- c. The proposal is of a scale appropriate in this location, adjacent to existing premises and appropriate to the existing development;
- d. There is no unacceptable adverse impact on the countryside with regard to scale, character and appearance of new buildings and/or changes of use of land;
- e. Existing buildings are reused where possible;
- f. The proposed development would not (by itself or cumulatively) have a significant adverse impact in terms of the amount or nature of traffic generated.

## **Large scale warehousing and distribution centres**

- 7. Large scale warehousing and distribution centres providing for national or regional needs will not be permitted in Greater Cambridge.
- 

## **Supporting information**

**8.12** For the purposes of Local Plan policies, employment uses consist of:

- a. E(g)
  - i. Offices
  - ii. R&D facilities
  - iii Light industry
- b. B2: General Industry
- c. B8: Storage and distribution
- d. Any sui generis uses that share a significant number of characteristics with the uses above, in particular sui generis medical research institute uses.

**8.13** Cambridge, including its urban area that extends into South Cambridgeshire, lies at the heart of the Greater Cambridge economic ecosystem. The availability of suitable office and industrial land and premises that allow for the evolution of the city's economy is vital to its continuing economic success.

**8.14** Towns and villages offer sustainable, local business and employment opportunities as well as playing an important role in the economic success of Greater Cambridge. Plan policies seek to ensure that this role is maintained and, where appropriate, sensitive smaller scale opportunities for change and/or growth arising from a changing economic landscape are supported whilst the overall character of the settlement is maintained.

**8.15** On the edges of settlements, where no other site for development can be identified, a degree of flexibility is incorporated so that where a clear case for development is established and there are no adverse impacts on the surrounding landscape and road network, development for employment purposes may be acceptable.

- 8.16** In the countryside, policy seeks to balance the need to support the rural economy and local job opportunities with the need to restrict unsustainable business development and minimise harm to the landscape. Across South Cambridgeshire the plan identifies Established Areas in the Countryside. These are employment sites outside Defined Development Extent and not in the Green Belt, which provide local opportunities for businesses seeking opportunities to locate, grow and evolve. The growth of existing businesses can be an important source of economic growth therefore policy outlines the circumstances where expansion can be supported.
- 8.17** The General Permitted Development Order means that some changes of use between the different types of uses listed in Class E do not constitute development and so do not require planning permission. Whilst recognising the benefits and flexibility that Class E can bring, it can affect the councils' ability to ensure that there are sufficient employment land and premises to meet the economic needs of residents and businesses.
- 8.18** In particular, it has the potential to impact the economic function of Established Employment Areas in the Countryside. To continue to meet the floorspace needs of new and expanding businesses the council may seek to apply conditions on new employment development limiting the ability to change use to other uses within Use Class E without the need for planning permission.
- 8.19** Significant additional space for industrial and distribution space has been allocated in the Strategy section of this document responding to identified needs. Proposals for warehouse and distribution centres meeting local needs within or beyond these sites may be supported subject to other policy requirements. However, proposals for large scale warehousing or distribution centres, which for the purposes of this policy we define as those premises generally exceeding 9,300 square metres (100,000 square feet) and which serve a wider regional or national function, will not be supported.
- 8.20** Accommodating regional and national serving operations would add further land supply pressure in an area already facing significant land supply pressures to meet the need of specialist sectors such as the area's key life science and technology sectors, as well as increasing pressure on transport networks.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan Topic Paper 6: Jobs (2025)
- [Greater Cambridge Warehouse and Industrial Space Needs Study \(2025\)](#)
- [Greater Cambridge Growth Sectors Study: Life science and ICT locational, land and accommodation needs \(2024\)](#)

# Policy J/RE:

## Supporting the rural economy

### What this policy does

- 8.21** This policy sets out the approach to proposals for re-use and replacement of rural buildings, and proposals related to land-based enterprises.

#### Policy J/RE: Supporting the rural economy

1. The change of use or adaptation of buildings in the countryside for employment use will be acceptable provided the following apply:
  - a. The buildings are structurally sound, not makeshift in nature and are of permanent, substantial construction;
  - b. The buildings are capable of re-use without materially changing their existing character or impact upon the surrounding countryside.
2. The replacement of suitably located, existing buildings for employment uses with new buildings of permanent design and construction in the countryside will be acceptable where it would bring about environmental improvement, and result in a more sustainable development.
3. For permission to be granted for any change of use, adaptation or replacement of buildings:
  - a. They must be well designed and their form, bulk and general design in scale and character with their rural surroundings.
  - b. Incidental uses such as car parking and storage should be accommodated within the group of buildings, or on well related land where landscaping can reduce the visual impact of the new site.
  - c. Employment generated must be in scale with the rural location. Developments resulting in significant numbers of employees or visitors must only be located near to larger settlements or accessible by public transport, cycling, or walking. Proposals which would have a significant adverse impact in terms of the amount or nature of traffic generated will be refused.



4. Well-conceived diversification schemes to support agricultural and other land-based rural businesses, will be permitted if:
    - a. They are consistent in scale with their rural location;
    - b. Existing buildings are reused where possible;
    - c. Any new development is part of an existing group of buildings;
    - d. A Business Plan, submitted with the planning application, demonstrates how the proposal will support the continued viable operation of the agricultural and other land based rural businesses.
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## Supporting information

- 8.22** The policy seeks to support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings.
- 8.23** Whilst some development types can take place as permitted development under the General Permitted Development Order or via a prior approval process, it is important that where planning permission is required the Plan controls the scale of development in the countryside where large scale development would be unsustainable. Rural buildings, such as farm buildings no longer needed for agriculture, provide opportunities for conversion for employment uses in the district, and provide a way of supporting the rural economy and making best use of an existing resource.
- 8.24** The Plan also needs to support land-based businesses and farms to continue to thrive whilst protecting the quality and distinctiveness of the local landscape and ensuring development is sustainable. To do this many have diversified into other business areas. They also need to continue to adapt to respond to climate change and to new Government funding schemes. It is important that diversification proposals are well founded in terms of effectively contributing to the sustainability of the existing agricultural business and the rural economy and integrating new activities into the environment and the rural context.
- 8.25** Farmers are required to submit a Business Plan with any planning application for diversification. This should include details of existing farm activities, the need for diversification, and details of the proposal and implications of the proposal on, for example, the rural economy and the environment.

### Supporting topic paper and evidence studies

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan Topic Paper 6: Jobs (2025)

# Policy J/AL:

## Protecting the best agricultural land

### What this policy does

- 8.26** This policy sets out how development proposals affecting agricultural land and soils should be considered.

#### Policy J/AL: Protecting the best agricultural land

1. Planning permission will not be granted for development which would lead to the irreversible loss of Grades 1, 2 or 3a agricultural land unless:
  - a. The land is allocated for development in the Local Plan or a Neighbourhood Plan;
  - b. Sustainability considerations and the need for the development clearly outweigh the impacts of the loss of the economic and other benefits of the land, and the development cannot be located on areas of poorer quality land.
2. Uses not involving substantial built development but which take agricultural land will be regarded as permanent unless restricted specifically by condition including reinstatement to its pre-development quality.
3. When considering proposals for the change of use or diversification of farmland, particular consideration shall be given to the potential for impact upon Priority Species and Habitats.

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### Supporting information

- 8.27** Agricultural land classification (ALC) is a system used to assess and categorise land based on its suitability for agricultural use. There are five grades, with Grades 1, 2, and 3a regarded as the 'best and most versatile' agricultural land, which should therefore be protected.
- 8.28** Greater Cambridge has a significant resource of good quality agricultural land. This is a valuable resource that needs to be protected. The sector is a key economic and environmental resource with the total farmed area of Greater Cambridge just under 72,000 hectares in 2024.

- 8.29** Much of the best agricultural land lies around Cambridge and the larger settlements, which may be the most sustainable locations for future development. The need to identify and maintain a supply of land for development means there is pressure for development of agricultural land.
- 8.30** Farmland is also an important biodiversity asset for Greater Cambridge. South Cambridgeshire being still a largely rural district has a large proportion of open farmland which has a variety of habitats on both high and low grade agricultural land. This provides an extensive biodiversity resource for the district. Due to the pressures of increasing land use and the past needs of intensive cultivation, the farmland of the district in places is under severe stress and this resource needs to be protected.
- 8.31** Priority Species and Habitats are those that are identified within the list of priority habitats and species in England ('Section 41 habitats and species') and detailed more fully in the list of UK BAP priority habitats.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan Topic Paper 6: Jobs (2025)

# Policy J/PB:

## Protecting existing business space

### What this policy does

- 8.32** This policy seeks to protect business space in Greater Cambridge from losses to other uses unless it is justified. It includes specific protection for Strategic Industrial Estates recognising the importance of these areas to the Greater Cambridge economy.

#### Policy J/PB: Protecting existing business space

1. There will be a presumption in favour of retaining employment sites and premises. Development (including change of use) outside Strategic Industrial Estates which results in the loss of employment floorspace will only be permitted where:
  - a. The site is allocated for an alternative use in the strategy section of this plan or in a neighbourhood plan;
  - b. It is demonstrated through documentary evidence that circumstances have changed such that the site or premises are inappropriate for any employment use to continue by reference to:
    - i. Whether the site or premises are being used productively, or if not, the viability of reusing the vacant premises or developing the land for employment use;
    - ii. the level of interest in existing premises following a marketing period of not less than twelve months on reasonable terms that reflect the lawful use and condition of the premises during a sustained period of UK economic growth;
    - iii. General signals of demand across Greater Cambridge and in relation to the area of the site or premise;
    - iv. The availability and quality of alternative premises.
  - c. The loss of a small proportion of floorspace would facilitate the redevelopment and continuation of employment on the site and the proposed redevelopment will modernise buildings that are out of date and do not meet business needs.
  - d. The overall benefit to the community of the proposal outweighs any adverse effect on employment opportunities and the range of available employment land and premises.
  - e. The existing use is generating environmental problems such as noise, pollution, or unacceptable levels of traffic and any alternative employment use would continue to generate similar environmental problems.

2. Proposals for industrial and storage uses will be acceptable in principle on the Strategic Industrial Estates listed below. Development, including changes of use, which results in the loss of industrial and storage floorspace on Strategic Industrial Estates will be permitted only where there is compelling evidence that circumstances have changed to the extent that there is no reasonable prospect of floorspace, or land being used for these purposes by reference to:
  - a. whether existing premises are being used productively, or if not, the viability of reusing vacant premises or developing allocated land suitable for industrial and storage uses;
  - b. the level of interest in existing premises following a marketing period of not less than 24 months, on reasonable terms, that reflect the lawful use and condition of the premises, during a sustained period of UK economic growth;
  - c. general market signals of demand across Greater Cambridge and in relation to the locality;
  - d. the availability and quality of alternative premises.
3. Applicants will also need to demonstrate that non-industrial or non-storage uses would not have an adverse impact on the sustainability of industrial and storage premises that remain around the site or would not act against the development of undeveloped areas for industrial uses.
4. Mid-tech premises will, in principle, be acceptable on Strategic Industrial Estates where it can be demonstrated that the industrial function of the land or premises would remain.
5. The following Strategic Industrial Estates are identified on the policies map:
  - a. Barnwell Business Park and Barnwell Drive, Cambridge
  - b. Beadle Industrial Estate, Ditton Walk, Cambridge
  - c. Brickyard Industrial Estate/Coldham's Road, Cambridge
  - d. Cheddars Lane, Cambridge
  - e. Coldham's Lane Business Park, Cambridge
  - f. Cottage and Cave Industrial Estates, Fen Ditton
  - g. Hain Daniels Site, Histon
  - h. Henley Road, Cambridge
  - i. King's Hedges Road – Kirkwood Road / Kilmaine Estate, Cambridge
  - j. Mercers Row Industrial Estate (including Swanns Road), Cambridge
  - k. North of Coldham's Lane, Cambridge (including Church End Industrial Estate and College Business Park).
  - l. Ronald Rolph Court, Wadloes Road, Cambridge
  - m. Winship Road, Norman Industrial Estate, Cambridge Road, Milton.

6. Meanwhile uses that generate employment opportunities will be encouraged while the marketing of a vacant site takes place.
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## Supporting information

- 8.33** Employment uses are defined in Policy J/NE above. For the purposes of Local Plan policies, industrial and storage uses consist of:
- a. E(g) iii Light industry
  - b. B2: General Industry
  - c. B8: Storage and distribution
  - d. Any sui generis uses that share a significant number of characteristics with the uses above
  - e. Mid-tech, modern general industrial premises that have a greater emphasis on the office / R&D element alongside manufacturing and storage / distribution.
- 8.34** Employment sites and business premises in Greater Cambridge are under pressure for redevelopment from residential and other uses. The uncontrolled loss of employment floorspace can impact the sustainability of local communities and local economies. Fewer local employment opportunities could reduce the vibrancy of communities and mean that people have to travel further for work, or to access local services. Fewer businesses, including those supporting Greater Cambridge's key sectors could damage the local economic ecosystem.
- 8.35** In the urban development framework of Cambridge, there is a particular pressure on industrial land from other uses with reduced space and rising land values pushing industrial uses out of the city (or out of business). As available sites within more central areas have fallen, the demand for the redevelopment of existing industrial sites has begun to move out towards the periphery of the city and beyond. For existing industrial uses, new modern sites may not be suitable and it can be difficult to find new premises within their price point, particularly if their business model relies on a proximity to Cambridge. Protecting existing industrial sites is considered a vital part of developing a more inclusive Greater Cambridge economy. The designation of Strategic Industrial Estates, including the protection of several sites in villages close to Cambridge, seeks to mitigate these pressures.
- 8.36** The policy will operate within the limits of the Class Uses and permitted development rights, which allow certain changes of use from light industrial use to take place without the need for planning permission. Where new light industrial or mid-tech uses are permitted, the Councils will seek to apply conditions limiting the ability to change use to other Use Class uses to ensure that the industrial use of the sites or premises is retained and that any future loss is assessed against Local Plan policies via a planning application.

- 8.37** Making best use of existing employment sites and premises reduces the pressure for the development of new sites, including new sites in the countryside. It also provides a greater range of employment opportunities and reduces the need to travel. Site and premises should be retained to provide local employment, unless specific factors indicate otherwise.
- 8.38** It would be unreasonable to protect employment sites in perpetuity, but we can seek to ensure that alternative opportunities have been explored before sites are lost.
- 8.39** Any marketing exercise should include extensive advertising. Both freehold and leasehold options should be made available without restrictive covenants preventing reuse as an employment use. Subject to commercial sensitivity, the original details of all offers should be provided to the Council resulting from the marketing period together with full reasons as to why any offer has not been accepted. The facility should only be marketed at an appropriate value agreed by the Council and an independent assessor for its existing use. Further details of the Councils' expectations of applicants for marketing exercises are set out in Appendix G of this Local Plan.
- 8.40** The Agent of Change principle should be applied to employment sites with the responsibility for mitigating impacts from existing noise and other nuisance-generating activities or uses on these sites applied to the proposed new noise-sensitive development. This is to ensure that any existing nuisance-generating uses are protected and prioritised, and do not have unreasonable restrictions placed on them through the introduction of new sensitive uses such as residential. The principle should also support the intensification of existing or emerging industrial areas.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan Topic Paper 6: Jobs (2025)
- [Greater Cambridge Employment Land and Economic Development Evidence Study \(2020\)](#)
- [Greater Cambridge Employment and Housing Evidence Update \(2023\)](#)
- [Greater Cambridge Warehouse and Industrial Space Needs Study \(2025\)](#)

# Policy J/AW:

## Affordable workspace and creative industries

### What this policy does

- 8.41** This policy seeks affordable workspace to be included in large commercial developments, specifying the size of developments on which affordable workspace will be sought and setting out the ways in which they must be operated and managed.
- 8.42** Employment or mixed development schemes of an appropriate scale will be required to provide an element of affordable workspace.
- 8.43** Where this is applied in other areas, proposals are typically required to deliver between 10 and 20 per cent of total NIA floorspace as affordable rentable floorspace either over a fixed period of time or in perpetuity. Market discounts are then specified which often vary to reflect the prevailing market rate, for example 10 per cent in low cost areas and 50% in higher cost areas. A threshold is set for when the requirement would be applied, such as developments over than 2,500 sqm GIA of new (net) employment.
- 8.44** The Councils are still refining the nature and scale of the employment floorspace the policy will apply to, the affordable workspace percentage to be applied to total floorspace, the level of discounts applied to different areas of Greater Cambridge and payments in-lieu calculations. We would welcome feedback on the approach through this consultation.

### Policy J/AW: Affordable workspace and creative industries

The following requirements will apply when affordable workspace is secured:

1. The type and specification of affordable workspace must address an identified local need. Workspace types may be affordable artist studios, office, research and development, light industrial or general industrial workspace and maker spaces in light industrial use.
2. Affordable workspace schemes must be operated and managed:
  - a. by an affordable workspace provider on the Councils' approved list; or
  - b. by the owner, or alternative party, where it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the council that they have the necessary skills and experience; or
  - c. where occupiers are from specific sectors that have cultural or social value such as cultural organisations, charities, public health services, voluntary and



community organisations, the councils will explore opportunities for long term management and delivery of workspace.

3. An Affordable Workspace Management Plan must be prepared by the developer and agreed with the Councils at least three months prior to the implementation of the development.
  4. The affordable workspace should be made available for occupation at the same time as, or prior to, the first occupation of 50 percent of the non-affordable element of the remaining economic floorspace in the development, unless justified on specific site circumstances.
  5. Affordable workspace secured should be provided on-site. Off-site provision will only be acceptable in the following exceptional circumstances:
    - a. Where a hard to let vacant property is brought back into use, or
    - b. Where there is strong existing provision within the area of the development, or
    - c. Where an occupier requires exclusive use of a single office property, such as a global headquarters building, or
    - d. Within the overall development on mixed use sites where there are a range of landowners.
  6. Payment in lieu will only be acceptable where:
    - a. The Councils consider that the economic benefits of pooling affordable workspace funds are significantly more positive than on-site or off-site provision;
    - b. Where on-site or off-site provision is demonstrated not to be feasible.
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## Supporting information

- 8.46** There is a shortage of affordable workspace for start-up businesses and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) across Greater Cambridge. The issue is more apparent and increases further towards Cambridge city centre. Tenants are priced out of the market due to high rents and long waiting lists for new space, leading to the Greater Cambridge workspace market being difficult for micro-enterprises and SMEs to enter.
- 8.47** The creative sector has a significant economic role in the Greater Cambridge and in supporting wider community well-being. There is an identified shortage of available, affordable space to support creative industries growth and expansion, particularly for smaller businesses. Affordability has been identified as is a key concern with these smaller creative businesses likely to work from home or in other unsuitable set ups.
- 8.48** Reduced rent workspace provision helps encourage individuals to start a new business or grow their previously homebased business. In conjunction with tailored business support shared spaces can help entrepreneurs develop sustainable companies. It can ensure a sufficient supply of affordable business space and can support sectors that

have cultural or social value such as artists, charities, and community organisations for which low-cost space can be important.

- 8.49** Affordable workspaces have an important role in helping to address social inclusion, helping people from deprived communities start businesses by providing affordable flexible spaces to overcome financial barriers and absorb risk.
- 8.50** Affordable Workspace Management Plans should include details of management, user target sectors and tenants, details of the final workspace provision, fit-out, charges and leasing, additional facilities and support, and next steps assistance.
- 8.51** Where fit out costs are likely to be high, for example in R&D or workshop space the proportion of affordable workspace provided could be lower than the policy requirement given the lower values associated with this type of space. The proportion of discounted floorspace in these cases will be determined through consideration of site characteristics and viability.
- 8.52** Applicants should work with council officers to determine the nature of the affordable workspace provision on a case-by-case basis. Affordable workspace and contributions will be secured via Section 106 agreements.
- 8.53** For all schemes that provide affordable workspace, the council will require an annual monitoring report to be submitted to show how policy requirements are being met. This requirement will also be secured via a Section 106 agreement.
- 8.54** The Councils, in due course, may consider bringing forward further guidance in an Affordable Workspace Supplementary Planning Document.
- 8.55** The councils will be commissioning viability and affordable workspace studies to help to determine the policy variables in order to ensure that these are viable from the point of view of both developers and affordable workspace providers. The nature of the need in Greater Cambridge will also be considered. The council's approved list of affordable workspace providers will be developed as the Local Plan nears adoption.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic paper 6: Jobs (2025)
- Greater Cambridge Employment Land and Economic Development Evidence Study (2020)
- Greater Cambridge Warehouse and Industrial Space Needs Study (2025)
- Greater Cambridge Growth Sectors Study: Life science and ICT locational, land and accommodation needs (2024)

# Policy J/EP:

## Supporting a range of facilities in employment parks

### What this policy does

- 8.56** This policy supports proposals for shared facilities in employment parks and campuses subject to criteria around the nature of the proposals and their potential impact on businesses, the site and surrounding areas.

#### Policy J/EP: Supporting a range of facilities in employment parks

1. Appropriately scaled facilities including indoor and outdoor leisure, eating, social and collaboration spaces will be supported in business parks and employment areas where:
  - a. The use is ancillary or complementary to existing or proposed Employment Uses and supports the functionality of the employment area.
  - b. The use would not have an unacceptably adverse impact on existing businesses, future business use of the site or nearby centres.
  - c. The facilities are intended to primarily serve the needs of workers in the business park and do not attract significant levels of visitor traffic.
2. Proposals for new or expanded employment sites or business parks must consider and demonstrate how the needs of workers and visitors will be met, and ensure that any new facilities do not have unacceptable impacts on nearby centres.

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### Supporting information

- 8.57** The success of many business parks and employment areas in Greater Cambridge is not solely due to their employment buildings but also the mix of services and facilities that support them. Providing amenities such as cafes, restaurants, indoor and outdoor social spaces and leisure facilities, changing facilities and creches, green spaces, and collaboration and networking spaces helps create high-quality working environments that attract and retain talent, foster collaboration, and support employee well-being.

- 8.58** Integrating these facilities into employment sites also contributes to sustainable transport patterns by reducing the need for off-site travel during the working day. Helping to manage the peak arrival and departure of workers travelling to and from the site, can contribute to managing peak-time congestion, easing pressure on infrastructure, and improving air quality.
- 8.59** At the same time, it is important that these facilities are appropriately scaled, proportionate to the employment park, so they enhance employment areas without undermining the role of nearby district and local centres.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic paper 6: Jobs (2025)
- Greater Cambridge Employment Land and Economic Development Evidence Study (2020)
- Greater Cambridge Warehouse and Industrial Space needs study (2025)
- Greater Cambridge Growth Sectors Study: Life science and ICT locational, land and accommodation needs (2024)

# Policy J/MS:

## Markets and street trading

### What this policy does

- 8.60** This policy explains the circumstances in which local markets and street traders will be supported in Designated Centres.

#### Policy J/MS: Markets and street trading

1. Proposals that seek to protect and enhance the daily market in the Market Square or the arts and crafts market on All Saints Garden will be supported.
2. Proposals for new markets and street trading operators in existing and emerging Designated Centres will be supported where they:
  - a. maintain and add to the vitality, viability and diversity of the centre, complement the retail function and, in emerging centres, do not demonstrably compete with permanent retail units;
  - b. would not give rise to a detrimental effect, individually or cumulatively, on the character or amenity of the area through smell, litter, noise or traffic problems, including obstructions for the movement and safety of pedestrians, mobility-assisted users or emergency services;
  - c. secure appropriate public realm and utilities improvements, where necessary, to ensure the safe operation of street trader activities and maintain public access; and
  - d. are designed to enable flexible usage for a range of other community and cultural activities.

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### Supporting information

- 8.61** Local markets and street traders can help attract visitors to a centre by providing goods for sale that may not otherwise be available on the high street. In new centres where retail units may not be available or retail occupiers have yet to establish themselves, local markets and street traders can provide local people with valuable access to food, goods and services that are not available on a permanent basis.
- 8.62** Beyond their practical role in supplying diverse products, markets also have the potential to contribute significantly to the social and economic vitality of Greater Cambridge's network of centres. They foster a sense of community by creating vibrant,

inclusive spaces where people from different backgrounds can interact, connect, and engage in shared experiences. Economically, markets support local entrepreneurship by offering low-barrier entry points for small businesses and independent traders, helping to stimulate local employment and retain wealth within the community.

- 8.63** Their presence can increase footfall, benefiting surrounding businesses and encouraging further investment in the area. Overall, markets play a crucial role in enhancing the resilience, diversity, and appeal of town centres, making them more dynamic and sustainable places to live, work, and visit.
- 8.64** However, it is important that local markets and street traders complement the local retail and service offer within the Designated Centre to maintain the viability and vitality of permanent retail and service facilities. Permanent retail units will have additional costs compared to temporary market stalls and street traders. Small retailers and food store operators are unlikely to commit to operating permanent retail units if local markets and street traders are allowed to dominate the local retail scene. Therefore, it is important that local markets are of a size, frequency and type that allows the permanent retail units/operators to trade profitably without trade diversion.
- 8.65** This is particularly important in new settlements where their designated centres are still emerging; in these circumstances, the market or street trader offer should be subject to additional testing when proposed, to ensure they support these new centres with complementary goods and services. To measure their complementary nature, a simple comparison between the goods and services provided by markets and street traders and those provided by permanent shops and other high street service providers must be completed. Where there is significant overlap, in terms of provision those duplicate market or street trader providers should not be allowed to continue to offer these similar goods or services.
- 8.66** Proposals will be expected to secure appropriate public realm and utilities improvements to ensure that different types of street traders can operate safely at different times of day and during different seasons. Depending on existing facilities, this may include (but would not necessarily be limited to) elements such as lighting, access to water, toilets, hand washing facilities, provision for waste disposal and level surfaces.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic paper 6: Jobs (2025)

# Policy J/RC:

## Retail and other complementary town centre uses

### What this policy does

8.67

This policy sets out the strategic approach to retail and other main town centre uses in Greater Cambridge's city, towns and villages, which includes a sequential approach to the location of retail and other main town centre uses in Greater Cambridge. This policy also sets out requirements for proposals that would result in the loss of retail other main town centre uses.

#### Policy J/RC: Retail and other complementary town centre uses

1. The Local Plan will provide for the needs of retail and other town centre uses over the plan period by:
  - a. Directing these uses to both new and existing centres, proportionate to their scale and function, before considering edge of centre and out of centre sites through the application of a sequential approach;
  - b. Supporting, protecting and enhancing the vitality, viability and diversity of Cambridge City Centre as the primary retail, leisure and cultural centre for the Greater Cambridge sub-region;
  - c. Supporting the development of new town centres at Cambourne North, Waterbeach New Town, Northstowe, and smaller centres at strategic allocations in accordance with their role and function, that complement the vitality and viability of surrounding centres and do not compete with Cambridge City Centre;
  - d. Supporting, protecting and enhancing the vitality, vibrancy and diversity of Greater Cambridge's network and hierarchy of other designated and non-designated centres, which serve important day-to-day needs close to homes and places of work, and safeguarding key shops and services in smaller villages; and
  - e. Making better use of underutilised spaces wherever possible.
2. Cambridge's network of existing and emerging designated city, town, district and local centres and non-designated neighbourhood centres and villages, including the role and function of such centres, is defined under the Hierarchy of Designated Centres, the Hierarchy of Non-Designated Centres and Emerging Centres. Proposals for new retail and other main town centre uses outside of designated centres must be

supported by a sequential test, as defined in national planning policy, applying the following hierarchy of designated centres before considering edge-of centre and out-of-centre sites:

- i. Cambridge City Centre;
- ii. Existing and emerging District and Town Centres;
- iii. Existing and emerging Local Centres.

A sequential test will not be required for proposals:

- a. that in line with national planning policy, are for small scale rural offices or other small scale rural development;
  - b. for office development in locations identified as acceptable for employment uses and that meet the policy criteria identified in Policy J/NE; or
  - c. for other development at employment parks that meets the tests in Policy J/EP.
3. Across Greater Cambridge's network of centres, proposals for the redevelopment, intensification or creation of new retail and other main town centre uses will be supported provided they:
- a. are appropriate and proportionate to the scale and function of the centre, as defined under the Hierarchy of Designated Centres and Hierarchy of Non-Designated Centres;
  - b. maintain or add to the vitality, viability and diversity of the centre;
  - c. do not give rise to significant detrimental effects, either individually or cumulatively, on the character or amenity of the area; and
  - d. for proposals at ground-floor level, make appropriate provision for an active frontage, such as a window display, which is in keeping with the character of the centre.
4. In designated centres (excluding the Primary Shopping Area), proposals should maximise opportunities to use non-ground-floor level spaces for both ancillary storage or office uses, or other retail and leisure uses that complement uses on other floors of the building. Residential development in centres will only be supported where:
- a. there is no market demand for the existing unit as office, retail, leisure or cultural development, as demonstrated through an up-to-date marketing exercise for at least 12 months, in accordance with the guidance provided in Appendix G: Marketing, local needs assessments and viability appraisals of this Local Plan showing that the premises are not reasonably capable of being used or redeveloped for an appropriate town centre use;
  - b. there are no nearby businesses linked to the evening / night-time economy and, or alternative cultural / live music / performance venues, which would be likely to attract noise complaints or have their operations restricted due to the development;
  - c. the development would not, either individually or cumulatively, undermine the centre's ability to perform its role and function for the communities it serves;
  - d. the development makes appropriate provision for an active frontage at the ground



- floor level, which would maintain the character of the centre and make a positive contribution to its vibrancy; and
- e. the development would not give rise, either individually or cumulatively, to a detrimental effect on an area's character, access or amenity to its residents.
5. Across Greater Cambridge's network of centres (excluding the Primary Shopping Area), proposals that would result in the loss of any retail or other main town centre use or in the reconfiguration of separate planning units through the merging of two or more units or sub-division of a unit will only be supported where:
    - a. there is no market demand for the existing unit(s) or potential replacement unit(s) of the same size and use, as demonstrated through an up-to-date marketing exercise for at least 12 months in accordance with the guidance provided in Appendix G: Marketing, local needs assessments and viability appraisals of this Local Plan demonstrating that the premises are not reasonably capable of being used or redeveloped for a town centre use acceptable in the centre; or
    - b. evidence is submitted that demonstrates the new use or reconfiguration of planning units (through merger or sub-division) would:
      - i. meet an identified need for alternative community, retail or leisure facilities;
      - ii. contribute positively to the vitality, viability and diversity of the centre; and
      - iii. not result in significant adverse impacts on surrounding uses.
  6. Outside of Greater Cambridge's centres, proposals that would result in the loss of village shops and services resulting in an unacceptable reduction in the level of provision locally will generally be resisted. In such cases, applications will be considered against the criteria set out in Policy W/CF.
  7. Unless specified in detail in a strategic allocation, proposals for new or amended centres, including a revised network of centres or quantum of retail and leisure space required within an allocation, should be accompanied by a Town Centre Impact Assessment to demonstrate that their scale is appropriate to the development they are intended to serve, and will avoid having any significant adverse impacts on the wider network of existing or planned centres.
  8. Proposals for retail and other main town centre uses outside designated centres will only be permitted where:
    - a. the proposal is in an accessible location appropriate to the users it is intended to serve and well served by sustainable modes of transport, as appropriate;
    - b. the proposal has, where required to do so, demonstrated the use of the sequential test when considering sites for development, and no suitable alternative sites have been identified for the proposed development; and
    - c. for retail and leisure proposals where the development exceeds 300m<sup>2</sup> of gross internal floorspace, the proposal is accompanied by a Town Centre Impact Assessment to demonstrate that there would be no significant adverse impacts on existing, committed and planned investment or on the vitality and viability of centres that may be affected.

## Greater Cambridge's Hierarchy of Designated Centres

### Cambridge City Centre (including the Primary Shopping Area)

**Role and function of City Centre:** Primary sub-regional destination for larger-scale comparison retail, services, cultural facilities, and day-/night-time leisure uses.

### District and Town Centres

- Arbury Court
- Cambourne\*
- Cambridge Retail Park / The Beehive
- Cherry Hinton High Street
- Histon Road
- Mill Road East
- Mill Road West
- Mitcham's Corner
- Hills Road

**Role and function of District and Town Centres:** Larger centres meeting day-to-day needs close to where people live and work, including medium- and small-scale comparison and convenience retail, leisure and service needs; may serve a wider city and district catchment.

**\*Note:** additional lower order centres, such as local or neighbourhood centres may also be planned in these new communities to meet local needs.

### Local Centres

- Arbury Court
- Barnwell Road
- Cherry Hinton Road East
- Cherry Hinton Road West
- Newnham Road
- Trumpington
- Newmarket Road
- Railway Station (CB1)
- Darwin Green
- Orchard Park
- Eddington
- Marleigh
- Springstead Village
- Histon & Impington
- Sawston
- Great Shelford & Stapleford

**Role and function:** Smaller centres meeting day-to-day small-scale comparison and convenience retail and service needs for local areas by active travel or other sustainable means of travel.

## Greater Cambridge's Hierarchy of Non-Designated Centres

### Neighbourhood Centres

- Atkins Corner
- Akeman Street
- Campkin Way
- Carlton Way
- Chesterton High Street
- Ditton Lane
- Fairfax Road
- Grantchester Street Newnham
- Green End Road
- Clay Farm
- Brookgate / Hills Road
- West Cambridge
- Minor Rural Centres

**Role and function:** Accessible hubs for everyday convenience and service provision, providing walkable provision to small-scale units serving essential community needs or, for Minor Rural Centres, the needs of a wider rural hinterland.

## Greater Cambridge's Emerging Centres

### Town Centres

- Northstowe
- Waterbeach New Town
- Grange Farm

### District Centres

- Cambridge Biomedical Campus
- Cambridge East
- North East Cambridge

### Local Centres

- Bourn Airfield

## Supporting information

- 8.68** In preparing the Local Plan, the Councils have taken into consideration the changing nature of Greater Cambridge's settlements, the influence of the internet on trading, an increasing demand for cultural and leisure services, and the level of forecast employment and population growth across the sub-region. Retailing and town centre visitation has been in a state of flux since the Covid-19 Pandemic and the growth of internet shopping.
- 8.69** This uncertainty reinforces the need to protect the varying sizes of town and local centres to allow them to recover and evolve. The policy directs the development of new leisure and cultural facilities, hotels, and other visitor accommodation to Greater Cambridge's network of centres to support a broader range of activities and underpin the sub-region's role as a visitor and cultural destination.
- 8.70** The strategic approach to the development of retail and other main town centre uses prioritises the delivery of such uses in identified centres, proportionate to the role and function of that centre. Greater Cambridge's hierarchy of centres comprises its larger Designated Centres (including Cambridge's Primary Shopping Area (PSA)) set out in the Hierarchy of Designated Centres, including Emerging Centres which are anticipated to emerge through the development of new towns and urban extensions, and smaller 'Non-Designated' Centres, set out in the hierarchy of Non-Designated Centres.
- 8.71** The geographical extent of existing Designated Centres and Non-Designated Centres has been defined on the Policies Map. Emerging centres will be defined at the later stages of the planning process, and they will be included on future iterations of the Policies Map. Upon delivery of an Emerging Centre, they will be considered an active location within the sequential approach set out within this policy.
- 8.72** Across Greater Cambridge's network of centres, proposals for the redevelopment, intensification or creation of new retail and other main town centre uses should enhance the environment and economy within these centres with proposals of a size and scale that is commensurate to the centre's function. The Hierarchy of Designated Centres defines the role and function of different tiers of the hierarchy, to guide the appropriateness of proposals. Investment is strongly supported at all levels of the hierarchy to enhance the range of businesses and facilities available locally.
- 8.73** The policy also actively supports proposals that maximise the re-use of space, in particular non-ground floorspaces which may be otherwise not be contributing to the vibrancy of the centre. This policies prioritises the provision of ancillary spaces which support the ongoing viability of town centre uses in the ground floor or the provision of complimentary retail or leisure uses on other floors, but does not preclude proposals for other complimentary main town centre uses or other uses meet with the requirements in this policy and other policies elsewhere in this Local Plan (for example, Policy WS/CF).
- 8.74** In relation to proposals for residential uses, national planning policy encourages housing in town centres to support their vitality and viability and diversify uses beyond traditional retail. Residential may therefore be appropriate in certain circumstances, subject to the additional requirements set out in the policy, which are designed to secure a high quality of development that would avoid conflict between potential future

residents and existing/future businesses and maintain the character of the centre, ultimately safeguarding and prioritising the its primary role and function.

- 8.75** Such an approach is supported by the Greater Cambridge Cultural Infrastructure Strategy (2025), which recommends guarding against forms of development adjacent to venues that might put the live music offer at risk of noise complaints and other challenges to their operations. This element of the policy does not apply in the PSA, which is subject to separate policy stipulations in J/SA reflecting its unique, sub-regional role and function.
- 8.76** Cambridge City Centre performs an important sub-regional role by providing a wide range of uses, including leisure, entertainment, cultural venues, museums, and faculty and student accommodation. In Cambridge City Centre, sub-regional facilities such as large retail shops, performance venues and other popular leisure activities will be directed to this location including those uses which attract large volumes of people, given its numerous transport connections.
- 8.77** District and Town Centres are important in providing for day-to-day needs close to where people live and work. They are the second tier of the centres hierarchy and are characterised by the range of shops and facilities they offer that would appeal to a larger catchment than Local Centres. In Town and District Centres, food stores and other town centre uses will be supported that are of a scale commensurate to the size and catchment area of the centre. Smaller retail units will also be supported to encourage independent shops, cafés and restaurants along with other local service providers.
- 8.78** Local Centres are important in providing shops and facilities that can be accessed by foot and bicycle rather than having to travel by car, but their catchments and the services and facilities on offer within centres are more limited. Typically, they provide a cluster of shops and services. Settlements identified as Rural Centres in the settlement hierarchy have also been identified as “Local Centres” because Rural Centres are the largest, most sustainable villages in Greater Cambridge, offering employment opportunities, and a variety of services and facilities that can be accessed using good public transport services.
- 8.79** Neighbourhood Centres are particularly valuable in providing for the everyday needs of smaller communities. In Cambridge, Neighbourhood Centres are small parades of shops that are identified on the policies map.
- 8.80** In Greater Cambridge’s Minor Rural Centres are also identified as Neighbourhood Centres in the centre’s hierarchy, reflecting the level of services present compared with other, smaller villages in the area. They often perform a role in terms of providing services and facilities for a small rural hinterland. However, specific Neighbourhood Centre areas have not been identified on the Policies Map within Minor Rural Centres, as the services and facilities in these villages are often dispersed across the settlement, and instead the Minor Rural Centres’ Defined Development Extent will be considered the extent of the Neighbourhood Centre in each case. While smaller villages could also benefit from a mix of more locally available dispersed services, these should be of size that will not undermine nearby shops and services.

- 8.81** Where the development of main town centre uses is proposed outside of a designated centre, sequential testing and Town Centre Impact testing will be required in line with national planning policies and guidance and the thresholds established in the policy. This will help to ensure that such development is, wherever possible, focused in established centres, supporting their vibrancy and vitality, whilst reflecting that smaller developments can still play a role in supporting the sustainability of individual communities, particularly smaller villages. In all cases, applicants will be required to demonstrate that the proposed location is accessible to the users the development it is intended to serve and well served by sustainable modes of transport appropriate to those users, which may include walking and cycling as appropriate.
- 8.82** In some cases, sequential testing would not be appropriate for out of centre proposals, and the policy makes clear when this will not be applied. National policy specifically exempts small scale rural developments, including offices, from the application of the sequential test so as not to unduly restrict proposals that would support the economic vitality and sustainability of smaller communities, which may be some distance from Greater Cambridge's network of centres.
- 8.83** Additionally, a specific exemption is made for office proposals that otherwise accord with the locational preferences and other requirements set out in Policy J/NE, reflecting Greater Cambridge's successful network of science parks and campuses which provide a range of appropriate locations for such development outside of identified centres. To support the vibrancy and sustainability of employment parks and campuses, a specific exemption is also made for town centre uses (other than offices) in these locations, should they be of a scale that only meet the need derived by their employment operations and not undermine the viability of other centres. While sequential testing would not be applied to such proposals, they will instead need to adhere to the requirements of Policy J/EP.
- 8.84** Most retail and leisure proposals outside of centres will be required to demonstrate through a Town Centre Impact Assessment that, in line with national policy and guidance, there would be no significant adverse impacts on existing, committed and planned investment or on the vitality and viability of centres that may be affected. The preparation of a Town Centre Impact Assessment should follow the government's guidance on impact tests as set out within the Town Centres and Retail planning guidance (or successor guidance documents).
- 8.85** In Greater Cambridge, this will be required for all such proposals exceeding 300m<sup>2</sup> of gross internal floorspace. This reflects the recommendations of the Greater Cambridge Retail and Leisure Study (2025) which identified a threshold of 300m<sup>2</sup> as an appropriate means of identifying proposals that would be more than "just local" in nature and scale, with a stronger consumer trade draw and therefore higher potential impact on existing floorspace. The requirement to test proposals above this threshold will help to reinforce and protect Greater Cambridge's network of centres. Proposals solely for other town centre uses (i.e. excluding retail and leisure) will not be required to undertake Town Centre Impact testing.
- 8.86** In addition, Town Centre Impact Assessments will also be required to test the impacts of new centres on existing designated centres, including a new or revised 'local'



network of centres. This includes some of the emerging centres expected to come forward as part of the Plan's proposed site allocations, as in some circumstances it will not always be possible for retail evidence prepared during plan-making to be able to accurately quantify the amount of retail and commercial leisure floorspace that a large development will generate, or identify a network of centres for the allocation, reflecting the longer timeframe over which some of these sites will come forward.

**8.87** Changes in consumer trends, transport improvements and other retail developments within the development's catchment area will affect demand for new shops and other town centre services, which cannot be fully addressed through the Local Plan. This is most likely to be encountered when a development's scheduled start date is not expected until the later part of the Plan period. Where impact testing is necessary in such situations, we would expect the detailed approach to impact testing to be agreed with the local planning in advance of submitting the application, and for the following specific requirements to be met:

- the completion of a household survey covering the catchment area of the proposed development, which may include areas beyond the boundaries of Greater Cambridge;
- an assessment of the settlements that may be affected, including their current economic performance, vitality and vibrancy;
- the use of industry recognised economic data modelling and analytics to quantify the need generated by the development proposal; and
- where a network of centres is proposed, details justifying their number, size and compatibility with Greater Cambridge's Hierarchy of Designated and Non-Designated Centres as outlined in Policy J/RC.

**8.88** Making the best use of sites in existing and emerging centres reduces the pressure for the development of new sites, including new sites in out-of-centre locations. The number and size of units in each of these centres should maintain a healthy balance between small, medium and larger units for retail and other services. Generally, independent retailers prefer smaller units and bring a more varied mix of retail options while chain store operators prefer larger units which help attract people to the high street, driving footfall that can draw people to less well-known smaller shops. This mix of retailers can create both a vibrant and diverse shopping experience which cannot be so easily derived from online shopping. Sites should therefore be retained in main town centre uses wherever possible, as they provide important services to residents and visitors.

**8.89** The Local Planning Authorities will therefore resist proposals that seek the loss of retail, leisure and other main town centre uses across its network of centres, particularly within designated centres, unless compelling evidence is presented that demonstrates there is no market demand for the site's existing use, or that the proposal would demonstrably meet an identified community need. The sub-division of any retail unit should ensure the remaining units retain sufficient ancillary storage/office space to remain commercially viable. Proposals for the merger of any retail units should take into consideration the availability of alternative, similar sized retail units in the same centre

and any nearby centres. Low vacancy rates in these centres would indicate the current range of units is meeting an identified need, and therefore any re-configuration of these units and their sizes should be resisted.

- 8.90** Cambridge City's Primary Shopping Area is defined separately on the Policies Map due to its special multi-functional role within Greater Cambridge's economic network and the wider sub-region. This policy's requirements regarding the loss of floorspace or changes to unit sizes for main town centre uses do not apply to proposals within the Primary Shopping Area as these are dealt with separately in Policy J/SA.
- 8.91** Changes to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order have resulted in various planning uses that were previously distinct being categorised under Use Class E (commercial, business and service). Change of use between the different types of planning uses listed under Class E does not, in itself, constitute development, and subsequently does not normally require planning permission. Whilst recognising the benefits and flexibility that Class E can bring, it also increases the risk of main town centre uses emerging in inappropriate edge-of-centre and out-of-centre locations, which could harm the vibrancy and vitality of Greater Cambridge's network of centres and eventually lead to the loss of retail and other town centre uses.
- 8.92** Similarly, valuable retail, leisure and other main town centres uses could in some cases be changed to other uses within Class Use E. The policy seeks to minimise this by establishing clear criteria for most development involving main town centre uses outside of Greater Cambridge's existing and emerging designated centres. However, the Councils may apply other planning controls to safeguard main town centre uses in the most appropriate locations in the hierarchy of centres and reduce the proliferation of such uses elsewhere, including applying conditions on new development limiting the ability to change key retail or leisure floorspace to other uses within Use Class E without the need for planning permission. Other Permitted Development Rights may also be subject to restrictions dependent on local circumstances.
- 8.93** Outside Greater Cambridge's network of centres, reflecting the vital role of small shops and community spaces located in smaller villages, proposals requiring planning permission that would result in the loss of a local community facility, including shops mostly selling essential goods, will be resisted in line with the requirements in policy WS/CF: Community, Sports, and Leisure Facilities.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan Topic Paper 6: Jobs (2025)
- Greater Cambridge Retail and Leisure Study – April 2025
- Greater Cambridge Cultural Infrastructure Strategy – April 2025



# Policy J/SA:

## Cambridge City's Primary Shopping Area

### What this policy does

- 8.94** This policy sets out the approach to development within the Primary Shopping Area designation that is situated within Cambridge City Centre.

#### Policy J/SA: Cambridge City's Primary Shopping Area

1. Part of the City Centre is defined as a Primary Shopping Area (PSA), which is shown on the policies map.
2. At ground-floor level, the following uses will generally be considered acceptable within the PSA:
  - a. Premises for the display or retail sale of goods, other than hot food, confined to 'comparison goods non-food retail' and 'convenience goods retail' in the form of food stores, bakers, butchers, fishmongers, delicatessens, newsagents, health food shops and off-licence stores;
  - b. Premises for the sale of food and drink consumption (mostly) on premises, confined to include cafés and restaurants;
  - c. Public houses, wine bars, drinking establishments, and drinking establishments with expanded food provision;
  - d. Visitor accommodation, specifically hotels;
  - e. Financial and professional services;
  - f. Other appropriate services in a commercial, business or service locality, to include dry cleaners, hairdressers, beauty salons, opticians, post offices, travel agents, clothing and fancy-dress hire, repairs, alterations and restoration, electronics and home entertainment, mobile phones and accessories;
  - g. Medical or health services, including dental surgeries;
  - h. Leisure arts, culture & entertainment, including gyms; and
  - i. Other 'sui generis' uses typically found in centres, including theatres, nightclubs, amusement arcades and launderettes.
3. In the PSA, spaces attached to retail for ancillary storage or office use, or other generally acceptable ground floor uses, will be supported on basement and upper floor levels.

4. Proposals that seek to provide leisure (arts, culture and entertainment) or other main town centre uses at basement level or on upper storeys will be supported in principle, provided they can evidence that:
    - a. the proposals will not undermine either the PSA's retail frontages or functions; and
    - b. relevant local amenity factors that may result in adverse impacts on neighbouring uses have been identified and, as necessary, mitigated.
  5. Reflecting the role of the PSA as a sub-regional centre for retail and other town centre uses, including the nighttime economy, proposals for residential development within the PSA (other than those defined as generally acceptable within this policy) will be resisted.
  6. Within the PSA, proposals requiring planning permission that would result in the loss of any retail or other main town centre use, a change in use from a generally acceptable use to another use at the ground-floor level, or the reconfiguration of separate planning units through the merging of two or more units or sub-division of a unit, will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that:
    - a. there is no market demand for the existing unit(s) or potential replacement unit(s) of the same size and use, as demonstrated through an up-to-date marketing exercise, in accordance with the guidance provided in Appendix G: Marketing, local needs assessments and viability appraisals of this Local Plan;
    - b. the new use or reconfiguration of planning units (through merger or sub-division) would meet an identified need for a town centre use acceptable in the PSA and the proposed development will not have a detrimental impact on the viability and vitality of the PSA and other existing, committed or planned investments, as demonstrated through a Town Centre Impact Assessment; and
    - c. for proposals seeking a change of use to non-main town centre uses, the unit(s) is not capable (through re-configuration or redevelopment) of supporting another main town centre use acceptable in the PSA, as demonstrated through a Financial Viability Assessment prepared in accordance with the guidance provided in The RICS professional standard for viability in planning.
- 

## Supporting information

- 8.95** Cambridge City Centre plays a vital multi-functional role in the network of centres across Greater Cambridge as well as a key role in the context of the wider sub-region. The City Centre's contribution towards meeting the Greater Cambridge's retail, leisure and cultural needs is likely to increase as it continues to meet the needs of committed and new population growth across the area. The retail offer within the City Centre, which is largely concentrated within the Primary Shopping Area (PSA) as defined on the Policies Map, is vibrant and currently experiences low vacancy levels.
- 8.96** The City Centre's retail provision will need to be promoted and retained within the Primary Shopping Area to ensure that its sub-regional retail role can be sustained. As such, the Councils are keen to protect and, where possible, enhance the Primary

Shopping Area's important retail functions and frontages. To achieve this, retail along with other leisure and town centre services will be promoted on ground floor level spaces with retail use taking precedence, whilst other leisure (arts, culture and entertainment) uses will be supported on basement levels or upper floors provided they do not undermine the PSA's retail functions.

- 8.97** Proposals should seek to maximise opportunities to use non-ground-floor level spaces for both ancillary storage or office uses that support the function and viability of different units, or other main town centre uses that complement existing uses on other floors the building.
- 8.98** To support the PSA's retail, leisure and town centres services, all new retail, leisure and mixed-use town centre development will be controlled using appropriate planning measures, including conditions, to ensure ground-floor occupancy is restricted to specific land uses identified as generally acceptable in the PSA, as set out in the policy. Planning controls may also be used to restrict the use of permitted development rights to change the use of existing units or control movement between different uses that fall within the same planning use class.
- 8.99** Many of the city's businesses, meeting spaces and other cultural event spaces including theatres, concert venues and night-clubs, are linked to the evening / nighttime economy, providing a wide range of cultural venues that serve both city residents and those living further away. The introduction of residential uses could put such spaces at risk from noise complaints or have their operations restricted from the development. It is therefore considered appropriate to resist such developments within the PSA.
- 8.100** Proposals for the merger of any retail units should first take into consideration the availability of alternative, similar sized retail units in the affected street area. Low vacancy rates in the PSA would indicate the current range of units is meeting an identified need, and therefore any re-configuration of these units and their sizes should be resisted. Proposals for the sub-division of any planning unit must ensure the new units retain sufficient ancillary storage/office space to remain commercially viable for an acceptable use in the PSA. In all these scenarios, proposals will be robustly tested.
- 8.101** In addition to marketing the property in accordance with Appendix G: Marketing, local needs assessments and viability appraisals of this Local Plan, they should also be accompanied by an Impact Assessment that follows the Government's guidance on impact tests, as set out within the Town Centres and Retail planning guidance (or successor guidance documents).
- 8.102** The Councils will also resist proposals that seek the loss of retail, leisure and other main town centre uses, unless compelling evidence is presented that demonstrates there is no market demand for the site's existing use and the site could not viably be redeveloped for another main town centre use. For proposals that seek to convert or redevelop retail and, or other main town centre uses to non-main town centre uses, the Councils will expect planning applications to include an assessment that demonstrates the site is not viable for acceptable PSA uses. This should be an independent professional assessment (funded by the developer) prepared in accordance with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors' (RICS) professional standards on Financial Viability in Planning: Conduct and Reporting (or successor standards).

## **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan Topic Paper 6: Jobs (2025)
- Greater Cambridge Retail and Leisure Study – April 2025
- Greater Cambridge Cultural Infrastructure Strategy – April 2025

# Policy J/VA:

## Visitor accommodation, attractions and facilities

### What this policy does

- 8.103** This policy sets out where hotel and other types of visitor accommodation development will be supported in Greater Cambridge and how the loss or gain of new hotels / visitor accommodation will be managed.

#### Policy J/ VA: Visitor accommodation, attractions and facilities

### Proposals within the Defined Development Extent of Cambridge

1. Proposals for high quality visitor accommodation will be supported in Cambridge City Centre and the following mixed use developments:
  - a. Cambridge Biomedical Campus
  - b. Cambridge East
  - c. North East Cambridge including Cambridge Science Park
  - d. West Cambridge
  - e. Eddington
2. Elsewhere within the Defined Development Extent of Cambridge new visitor accommodation will be supported where it is located on the frontages of main roads, in areas of mixed-use or within walking distance of good public transport accessibility.
3. Applicants for Apart-hotels and serviced apartments must provide full details of the nature of the accommodation to be provided and the proposed terms of occupation when submitting a planning application.

### Outside the Defined Development Extent of Cambridge

4. Development which will provide visitor accommodation within Defined Development Extents will be supported where the scale and type of development is directly related to the role and function of the centre.
5. Outside Defined development extents, development to provide overnight visitor accommodation, holiday accommodation and public houses will be permitted by the change of use / conversion / replacement of suitable buildings and by small scale new developments appropriate to local circumstances.

6. New developments of visitor accommodation will be limited to short term holiday lettings. Applicants will be required to provide full details of the nature of the accommodation to be provided and the proposed terms of occupation when submitting a planning application.

### **Conversion of dwellings to visitor accommodation**

7. Within Cambridge, and settlements and countryside that are within the outer boundary of the Green Belt, where planning permission is needed, in order to maintain housing supply, support residents' amenity and wellbeing and maintain local character, the conversion of residential properties to visitor accommodation use will be allowed only in exceptional circumstances and where it does not:
  - a. adversely affect residents' amenity and sense of security including unacceptable impacts and effects from noise, nuisance, traffic, or on-street parking; or
  - b. adversely affect the local area's character or social and community cohesion either individually or cumulatively.

### **Loss of visitor accommodation**

8. Development will not be permitted which would result in the loss of existing visitor accommodation unless it can be demonstrated that:
  - a. all reasonable efforts have been made to preserve the facility but it has been proven that it would not be economically viable to retain the visitor accommodation in its current form; and
  - b. the property or site has been appropriately marketed for at least 12 months in order to confirm that there is no interest in the property or site for visitor accommodation use.

### **Visitor attractions within the Defined Development Extent of Cambridge**

9. Proposals for new visitor attractions within Cambridge will be supported where they:
  - a. complement the existing cultural heritage of the city;
  - b. are limited in scale; and
  - c. assist the diversification of the attractions on offer, especially to better support the needs of families.

### **Visitor attractions outside the Defined Development Extent of Cambridge**

10. Proposals for new visitor attractions within South Cambridgeshire's towns and villages will be supported where they are of a scale and character that is appropriate to their location.

11. Proposals for new or extended tourist facilities and visitor attractions (excluding accommodation) in the countryside will be supported where it can be demonstrated that:
- a. The development utilises and enhances the areas existing tourism assets;
  - b. There is an identified need for a rural location, and all opportunities for reuse / replacement of existing rural buildings have been explored appropriate to the proposal;
  - c. The scheme is in scale with its location and the nature of the facility it supports
  - d. The proposal does not require on site accommodation (e.g. for security).
  - e. There is not a significant adverse impact on the amount or nature of traffic generated.
- 

## Supporting information

- 8.104** Visitor accommodation now takes many forms, ranging from traditional hotels, guesthouses and hostels to apart-hotels and serviced apartments. This policy applies to visitor accommodation within any of these (or similar) formats.
- 8.105** The Greater Cambridge Hotel Needs Study (2025) assessed the demand and supply of hotel bedspaces across Greater Cambridge. It identified a base case need for an additional 2,000 new bedspaces in the urban area of Cambridge to 2045. The pipeline of hotels already under construction means that no additional bedspaces are likely to be needed until 2027. Other pipeline developments could add to this supply but were identified in the study as being less certain. They could potentially meet demand until 2032.
- 8.106** Due to its appeal to leisure and business travellers, Cambridge city centre is identified as the key location for half the identified need with the remainder focused in the urban area outside the city centre, particularly to the south of Cambridge. As such, this policy seeks to support new visitor accommodation within the city centre. At the same time, recognising both the projection of need and the possibility that constraints on development and the competition for sites may increase demand in peripheral areas, the policy:
- identifies mixed use sites on the edge of Cambridge as locations for new visitor accommodation
  - supports the development of visitor accommodation at suitable accessible locations elsewhere in the periphery.
- 8.107** A modest growth in the need for hotel bedspaces of 220 is projected in the remainder of South Cambridgeshire. As such, recognising that there are existing hotel permissions not yet implemented in the developing new settlements, rather than identifying individual locations the policy seeks to support new visitor accommodation of an appropriate scale and type across the district.



- 8.108** In recent years, the use of online platforms for short term lets to rent out either whole or parts of a residential unit as temporary accommodation for a variety of occupiers has increased in popular tourist locations and areas close to large employment centres. This is particularly the case in Cambridge, including areas close to the main railway station and Trumpington Meadows where these activities are clustered together. Although these services provide opportunity to support good growth in cities, the widespread and concentrated prevalence of this activity can have negative effects. These include:
- Loss of residential housing supply, reducing the supply of homes available to meet residential accommodation needs.
  - Loss of amenity space, privacy and enjoyment of their home resulting from patterns of behaviour of short-term tenants.
  - Continual disruption caused by visitors moving in and out of the premises, disruptive occupants and associated servicing of the unit(s).
  - Frequent rotation of unknown, neighbouring occupiers undermines residents' sense of security of living in their own homes.
- 8.109** The accommodation offered at apart-hotels and serviced apartments can display characteristics associated with permanent, self-contained housing (Use Class C3). Alternatively, this accommodation can be akin to hotels, as a result of the type of services they provide (Use Class C1 or Sui Generis). Characteristics can include (amongst others):
- presence of on-site staff/management
  - presence of reception, bar and/or restaurant
  - provision of cleaning and administrative services
  - ownership or other tenure of units and/or ability to sell or lease on the open market
  - minimum/maximum lease lengths.
- 8.110** The different nature of the C1 and C3/Sui Generis accommodation may consequently result in different impacts on permanent housing. Where proposals for apart-hotels or serviced apartments are considered to fall within C3 Use Class proposals or comprise sui generis uses which have the characteristics of a C3 Use, such proposals will be assessed via relevant housing policies in the Local Plan.
- 8.111** Where apart-hotels and serviced apartment units fall under C1 or Sui Generis uses, the councils will take steps to ensure they will not be used for any other purpose. This may include the imposition of conditions to ensure maximum lengths of stay (typically 90 days) and a restriction on return visits.
- 8.112** The visitor economy has an important role to play in maintaining the sustainability of rural communities, providing business supply chain opportunities and jobs for local residents. In South Cambridgeshire, beyond the urban area of Cambridge, holiday accommodation will be limited to short term lets of no longer than four weeks, through conditions or legal agreements, to ensure it is retained as tourist accommodation and not used as long term or permanent residential accommodation. Permitted development rights may be removed in the interests of amenity.

- 8.113** Whilst some of the requirement for new visitor accommodation can be met through the new sites, conversions and redevelopments, the cost of and competition for sites, particularly in Cambridge city centre, mean that the retention of existing accommodation is key to ensuring growing demand can be satisfied. Where the case can be made that the visitor accommodation is not and cannot be made viable with investment, its loss may be acceptable.
- 8.114** The emphasis for the management of Cambridge as a tourist destination is on extending the length of visits and continued visitor management. While Cambridge would potentially benefit from the diversification of attractions including enhanced provision for families, major theme parks and other national profile developments will not be appropriate. There would, however, be potential for enhancing the existing visitor experience.
- 8.115** In South Cambridgeshire there are a number of assets which have become major tourist visitor attractions, such as the World War II airfield at Duxford which is now home to the Imperial War Museum, and Wimpole Hall which is owned by the National Trust. Facilities such as these can only be developed where the assets exist. Tourist facilities and attractions could include visitor and information centres, toilets, tea rooms, or picnic sites. The policy is intended to support the districts existing attractions and assets. It is not the intention of the policy to encourage new major tourist attractions.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan Topic Paper 6: Jobs (2025)
- Greater Cambridge Hotel Needs Study (2025)

# Policy J/FD:

## Faculty development and specialist / language schools

### What this policy does

- 8.116** This policy sets out the circumstances in which development or redevelopment of faculty, research, administrative sites and medical teaching/hospital facilities (higher education), will be supported, and the requirements that will need to be satisfied. It also sets out when the development of existing and new specialist colleges and/or language schools will be supported, and the requirements that will need to be satisfied.

### Policy J/FD: Faculty development and specialist / language schools

### Higher Education Institutions

#### Faculty development

1. The development or redevelopment of faculty, academic research and academic administrative sites for higher education institutions, (including medical teaching /hospital facilities) will be supported when it meets the principles set out in this policy and other planning policies.

#### University Development in the City Centre

2. In the city centre, these uses will be permitted provided they:
  - a. make effective use of land, including a mix of uses on larger sites to meet the needs of the relevant higher education institution, and
  - b. take reasonable opportunities to improve circulation for pedestrians and cyclists, together with public realm improvements, reductions in car parking provision and the introduction of active frontages at ground floor level.
3. The following sites are allocated for these uses and are shown on the Policies Map:
  - a. mixed-use redevelopment of the Old Press/Mill Lane site (Site S/C/OPM); and
  - b. mixed-use redevelopment of the New Museums site (Site S/C/NMD)

4. On the edge of the city centre, the following Policy Areas will provide opportunities for enhanced faculty teaching and administrative facilities:
  - a. development of sites in the Eastern Gate Public Realm Improvement Area (S/PRIA/EG); and
  - b. within the Fitzroy/Burleigh Street/Grafton Area of Major Change (S/AMC/FBG).

### **University Development outside the City Centre**

5. Beyond the city centre, the following areas will provide opportunities for enhanced faculty teaching and research facilities:
  - a. the development of medical teaching, research facilities and related university research institutes at the Cambridge Biomedical Campus (Site S/CBC);
  - b. the continued development of the West Cambridge site at Madingley Road (Site C/WC); and
  - c. the continued development of Eddington (Site C/NWC).
6. Other proposals for enhanced faculty, academic research, academic administrative and medical teaching/ hospital facilities that avoid a shortage of land for other uses, as identified in this Plan, will be supported on their merits on a case-by-case basis.

### **Specialist colleges / language schools**

7. The development of existing and new specialist colleges and/or language schools will be supported if they provide:
    - a. on-site residential accommodation with social and amenity facilities for all non-local students (students arriving to study from outside Cambridge and the Cambridge sub-region), with controls in place to ensure sufficient provision of accommodation, social spaces and amenities is provided to support any expansion of student places; and
    - b. any off-site residential accommodation is provided in local homestays.
  8. The use of family dwellings, solely occupied by students (including teaching instructors/wardens/supervisors or other associated employees) of specialist colleges and/or language schools is not an acceptable form of off-site residential accommodation. The use of higher education accommodation, outside of term-time is an acceptable form of off-site residential accommodation, subject to planning conditions to control their use and management.
- 

### **Supporting information**

- 8.117** The University of Cambridge (including affiliated colleges) and Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) are significant employers in Greater Cambridge. The University of Cambridge and its colleges provide over 13,000 jobs and their reputation and heritage continues to

attract students from across the world, tourists, language students, spin-off enterprise, medical and biomedical research, and continue to be a vital driver of the local and national economy. The University of Cambridge's estate covers many important research centres around the city and beyond its periphery.

- 8.118** Of these, the most significant include: West Cambridge, the location of the University of Cambridge's research centre for computer science, physics and engineering; and a new urban quarter at Eddington, between Madingley Road and Huntingdon Road which will include a mix of residential development along with academic and commercial research space. The Cambridge Biomedical Campus will also continue to be developed with the recent Cambridge Biomedical Campus Supplementary Planning Document (2025).
- 8.119** This SPD sets out the development principles to guide future development proposals (for phases one to three) and provides a planning framework for consideration when determining planning applications. Other key locations, where significant change has already been implemented with the remaining stages yet to be delivered, are the Old Press/Mill Lane area (Site S/C/OPM) and the New Museums site (Site S/C/NMD).
- 8.120** During preparation of the Plan the University of Cambridge advised GCSP that it has plans to grow undergraduate numbers by 0.5 per cent a year and postgraduates by 2 per cent a year. However, consultation responses from some University of Cambridge Colleges indicated higher growth aspirations and therefore these growth rates may be revised prior to the proposed submission Plan.
- 8.121** The policy acknowledges existing plans of the University of Cambridge on sites both inside and outside the city centre as well as providing an opportunity for redevelopment of sites in the city centre where plans are evolving. Similarly, ARU's East Road campus and the wider area along East Road both remain the most sustainable locations for ARU during the next plan period and the policy supports this approach.
- 8.122** There are a broad range of specialist colleges / language schools in Cambridge, including secretarial and tutorial colleges, these colleges concentrate on GCSE and A level qualifications and pre-university foundation courses. Courses of varying durations are run throughout the year. Given the economic contribution these establishments make to the local economy, it is appropriate to support their growth that mitigates their impact on local housing, amenity and facilities.
- 8.123** It is important that their growth avoids placing further pressure on demand for local housing. This means the use of family dwellings not occupied by a resident family is not appropriate, as this will put additional pressure on the housing market.
- 8.124** Promoters of specialist college and language school development will be expected to submit evidence to demonstrate how this issue is being addressed as a part of their planning application. The applicant will need to demonstrate how many additional students will be generated by the proposal. This will allow the planning application process to judge the residential, social and amenity impact generated.
- 8.125** A robust method of calculating the additional number of students arising from any proposal, on a case-by-case basis will need to be agreed with the planning authority.

This will also need to consider a range of mechanisms to agree an upper limit to the number of additional students.

- 8.126** The range of mechanisms considered may include, but not be limited to, controlling the hours of operation, the number of desk spaces and the number of students. This will ensure that a proposal will generate a specific level of growth that can be measured and mitigated. Higher education student accommodation is dealt with under Policy H/SA.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

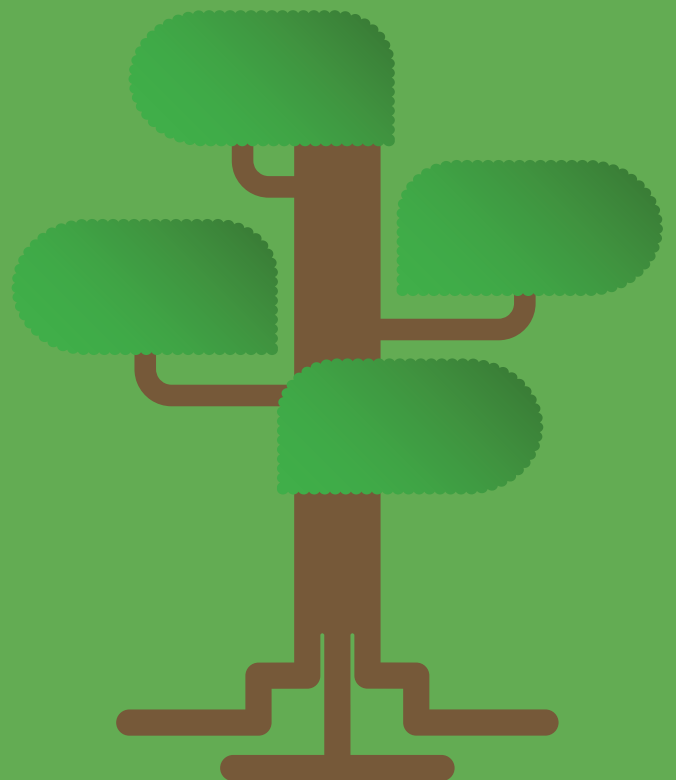
- Greater Cambridge Local Plan Topic Paper 6: Jobs (2025)





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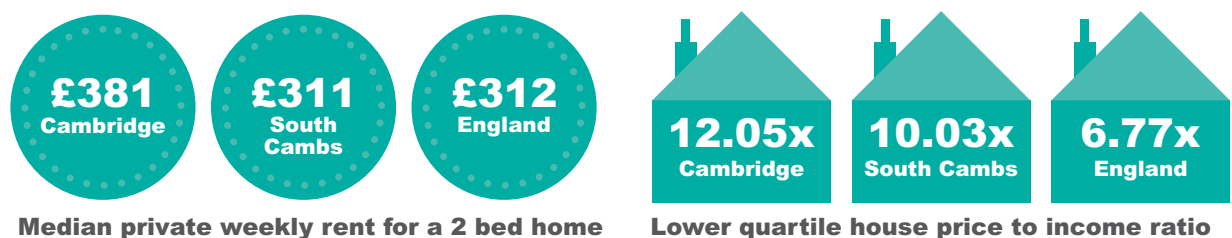
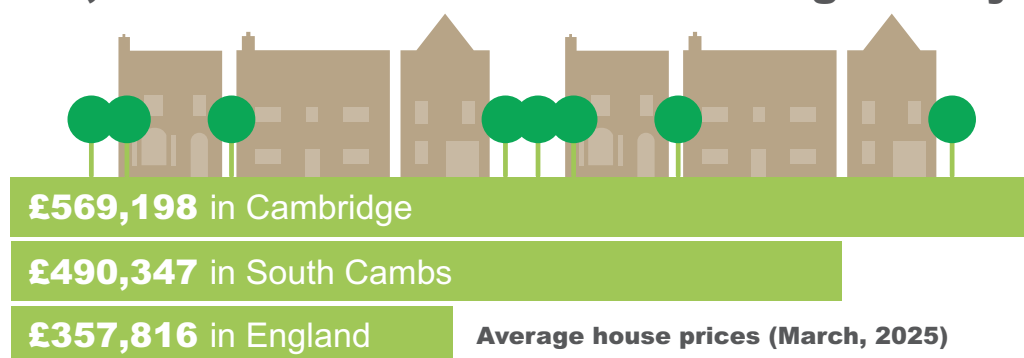
# Homes



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## 131,612 homes in Greater Cambridge today



# Introduction

- 9.1 In the Homes theme we set out policies that would be applied when considering planning applications for new housing developments.

## How community engagement helped shape the homes policies

- 9.2 Through consultation feedback you told us about concerns about potential levels of development, but also whether we were planning for enough homes, particularly to reflect the growing economy. You told us about the importance of delivering affordable housing, and homes to meet a variety of needs including for younger and older people.

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## Our strategic priority for our homes policies

- 9.3 **Strategic Priority:** Plan for enough housing to meet our needs, including significant quantities of housing that is affordable to rent and buy, and different kinds of homes to suit our diverse communities.
- 
- 9.4 We want our local plan to deliver high-quality, affordable housing in the right places. The Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy sets out our high-level approach to tackling these challenges, including through the building of a new generation of council homes, promoting the development of affordable homes and the delivery of a co-ordinated effort to reduce homelessness. It has guided our policies in this local plan.
- 9.5 As well as planning to meet the overall need in terms of the number of new homes, our policies seek to ensure that the right mix of house types and tenure is delivered. We want homes to be of a high quality, we therefore set minimum sizes for rooms and outdoor space. We require homes to be adaptable, so they can meet need through people's lives.
- 9.6 We require a high proportion of new homes to be Affordable Housing, provided at a cost below market rates to meet the needs of those who cannot afford to buy or rent at market prices. Our policies support innovative housing products, such as self-build, built to rent and co-living. We also require housing to meet specific needs including for older people and for Gypsies and Travellers.

## What our homes policies do

- Require 40% of housing on most development schemes to be delivered as Affordable Housing;
- Support delivery of rural exception sites, which help deliver affordable housing in rural communities;
- Require a varied choice, type and mix of housing to meet the needs of different groups in the community;
- Control development of garden land to ensure the quality of places are protected;
- Set minimum standards for internal spaces within new homes, and for external private and shared amenity space;
- Require developments to help meet the need for specialist housing, such as for older people;
- Help people find plots for self or custom build homes, by requiring a proportion of large development to include plots;
- Guide the development of build to rent and co-living schemes to ensure they are of a high quality and appropriately managed;
- Set criteria and standards for houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) that require planning permission;
- Support appropriately located purpose built student accommodation where there is a need and where it doesn't impact on the supply of family housing;
- Identify the circumstances where new houses in the countryside would be supported;
- Provide guidance on where residential boat moorings could be delivered and the standards they would need to meet;
- Guides development of new Gypsy and Traveller pitches and Travelling Showpeople plots.

# Policy H/AH:

# Affordable housing

### What this policy does

- 9.7** This policy sets out how affordable housing will be delivered on new housing developments, including specifying the size of developments on which affordable homes will be provided and the proportion of affordable homes required, and setting out the tenures of affordable housing required to address identified needs.

**Policy H/AH: Affordable housing**

### Self-contained dwellings and co-living developments

1. All major developments for housing will provide at least 40% of the new homes on site as affordable housing, unless a different requirement is set out within the allocation policy or the development is on land within the Green Belt. This applies to all residential developments of self-contained dwellings, including those for Build to Rent or specialist accommodation, and also to Co-living developments for the equivalent of 10 or more dwellings (calculated using the other communal accommodation units to dwellings ratio in the Housing Delivery Test).
2. Within the affordable housing secured on major developments for housing (except for within Build to Rent and Co-living developments), the proportions of each affordable housing tenure will be provided as set out in Table 00.

| Total number of new dwellings | Affordable housing tenures  |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 10-14 dwellings               | • 75% social and affordable rent homes, and   |
|                               | • 25% shared ownership homes, or other affordable providing a route to home ownership       |
| 15 dwellings or more          | • 65% affordable rent homes,  |
|                               | • 10% social rent homes, and  |
|                               | • 25% shared ownership homes, or other affordable homes providing a route to home ownership |

**Table 1:** Affordable housing tenures

3. All affordable housing secured within Build to Rent and Co-living developments will be provided as Affordable Private Rent homes.

4. Any major developments for housing that are on land within the Green Belt will provide at least 50% of the new homes on the site as affordable housing, in accordance with the Golden Rules set out in national planning policy and guidance.
5. New affordable homes will be:
  - a. limited to people in need of affordable housing;
  - b. available in perpetuity (wherever possible); and
  - c. tenure blind in design so that they are indistinguishable from any other housing tenures and well-integrated with market units on the site.

Additionally, with the exception of affordable homes provided on Co-living developments, new affordable homes will be:

- d. phased proportionally within the build out of the development to enable proper integration and timely provision; and
- e. designed to accommodate different family compositions, with the bedspaces per dwelling for social and affordable rent homes in line with Table 00.

| Number of bedrooms | Minimum number of bedspaces |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1-bedroom          | 2 bedspaces                 |
| 2-bedroom          | At least 4 bedspaces        |
| 3-bedroom          | At least 5 bedspaces        |
| 4-bedroom          | At least 6 bedspaces        |
| 5-bedroom          | At least 7 bedspaces        |

Table 00: Bedrooms and minimum number of bedspaces for social and affordable homes

6. Within major developments for housing, the new affordable homes must be dispersed in small groups or clusters that:
  - a. create an even distribution of affordable housing throughout the development as a whole, and when considered in combination with neighbouring developments;
  - b. contain a mix of affordable housing tenures and a mix in the number of bedrooms; and
  - c. are proportionate in size to the overall size of the development, having regard to the type and location of the housing being provided.
7. The off-site provision of affordable housing or a financial contribution (commuted sum) for affordable housing will only be considered if it can be demonstrated that:
  - a. on-site provision would not be practicable;
  - b. the proposed alternative to on-site provision would be more effective in achieving a mixed and balanced community; and

- c. the financial contribution for, or off-site provision of, affordable housing is at least equivalent to the increased development value resulting from affordable homes not being provided on-site, unless the applicant's viability assessment provides compelling evidence that this would not be viable.
- 8. Where a larger site has been subdivided into smaller development parcels, the major developments threshold and the requirement for 40% of new homes to be affordable housing will apply to the site as a whole.

## **Student accommodation**

- 9. Any developments of student bedrooms that are equivalent to 10 or more dwellings (calculated using the student accommodation bedrooms to dwellings ratio in the Housing Delivery Test) or any developments of 10 or more self-contained student units will provide a financial contribution for the off-site provision of affordable housing that is equivalent to at least 40% of the bedrooms or units being affordable. On-site delivery of affordable housing can be provided if both the Council(s) and the University agree that this is appropriate.
  - 10. An affordable housing contribution will not be sought where the proposed development is:
    - a. within an existing university or college campus site, or
    - b. for the redevelopment of existing purpose-built student accommodation owned by a university or college, and which will continue to be owned by a university or college after the redevelopment to provide student accommodation to meet its needs.
- 

## **Supporting information**

### **9.8**

Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire have been identified by the Government as areas of high affordability pressure and our evidence shows that there is an acute need for affordable housing in Greater Cambridge. The policy therefore seeks to maximise the supply of new affordable housing by requiring affordable housing on all major developments for housing that are providing self-contained dwellings, irrespective of their use class. Major developments for housing that are specifically for retirement living or other forms of specialist accommodation, Build to Rent, and Houses in Multiple Occupation, will therefore be expected to contribute towards the delivery of affordable housing.

- 9.9** The policy also requires affordable units to be provided within Co-living developments. Although these developments are not providing self-contained dwellings, they are contributing towards meeting our overall housing requirement and it is therefore important that they also contribute towards meeting Greater Cambridge's affordable housing need. As they are likely to be delivered as a form of Build to Rent, it is appropriate to seek the affordable units on-site and that they are provided following the same principles as Affordable Private Rent homes.
- 9.10** Where student accommodation is delivered within an existing university or college campus, the policy exempts such development from contributing towards affordable housing, as other types of housing would not normally be delivered in these locations. However, student accommodation brought forward on other off-campus sites could equally be suitable for other types of housing, therefore it is important that such developments are required to contribute towards meeting our affordable housing need. This would also apply where an existing university or college campus is redeveloped for other types of housing. Recognising that the provision of affordable housing on-site within a development for student accommodation is unlikely to be achievable due to management issues, a financial contribution would be sought that is comparable to the on-site delivery of affordable housing within other residential schemes.
- 9.11** The thresholds at which affordable housing must be provided on any Co-living or student accommodation developments are in line with national planning policy, which allows for affordable housing to be sought on any major developments for housing i.e. 10 or more dwellings. The number of Co-living units and student bedrooms should be converted to a dwelling equivalent using the ratio for either other communal accommodation or student accommodation set out within the Housing Delivery Test rulebook. This is currently 1.9 units to one dwelling for other communal accommodation (which will be used for Co-living developments) and 2.4 bedrooms to one dwelling for student accommodation.
- 9.12** As set out in national planning policy and guidance, vacant buildings credit will apply to any major developments for housing on land outside of the Green Belt but will not apply to any major developments for housing on land within the Green Belt.
- 9.13** New affordable housing for sale or rent will be limited to those whose needs are not met by market housing, and taking account of the criteria set out in national planning policy for each of the different tenures of affordable housing. The majority of the identified need is for rented affordable housing, rather than affordable home ownership, and therefore it is important that the Councils prioritise the delivery of affordable housing for rent. The provision of genuinely affordable housing is also a priority for both Councils. The policy therefore seeks to secure an affordable housing tenure mix that will meet a wide range of housing needs and create mixed and balanced communities, providing for different types of households and household incomes.
- 9.14** The specific requirements in terms of price caps and discounts for First Homes, which are an affordable home ownership tenure, mean that they are unlikely to be a suitable affordable housing tenure on the majority of new developments in Greater Cambridge.
- 9.15** Viability will be considered as set out in national planning policy and guidance, and in accordance with Policy I/ID.



- 9.16** To align with the Councils' Lettings Policies and Local Housing Allowance criteria, minimum bedspaces are set out for different numbers of bedrooms to accommodate different family compositions and to enable occupancy to be maximised.
- 9.17** Local Lettings Plans will be required for affordable rented and social rented homes where necessary to achieve mixed and balanced communities and/or to prioritise affordable housing for local workers or for specific groups of people. The Local Lettings Plan must be agreed by the Housing Team(s) at the Council(s) and will be published on their websites.
- 9.18** The Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy sets out the Councils' priorities to tackle the housing challenges facing the area and is a material consideration in any planning decisions. The current Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy covers 2024-2029.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Homes Topic Paper (2025)
- Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2024-2029: Homes for Our Future and Annexes 1-8
- Housing Needs of Specific Groups in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire (2025)

# Policy H/ES:

## Exception sites for affordable housing

### What this policy does

- 9.19** This policy sets out the circumstances in which Rural Exception Sites for affordable housing and First Homes Exception Sites in South Cambridgeshire will be supported.

#### Policy H/ES: Exception sites for affordable housing

1. Rural Exception Sites to meet identified local housing needs in rural parishes on small sites adjoining a defined development extent of a Rural Centre, Minor Rural Centre, Group Village or Infill Village will be permitted subject to:
  - a. there being demonstrable social or economic need for affordable housing for local residents which cannot be met in any other way, which can reasonably be expected to persist in the long term, and which is evidenced by an independent local housing needs assessment;
  - b. the number, size, design, mix and tenure of affordable homes being limited to, and reflecting, identified local needs, as evidenced by an independent housing needs assessment;
  - c. the development being of a scale and location appropriate to the size, facilities and character of the settlement. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby and meet housing need within a wider catchment area where that area has been agreed with the Council;
  - d. for sites at settlements within or adjoining the Green Belt, that no alternative sites exist that would have less impact on Green Belt purposes; and
  - e. the affordable homes being secured in perpetuity for occupation by those in need of affordable housing. Mortgagee in Possession clauses will be allowed to enable development to proceed.
2. Rural Exception Sites will be delivered by, or in partnership with, Registered Providers or community-led housing groups and must be named in the relevant s106 agreement.
3. First Homes Exception Sites to meet identified local housing needs on small sites adjoining a defined development extent in South Cambridgeshire will be permitted subject to:

- a. demonstration that a First Homes Exception Site is a more appropriate development for the proposed site than a rural exception site;
  - b. the development being of a scale and location appropriate to the size, facilities and character of the settlement;
  - c. the development being located outside of the Green Belt;
  - d. the number and size of the First Homes being commensurate with demand for First Homes within South Cambridgeshire, that there is a realistic likelihood that all homes will be occupied by people with a local connection to South Cambridgeshire, and that this is evidenced by an independent housing needs assessment; and
  - e. any other forms of affordable housing proposed within a First Homes Exception Site being acceptable based on evidence of local need from the adjoining settlement for those tenures of affordable homes.
4. All affordable homes on either a Rural Exception Site or a First Homes Exception Site will be subject to a local connection criteria policy.
- a. For a Rural Exception Site the local area is defined as the parish in which the scheme is located (or village if more appropriate), and for a First Homes Exception Site the local area is defined as being South Cambridgeshire.
  - b. For Rural Exception Sites the local connection criteria will be applied for 3 months before a cascade system will be used.
  - c. For First Homes Exception Sites the local connection criteria will be applied for 3 months, but for the first 4 weeks of this period priority will be given to people with a local connection to the adjoining village.
  - d. An applicant for an affordable home on either a Rural Exception Site or a First Homes Exception Site will be considered to have a connection to the local area if they meet one or more of the following criteria:
    - i. the applicant is in full time or part time employment in the relevant local area for 16 hours or more per week;
    - ii. the applicant has lived in the relevant local area for at least 6 of the last 12 months, or 3 of the last 5 years;
    - iii. the applicant has family members who have been resident in the relevant local area for a period of 5 years or longer and are currently resident in the relevant local authority area. Family members are defined as parents, adult sons and adult daughters, or brothers or sisters. Other family associations will be considered on a case-by-case basis; or
    - iv. there are special circumstances that the council considers give rise to a local connection.

5. In order to facilitate the delivery of significant additional affordable housing the Council will consider allowing some market housing on rural exception sites and First Homes Exception Sites where demonstrated to be necessary on viability or deliverability grounds:
    - a. where market housing is proposed on Rural Exception Sites or First Homes Exception Sites it should be of a scale and mix appropriate to the exception site and designed to integrate with the affordable housing;
    - b. viability should be based on exception site land values; and
    - c. the delivery of any market housing through custom and self build plots will be encouraged.
- 

## Supporting information

- 9.20** There is a shortage of affordable housing in Greater Cambridge. There is a particularly acute shortage in many rural communities where the Right to Buy is an attractive option to tenants and few new affordable homes have been built due to national policy not requiring affordable housing on developments of less than 10 homes. Rural Exception Sites have been delivered successfully over many years in South Cambridgeshire.
- 9.21** Exception sites deliver affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be permitted for housing. They are located adjacent to an existing settlement and have not been allocated for housing within a Local or Neighbourhood Plan. Rural Exception Sites support local communities by prioritising the new affordable homes for people with a local connection to the parish or village concerned. This is achieved by applying the local connection criteria set out in the policy. Priority is given to applicants who meet the criteria. Where there are no suitable applicants meeting the criteria the definition of local is widened to include neighbouring parishes and / or the district, and this will be set out in the s106 agreement. The local connection criteria policy is applied each time an affordable home on a rural exception site becomes available.
- 9.22** Some villages are very small and whilst housing need may be acute for the people concerned it may not be large enough in scale to support a viable Rural Exception Site scheme. It may be appropriate, sometimes, to develop a scheme in one village that can support a small cluster of villages thereby supporting local facilities that are serving a catchment beyond the village where they are based. Any clusters of villages or parishes should be agreed with the Council and the housing needs assessment will need to cover the agreed area. The villages selected for this approach should be in close proximity, ideally with sustainable transport connections, and with some form of functional relationship such as school or GP surgery catchment areas.
- 9.23** The government introduced the concept of a First Homes Exception Site to replace entry-level exception sites. Although, First Homes Exception Sites will comprise primarily First Homes they can include other affordable housing tenures where there is evidence of need.

- 9.24** Government planning guidance on First Homes allows local authorities to apply their own eligibility criteria such as a local connection criteria, a local income cap or key worker criteria. The draft plan applies the national criteria to First Homes regarding price caps, household income caps and discount levels. However, a specific local connection criteria has been included in the policy. In line with Planning Practice Guidance, these local eligibility criteria will apply for 3 months from when a home is first marketed. If a suitable buyer has not reserved a home after this point, the eligibility criteria will revert to the national criteria. To maximise the number of homes on a First Homes Exception Site that are occupied by households with a local connection to the village concerned priority will be given to these households for the first 4 weeks within the 3 month period.
- 9.25** To demonstrate why a First Homes Exception Site is better suited than a Rural Exception Site, an applicant must demonstrate that the availability of First Homes or other affordable home ownership tenures is insufficient within the village of the proposed development to cater for the needs of first-time buyers. In terms of scale, First Homes Exception Sites should generally be no larger than a typical rural exception site of between 10 and 20 homes, bearing in mind that they are likely to be all one tenure and smaller homes.
- 9.26** The introduction of a First Homes Exception Site component, with locally specific criteria to the policy, will ensure the policy is complementary to requirements already set out in national planning policy and will support schemes to be more tailored to local needs within Greater Cambridge. It is important that the policy encourages Rural Exception Sites and First Homes Exception Sites to work in tandem enabling schemes to come forward across all settlement sizes that address local needs but are also sympathetic to local constraints. One key difference between Rural Exception Sites and First Homes Exception Sites is that national planning policy allows Rural Exception Sites to be developed in the Green Belt under certain circumstances whereas First Homes Exception Sites are not permitted within the Green Belt.
- 9.27** The primary focus of exception sites is to address identified need for affordable housing. Therefore, any market housing should be the minimum required to make a scheme viable and should be supported by a viability assessment which is transparent and complies with relevant national or local planning policy and guidance applicable at the time. Where a viability assessment has been submitted the Council will undertake an independent review of that appraisal for which the applicant will bear the cost.
- 9.28** Exception sites work by granting planning permission on a site that would not otherwise be acceptable for residential development. As a result, the land should not attract residential land value. The Registered Provider therefore pays a price higher than the existing land use value (typically agricultural) but lower than residential value. The lower land value enables the Registered Housing Provider to build high quality homes that can be rented at a discounted level.
- 9.29** Exception sites, by definition, tend to be on the edge of a settlement and can therefore be in sensitive locations. The impact of the proposed development on village character and the rural landscape will be key considerations in determining any planning application. Proposals to extend exception sites will be considered on their merits having regard to the overall scale of the site that would be created when combined with the original development and the cumulative visual impact.

- 9.30** Given the shortfall in custom and self build plots in Greater Cambridge, it is considered reasonable to encourage this tenure where market housing is needed for viability reasons.
- 9.31** Neighbourhood Plans may include exception site policies with more locally specific criteria to encourage developments to better integrate with and support local communities. This could include support for community-led housing development.
- 9.32** This policy does not specifically relate to exception sites for community-led development, which are supported by national planning policy. There are no additional local requirements for these types of development beyond those set out in national planning policy.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Homes Topic Paper (2025)
- Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2024-2029: Homes for Our Future and Annexes 1-8
- Greater Cambridge – A First Homes Interim Position Statement (March 2022)

# Policy H/HM:

## Housing mix

### What this policy does

**9.33** This policy sets out the mix of housing to be provided by new development, to ensure that new homes are generally of a size and type that meet the housing needs of different groups in the community.

#### Policy H/HM: Housing mix

1. A varied choice, type and mix of housing will be provided to meet the needs of different groups in the community, including families with children, older people, those seeking their first home, people wishing to build their own homes, people seeking private rented sector housing, and people with disabilities. Unless an alternative mix has been justified as part of a planning application, developments of 10 or more units should provide the following housing mix:

#### For Cambridge:

| Market housing   |                 |                 |                               |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| 1-bedroom homes  | 2-bedroom homes | 3-bedroom homes | Homes with 4 or more bedrooms |
| 10%  | 35%             | 35%             | 20%                           |
| Discounted market housing and other affordable routes to homeownership |                 |                 |                               |
| 1-bedroom homes  | 2-bedroom homes | 3-bedroom homes | Homes with 4 or more bedrooms |
| 20%  | 45%             | 25%             | 10%                           |
| Social rent, affordable rent, and affordable private rent              |                 |                 |                               |
| 1-bedroom homes  | 2-bedroom homes | 3-bedroom homes | Homes with 4 or more bedrooms |
| 20%  | 35%             | 30%             | 15%                           |

**For South Cambridgeshire:**

| Market housing   |                 |                 |                               |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| 1-bedroom homes  | 2-bedroom homes | 3-bedroom homes | Homes with 4 or more bedrooms |
| 5%   | 30%             | 40%             | 25%                           |
| Discounted market housing and other affordable routes to homeownership |                 |                 |                               |
| 1-bedroom homes  | 2-bedroom homes | 3-bedroom homes | Homes with 4 or more bedrooms |
| 15%  | 45%             | 30%             | 10%                           |
| Social rent, affordable rent, and affordable private rent              |                 |                 |                               |
| 1-bedroom homes  | 2-bedroom homes | 3-bedroom homes | Homes with 4 or more bedrooms |
| 20%  | 35%             | 35%             | 10%                           |

**Table 2:** Housing mix for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire

- 2. Deviations from the above housing mixes will be allowed where an alternative mix is justified, having regard to the location and character of the area, the built form of the new development, the nature or type of development being proposed, the viability of delivery given site-specific constraints or requirements, changes in affordable and market housing demand in the local area, and the existing housing mix in the surrounding area.
- 3. The mix of homes to be provided on sites of 9 homes or fewer must take account of housing demand in the local area, the existing housing mix in the surrounding area, and the character of the local area.
- 4. Development proposals will be supported where a mix of housing types (e.g. houses, flats and bungalows) are provided proportionally across all market and affordable tenures, taking account of the local character and built form and up-to-date evidence of housing need.

**Why this policy is needed**

**9.34** In order to deliver a wide choice of high-quality homes that help to satisfy a diverse range of housing needs and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, it is important that the plan promotes a mix of housing based on the needs of different groups in the community.



- 9.35** The housing stock across Greater Cambridgeshire has traditionally comprised larger detached or semi-detached homes. The high cost of housing locally also affects the size of homes that people can afford to live in, even if they would prefer or have a need for a particular property size; it is important to provide for everyone's needs in order to maintain mixed and balanced communities. Therefore, the policy sets out housing mix requirements for residential development of 10 or more dwelling units in South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge, which should be used as the basis for the housing mix of new developments, unless an alternative mix can be justified. For proposals of 9 or fewer dwelling units, the Local Planning Authority will expect applicants to justify their proposals on the basis of local needs and circumstances.
- 9.36** There are cases where the above housing mix may not be suitable in meeting a particular, identified need; the housing mix may not be appropriate to apply to developments of a nature intended for a particular community need, including student accommodation, some residential institutions, custom and self-build housing, or other types of specialist housing for different groups in the community (such as older people, looked-after children, or other groups identified by national planning policy). Deviations from the stated housing mix may also be allowed if an alternative housing mix can be justified because of the site's location and site constraints, such as within the centre of Cambridge where a higher density of development may be more appropriate or in locations where an alternative mix is needed to ensure the development is viable.
- 9.37** Deviations from the housing mix stated within the policy will only be allowed where sufficient, robust evidence is provided as part of a planning application to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.
- 9.38** In some special circumstances, the Local Planning Authority may use planning conditions or other planning instruments to protect the housing mix of developments that have been designed to meet a particular community need.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Homes Topic Paper (2025)
- Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2024-2029: Homes for Our Future and Annexes 1-8
- Housing Needs of Specific Groups in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire (2025)

# Policy H/GL:

## Garden land and subdivision of existing plots

### What this policy does

- 9.39** This policy sets out criteria to determine when it will be acceptable in principle for garden land and existing residential plots to be developed for new housing or residential annexes.

#### Policy H/GL: Garden land and subdivision of existing plots

1. The development of land used as residential gardens for new dwellings or residential annexes will only be permitted where:
  - a. The residential amenity and privacy of neighbouring existing and new properties is protected;
  - b. The proposed siting, design, scale, and materials of construction of the new dwellings or residential annexes are appropriate to the surrounding pattern of development and the character of the area;
  - c. There is the existence of, or ability to create, safe and adequate amenity spaces, vehicular access arrangements and parking spaces for the existing and proposed dwellings or residential annexes, and these spaces are designed to fully utilise permeable materials to reduce surface flooding risk;
  - d. Sufficient garden and amenity space around existing dwellings is retained; and
  - e. There is no detrimental effect on the potential comprehensive development of the wider area.
2. Additionally, a residential annexe will only be permitted where:
  - a. It is subordinate in scale to the principal dwelling;
  - b. Its occupant(s) share the existing vehicular access, parking spaces, garden and amenity spaces with the principal dwelling;
  - c. It remains in the same ownership as, and is occupied in conjunction with, the principal dwelling;
  - d. Occupation of the annexe is ancillary to the principal dwelling; and
  - e. It meets the internal residential space standards and accessible and adaptable homes standards set out in Policy H/SS.

3. Proposals for new dwellings within settlements will be subject to other policies in the development plan, including policy S/SH and Policy S/DE. Proposals for new dwellings and residential annexes outside of settlements will only be acceptable where they meet the requirements in Policy S/DE and Policy H/DC.
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## Supporting information

- 9.40** National planning policy sets out that Local Plans should consider the case for setting out policies to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens, though there is currently no national guidance specifically relating to residential annexes. Gardens are an important environmental asset and can make a significant contribution to local character and amenity. Residential gardens within built up areas are not defined as previously developed land by national planning policy. However, some forms of redevelopment and infill development, which are well designed and make efficient use of land, will continue to be a valuable additional source of housing supply. This policy defines the criteria which would need to be met for such proposals to be deemed not inappropriate, alongside compliance with other policies in the local plan.
- 9.41** The Councils anticipate that there will be increasing demand for residential annexes as intergenerational living rises, people live longer, and the costs of residential care remain high. To support families and an ageing population, well-designed residential annexes that help households adapt to changing circumstances will be supported, provided the annexe remains subsidiary to the principal dwelling. Occupation of any residential annexe permitted will be restricted through planning conditions to ensure that a new independent dwelling is not created.
- 9.42** This policy relates both to developments where an existing dwelling or dwellings are demolished for redevelopment and the proposed replacement dwelling(s) cover a wider footprint than the original, and where an existing dwelling is retained and a new dwelling(s) or a residential annexe is erected in the garden.
- 9.43** Residential outbuildings (that are permitted via Class E of the General Permitted Development Order 2015) are specifically for uses that are incidental to the enjoyment of the principal dwelling, and therefore should not contain all the primary living accommodation functions of kitchens, bathrooms, and bedrooms. Residential outbuildings should not be capable of being occupied as residential annexes or independent dwellings.

### Supporting topic paper and evidence studies

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Homes Topic Paper (2025)

# Policy H/SS:

## Residential space standards and accessible homes

### What this policy does

- 9.44** This policy sets the required standards for internal spaces within new homes, the proportion of accessible and adaptable dwellings to be provided, and the required standards for external private and shared amenity space.

#### Policy H/SS: Residential space standards and accessible homes

### Internal residential space standards

1. All new residential units (including residential annexes) created through new build, conversions and change of use must as a minimum meet, and wherever possible exceed, the residential space standards set out in the Government's Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard (2015) or a successor document.
2. The Government's Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard (2015) requires that:
  - a. The dwelling provides at least the gross internal floor area and built-in storage area set out in Table 3;
  - b. A dwelling with two or more bedspaces has at least 1 double (or twin) bedroom;
  - c. In order to provide 1 bedspace, a single bedroom has a floor area of at least 7.5m<sup>2</sup> and is at least 2.15m wide;
  - d. In order to provide two bedspaces, a double (or twin bedroom) has a floor area of at least 11.5m<sup>2</sup>;
  - e. One double (or twin bedroom) is at least 2.75m wide and every other double (or twin) bedroom is at least 2.55m wide;
  - f. Any area with a headroom of less than 1.5m is not counted within the gross internal area unless used solely for storage (if the area under the stairs is to be used for storage, assume a general floor area of 1m<sup>2</sup> within the gross internal area);
  - g. Any other area that is used solely for storage and has a head room of 900-1,500mm (such as under eaves) is counted at 50% of its floor area, and any area lower than 900mm is not counted at all;

- h. A built-in wardrobe counts towards the gross internal area and bedroom floor area requirements, but should not reduce the effective width of the room below the minimum widths set out above. The built-in area in excess of 0.72m<sup>2</sup> in a double bedroom and 0.36m<sup>2</sup> in a single bedroom counts towards the built-in storage requirement;
- i. The minimum floor to ceiling height is 2.3m for at least 75% of the gross internal area.

| Number of bedrooms (b) | Number of bed spaces (persons) | 1 storey dwellings | 2 storey dwellings | 3 storey dwellings | Built-in storage |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 1b                     | 1p                             | 39 (37) *          | –                  | –                  | 1.0              |
| 1b                     | 2p                             | 50                 | 58                 | –                  | 1.5              |
| 2b                     | 3p                             | 61                 | 70                 | –                  | 2.0              |
| 2b                     | 4p                             | 70                 | 79                 | –                  | 2.0              |
| 3b                     | 4p                             | 74                 | 84                 | 90                 | 2.5              |
| 3b                     | 5p                             | 86                 | 93                 | 99                 | 2.5              |
| 3b                     | 6p                             | 95                 | 102                | 108                | 2.5              |
| 4b                     | 5p                             | 90                 | 97                 | 103                | 3.0              |
| 4b                     | 6p                             | 99                 | 106                | 112                | 3.0              |
| 4b                     | 7p                             | 108                | 115                | 121                | 3.0              |
| 4b                     | 8p                             | 117                | 124                | 130                | 3.0              |
| 5b                     | 6p                             | 103                | 110                | 116                | 3.5              |
| 5b                     | 7p                             | 112                | 119                | 125                | 3.5              |
| 5b                     | 8p                             | 121                | 128                | 134                | 3.5              |
| 6b                     | 7p                             | 116                | 123                | 129                | 4.0              |
| 6b                     | 8p                             | 125                | 132                | 138                | 4.0              |

**Table 3:** Minimum gross internal floor areas and storage (m2)

**Notes:**

- Built-in storage areas are included within the overall Gross Internal Areas (GIAs) and include an allowance of 0.5m<sup>2</sup> for fixed services or equipment such as a hot water cylinder, boiler or heat exchanger.
- GIAs for 1 storey dwellings include enough space for 1 bathroom and 1 additional WC (or shower room) in dwellings with 5 or more bedspaces. GIAs for 2 and 3 storey dwellings include enough space for 1 bathroom and 1 additional WC (or shower room). Additional sanitary facilities may be included without increasing the GIA provided that all aspects of the space standard have been met.

- Where a 1 bed 1 person (1b1p) dwelling has a shower room instead of a bathroom, the floor area may be reduced from 39m<sup>2</sup> to 37m<sup>2</sup>, as shown bracketed.
- Furnished layouts are not required to demonstrate compliance.

## External residential space standards

3. All new residential dwellings, created through new build, conversions and change of use, will be expected to have direct access to private external amenity space that is immediately outside their living accommodation. The form of amenity space will be dependent on the typology and size of housing and could include a private garden, roof garden, balcony, glazed winter garden or ground-level patio with defensible space from any shared external amenity areas. The required external amenity space standards may be met through a combination of multi-levelled private amenity space.
4. Developments must meet or exceed the following private external amenity space standards:
  - a. Any house (irrespective of the number of bedrooms) should provide a minimum of 30 m<sup>2</sup> of private external amenity space,
  - b. Ground floor apartments (irrespective of the number of bedrooms) should provide a minimum of 10 m<sup>2</sup> private external amenity space immediately outside their living accommodation, with a minimum depth of 2500mm, or
  - c. Upper floor apartments with 1 bedroom (one or two bedspaces) should have a private external amenity space of 5 m<sup>2</sup> through the use of a private balcony with a minimum depth of 1500mm and a minimum usable width of 3000mm. An additional 1 m<sup>2</sup> will need to be provided for each additional person (bedspace).
5. In providing appropriate private external amenity space, development must:
  - a. consider the location and context of the development, including the character of the surrounding area;
  - b. take into account the orientation of the amenity space in relation to the sun at different times of year, balance openness and protection, and be designed to provide a sense of privacy to avoid spaces that feel overly exposed;
  - c. address issues of overlooking and enclosure, which may otherwise impact detrimentally on the proposed dwelling and any neighbouring dwellings;
  - d. design the amenity space to be of a shape, size and location that allows for effective and practical use of the space by residents;
  - e. provide balconies that are designed as integral elements of the building's architecture and not appear as bolt-on additions, with semi-inset or inset balconies encouraged, to support cohesive facade compositions and support usability; and
  - f. provide well designed defensible spaces for ground floor apartments ensuring buffer zones are deep enough to create a layered transition between the home and public realm to support usability.

6. In exceptional circumstances, reduced private amenity space provision for houses may be acceptable where it forms part of a clearly defined and well-designed communal living arrangement such as co-housing or community-led housing scheme and where high-quality, shared communal space is provided that demonstrates that:
  - a. The communal space is of sufficient size, quality, and accessibility to meet residents' day-to-day needs;
  - b. It is integral to the design and function of the development (no leftover or peripheral space);
  - c. Long-term management arrangements are in place to ensure its usability and maintenance; and
  - d. The approach is appropriate to the nature of the community and tenure model proposed.

## **Accessible and adaptable homes**

7. All new build residential units (including residential annexes) must be designed to be accessible and adaptable in accordance with the Building Regulations M4(2) standard.
  8. For development proposals providing 20 or more new build dwellings, 10% of the affordable units and 5% of the market units must be 'wheelchair user' dwellings in accordance with the Building Regulations M4(3) standard. These homes should be delivered as Building Regulations M4(3)(a) 'wheelchair adaptable' dwellings unless the Council has identified a need for Building Regulations M4(3)(b) 'wheelchair accessible' dwellings.
  9. Exceptions to meeting the Building Regulations M4(2) and M4(3) standards as set out above will only apply where robust justification is provided that sets out how site-specific circumstances, in addition to the other requirements for the development, make the proposed development impractical, unachievable or unviable.
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## **Supporting information**

- 9.45** National planning policy sets out that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work, and helps make development acceptable to communities. This policy will ensure that new homes across Greater Cambridge provide high-quality internal and external spaces so they are inclusive, accessible, adaptable and flexible to meet the needs of existing and future users, and therefore enable and support healthy lives.
- 9.46** New dwellings should provide sufficient internal and external spaces for daily activities and needs, and private amenity space can make an important contribution to improving quality of life for residents. It is important to note that the internal and external amenity space standards are expressed as minimum space standards, and housing that



exceeds standards will always be encouraged. The internal and external amenity space standards apply to all tenures of housing in Greater Cambridge, and all homes created through conversion, change of use, or new build. In order to achieve certain design configurations, to work within site constraints or to deliver units to a particular segment of the housing market, designers and developers may need to make early allowance to exceed the internal and / or external amenity space standards for that dwelling type.

**9.47** External amenity space should be sufficient to accommodate the following:

- a table and chairs suitable for the size of dwelling;
- where relevant, provision of a garden shed for general storage (including bicycles where no garage provision or cycle storage to the frontage of the dwelling is possible);
- space for refuse and recycling bins;
- an area to dry washing;
- circulation space; and
- an area for children to play in.

**9.48** External amenity space does not include car parking or turning areas. Suitable arrangements for access to refuse and recycling bins should be made. One-bedroom dwellings would not be expected to provide space for children to play, due to the lower likelihood of children occupying these units.

**9.49** Accessible and adaptable homes (i.e. dwellings in accordance with the Building Regulations M4(2) standard) support the changing needs of residents over their lifetime. They include design features that allow the home to be altered to meet the needs of a wide range of occupants, such as older people or those with disabilities. Wheelchair user dwellings (i.e. dwellings in accordance with the Building Regulations M4(3) standard) are those specifically designed to meet the needs of wheelchair users.

**9.50** Between 2024 and 2045, our evidence projects an increase in the number of older people, an increase in the number of older people with mobility problems, and an increase in the number of people with mobility problems, impaired mobility and wheelchair users. It also shows a likely need for a greater proportion of affordable housing to rent for wheelchair users. The Housing Needs of Specific Groups Update (2025) recommends that up to 5% of all new market homes and up to 10% of all new affordable homes should be wheelchair user dwellings, and sets out that these figures reflect that not all sites would be able to deliver homes of this type. Requiring all new build dwellings to be designed to meet the Buildings Regulations M4(2) standard will ensure that new homes will be provided that meet the needs of a wide range of occupants, including older people, others with disability or mobility issues, and some wheelchair users. Requiring a proportion of market and affordable dwellings on sites of 20 dwellings or more to meet the Building Regulations M4(3) standard will help to ensure that new homes will be provided to meet the specific identified need for wheelchair users.



- 9.51** The requirement to meet Building Regulations M4(2) and / or M4(3) standards will normally be controlled through the use of a planning condition to ensure that the relevant homes are delivered to meet the standards. When calculating the amount of wheelchair user dwellings required for a development meeting the threshold as set out in the policy, developers should round up to the nearest dwelling.
- 9.52** Application of residential space standards, both internally and externally, should be shown on all submitted layouts and floorplans and be clearly demonstrated in the Design and Access Statement, which will be used to assess the acceptability of any proposal. Compliance with the accessible and adaptable homes standards should also be demonstrated in the Design and Access Statement.
- 9.53** There may be specific developments where meeting the required internal and external amenity space standards, and / or accessible and adaptable homes standards, would not be appropriate for the identified occupants, such as new pod homes for the homeless. However, any exceptions would need to be clearly justified with evidence provided to demonstrate that the proposed development still delivers suitable and appropriate homes for the anticipated occupants.
- 9.54** This policy applies to all proposals for self-contained dwellings, irrespective of their use class. However, developments of residential caravans are not required to meet the requirements in this policy as there are other more appropriate standards such as the British Standard for Residential Park Homes and Caravans that ensure residential caravans are built to acceptable standards.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Homes Topic Paper (2025)
- Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2024-2029: Homes for Our Future and Annexes 1-8
- Housing Needs of Specific Groups in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire (2025)
- Cambridge City Council – Sustainable Housing Design Guide (2021)
- South Cambridgeshire District Council – District Design Guide SPD (2010)

# Policy H/SH:

## Specialist housing

### What this policy does

- 9.55** This policy guides proposals for specialist housing (within both Use Classes C2 and C3) designed to support a variety of groups such as older people, disabled people, people with alcohol or drug dependency, those requiring refuge from harassment and violence, looked after children and others who may, for a variety of reasons, need specialist supported housing. Student accommodation is covered in Policy H/SA.

#### Policy H/SH: Specialist housing

1. Proposals for residential development should consider and respond to the need for specialist housing.
2. Planning permission will be granted for the development of specialist housing, subject to the development being:
  - a. supported by evidence of the demonstrable need for this form of development within Greater Cambridge;
  - b. suitable for the intended occupiers in relation to the quality and type of facilities, and the provision of support and/or care;
  - c. accessible to local shops and services, public transport and other sustainable modes of transport, and community facilities appropriate to the needs of the intended occupiers; and
  - d. in a location that does not create an over-concentration of such housing in the local area.
3. Proposals for specialist housing within settlements (shown as Defined Development Extents on the Policies Map) will be subject to other policies in the development plan, including Policy S/SH. Proposals for specialist housing outside of settlements will only be acceptable where they meet the requirements in Policy S/DE.
4. Unallocated strategic sites of 1,000 dwellings or more will be expected to provide at least 10% of homes as specialist housing. Proposals must meet the following criteria:
  - a. the majority of specialist housing is expected to be focused on the needs of older people and disabled people but other forms of specialist housing will be encouraged where supported by appropriate evidence of need;
  - b. specialist housing should be designed to support its integration into the wider community, and be within walking distance to a local centre, appropriate facilities such as health services, and public transport; and

- c. the phasing of specialist housing should be planned alongside the provision of services relevant to the type of specialist housing proposed such as health and education facilities, shops and bus services.
  - 5. If development, including change of use, would involve a net loss of specialist residential floorspace, this will only be permitted where:
    - a. appropriate replacement specialist housing accommodation will be provided that satisfies the four criteria 2a–2d;
    - b. it is demonstrated that there is reduced local need for the existing provision of specialist housing; or
    - c. the new proposals provide specialist housing of a significantly higher quality.
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## Supporting information

- 9.56** Specialist housing is designed so that support can be provided to its occupants where required (and often to others in the wider community) while promoting independent living. National planning policy requires the size, type and tenure of homes needed for different groups in the community to be assessed and that the results of that assessment be reflected in planning policies.
- 9.57** Providing specialist accommodation for older people and disabled people can help people to live independently whilst staying within their local community. It can also provide opportunities for people to downsize if they choose to do so and help to support mixed and balanced communities. The need to help older people and disabled people downsize or stay within their community through ‘whole life housing’ approaches is also addressed in Policy H/HM and Policy H/SS.
- 9.58** The Local Plan therefore needs to set out how the Councils will deliver sufficient specialist housing to meet the identified need and how proposals for new specialist housing will be considered. Proposals will be expected to have regard to the evidence base supporting the Local Plan which considers the needs of a wide range of groups. However, proposals can also provide their own evidence to support their specific plans for specialist housing. This could include more up to date data or more detailed evidence on a specific form of specialist housing.
- 9.59** To ensure that specialist housing is well integrated with wider communities when developing strategic sites the specialist housing needs should be considered at an early stage. Where strategic sites involve a masterplanning or similar process this should address how and where specialist housing will be provided.
- 9.60** There is a need for market and affordable housing for older people. Therefore, specialist housing for older people will be expected to contribute towards the delivery of affordable housing. Where self-contained specialist housing for older people forms part of a larger multi-tenure development it will count towards the overall numbers against which affordable housing requirements are calculated (as set out in Policy H/AH).

It is recognised that it will often be inappropriate for market and affordable homes for older people to be delivered in an integrated manner. Therefore, when a market scheme for specialist housing triggers a requirement for affordable provision a financial contribution will be sought in lieu of on site provision. Most other forms of specialist supported accommodation are likely to be considered as affordable housing.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Homes Topic Paper (2025)
- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Development Strategy Topic Paper (2025)
- Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2024-2029: Homes for Our Future and Annexes 1-8
- Housing Needs of Specific Groups in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire (2025)

# Policy H/CB:

## Self and Custom Build homes

### What this policy does

- 9.62** This policy sets out how self and custom build homes will be delivered in Greater Cambridge. This includes specifying the size of developments on which self and custom build homes will be provided, the proportion of self and custom build homes required, where exceptions apply and how specific proposals for self and custom build homes will be assessed.
- 9.63** The term self and custom build is used to apply to all forms of custom homes and self build homes. Although they are often seen as a broad spectrum of house building options with varying levels of input from the home owner, in planning law, all custom and self build homes have the same status.

#### Policy H/CB: Self and Custom Build homes

1. All development proposals including 20 or more dwellings must provide at least 5% of the new homes as serviced plots for custom and self build houses and/or serviced custom-build flats.
  - a. Specific types of housing schemes are not appropriate for custom and self build homes and are therefore excluded from this requirement. Exclusions include:
    - i. Build to Rent schemes,
    - ii. Schemes where at least 80% of homes are affordable,
    - iii. Gypsy & Traveller sites, Travelling Showpeople yards and other residential caravan schemes,
    - iv. Residential institution use accommodation,
    - v. Accommodation specifically for older people such as extra-care schemes or age-restricted housing, and
    - vi. Other accommodation that is primarily targeting the rented market such as Homes in Multiple Occupation.
2. On major developments for housing where affordable housing is being provided the custom and self-build homes will count towards the market housing contribution unless they are specifically delivered as affordable homes. Early delivery of custom and self-build homes will be strongly supported

3. The following criteria apply to all custom and self build developments:
- a. Each plot must be marketed for at least a 12 month marketing period in accordance with a marketing strategy and valuation approved by the local planning authority at the outline or full planning application stage. Once plots have been marketed for the minimum period, they will either be further marketed for a period of time as has been agreed by the local planning authority or will be transferred to a Registered Provider for the provision of affordable housing at affordable housing land values,
  - b. Prior to marketing, each plot must be developable by a custom and self build home builder, with no issues to prevent immediate purchase and development,
  - c. Conditions will be attached to outline planning permissions to secure agreement of Plot Passports and Design Codes for the development prior to the submission of the first Reserved Matters application,
  - d. Applications must demonstrate how initial occupants have had or will have primary input into the final design and layout of the dwelling which is sufficient to meet the definition of custom and self build housing, and
  - e. Custom-finish proposals will only be acceptable as flats.
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## Supporting information

- 9.64** National planning policy requires the housing needs of those who wish to commission or build their own homes to be reflected in planning policies. National legislation requires local authorities to keep a register of those people seeking to acquire serviced plots within the area for their own custom or self build home, and through the same legislation local planning authorities have a duty to grant planning permission for enough plots to meet the identified demand.
- 9.65** The legal definition of custom and self build housing is clear that to comply the initial occupant, or group of occupants, must have primary input to the final design and layout.
- 9.66** The Greater Cambridge Custom and Self Build Register demonstrates a continued demand for custom and self build plots and this policy responds by ensuring an increased supply of new provision is delivered.
- 9.67** The supply of custom and self build plots with planning permission is routinely monitored and is reported at the end of each base period on the [Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service website](#). The 5% requirement may be reduced where at least a 1 year oversupply of custom and self-build housing permissions exists and subject to agreement with the local planning authority. In assessing the extent to which a shortfall or surplus of custom and self-build housing permissions exists across the plan area, the Greater Cambridge Custom and Self Build Register will be used with reference to the relevant base period.

- 9.68** A significant proportion of new development in Greater Cambridge is expected to be flatted accommodation. If the statutory duty to match demand for custom and self build with permissions is to be met it is important that this development contributes towards the delivery of custom and self build plots. It is recognised that the type of custom and self build delivered will be influenced by the type of dwellings being built on any given development. Flatted developments may be better suited to a custom finish approach but it is important that such dwellings still provide sufficient design input opportunity for the occupier to meet the definition of custom and self build.
- 9.69** Criteria 1 and 3e) identify the distinction between flats and houses and the requirement that custom finish proposals will only be acceptable as flats. This distinction is designed to allow for the delivery of custom-build flats, which by their very nature cannot facilitate the same level of customisation achievable in custom and self-build houses, whilst helping to ensure houses are designed and delivered in a manner consistent with the preferences expressed through the Council's Custom and Self Build Housing Register.
- 9.70** Criterion 2 strongly encourages the early delivery of custom and self-build plots. Custom and self-build plots should be delivered prior to 25% occupation of the relevant phase in which the serviced plots are located as agreed at outline planning application stage. For larger schemes of 200 or more dwellings, a phasing plan should be included at the outline planning application stage showing how custom and self-build plots will be made available at a rate broadly in proportion to the build out of the phase.
- 9.71** In applying criterion 3d) and demonstrating compliance with the custom and self-build housing legal definition, set out in section 1(A1) of the Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended) and interpreted in the self-build and custom housebuilding section of national planning practice guidance, applicants of outline applications should briefly set out how initial occupants will have primary input into the final design and layout of the custom and self-build home(s). A potential satisfactory explanation could be that serviced plots will be sold to initial occupants prior to the submission of the first design focussed plot level reserved matters application.
- 9.72** Applicants of full or relevant reserved matters applications should set out how initial occupants have had primary input into the final design and layout of the custom and self-build home(s). Potential satisfactory explanations could include that the applicant will be the initial occupant or the initial occupant has had the primary input into the design and layout of their home through the preparation of the full or relevant reserved matters application.
- 9.73** Relevant reserved matters applications will usually be the first such application on each plot that seeks to fix the design and layout of the custom and self-build home(s).
- 9.74** Proposals specifically for custom and self build homes will be required to contribute towards the delivery of affordable housing in line with Policy H/AH. However, it is anticipated that most provision will be through a commuted sum. Direct delivery through a Registered Provider or community-led housing scheme will also be acceptable.

## **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Homes Topic Paper (2025)
- Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2024-2029: Homes for Our Future and Annexes 1-8
- Housing Needs of Specific Groups in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire (2025)
- Greater Cambridge Custom and Self Build Register



# Policy H/BR:

## Build to Rent homes

### What this policy does

- 9.75** This policy sets out when and how proposals for Build to Rent homes will be supported.

#### Policy H/BR: Build to Rent homes

1. Proposals for Build to Rent housing will be approved where they meet the following criteria:
  - a. Schemes should be designed so that their scale and location does not dominate the surrounding area or the overall scheme if part of a wider multi-tenure proposal,
  - b. The homes are held as Build to Rent under a covenant of at least 15 years,
  - c. The development offers tenancies of at least 3 years available to all tenants (subject to any future legislative changes), and
  - d. The development will be professionally managed by a single management operator and have an agreed Management Plan.

### Supporting information

- 9.76** National planning policy requires the size, type and tenure of homes needed for different groups in the community, including those who rent their homes, to be assessed and that the results of that assessment be reflected in planning policies. Build to Rent homes can respond to a need, by providing quality homes for those who wish to rent, which adds to the flexibility of the local housing market to respond to demand. There is evidence of local need for this type of housing, and therefore the Local Plan needs to be clear how any proposals for these types of development will be considered.
- 9.77** National planning guidance states that 20% is generally a suitable benchmark for the level of Affordable Private Rent homes to be provided in any Build to Rent scheme. However, viability evidence shows that the strong Greater Cambridge housing market will support 40% Affordable Private Rent in Build to Rent schemes which is consistent with the policy approach to affordable housing as set out in Policy H/AH, but this must also be balanced with the level of rent discount (relative to local market rents) needed to make these units affordable. It is also appropriate to limit the proportion of Build to Rent homes within large new developments in order to secure the provision of a range of affordable housing tenures to meet identified need and provide mixed and balanced communities. Any such limits would still need to enable the resulting number of Build to Rent homes to be sufficient to be delivered and managed viably.

- 9.78** Addressing affordable housing need in Greater Cambridge is not just about securing more affordable housing. It is also about securing a level of rent discount that makes the housing affordable to people that cannot afford market housing rents. Equally, where schemes face viability challenges due to site specific issues the Councils will apply a flexible approach in order to achieve an appropriate balance between the percentage of Affordable Private Rent homes which can be achieved and the potential rental affordability of those homes.
- 9.79** Policy H/HM provides a starting point for considering the appropriate housing mix of Build to Rent developments. However, it is acknowledged that Build to Rent is a relatively new type of housing and the profile of occupants may differ from other forms of housing. Where proposals are supported by compelling evidence an alternative housing mix will be acceptable.
- 9.80** Management of Build to Rent developments by a single management operator, with an appropriate level of on-site daily management, will minimise any community risks arising from the development, and ensure that schemes are well-integrated into the community. A Management Plan showing how the whole development will be managed and maintained must be produced and submitted with the planning application, and the agreed Management Plan should be secured through a Section 106 agreement. The Management Plan should include detailed information on long term management and maintenance arrangements, and outline the measures that will be in place to manage any issues arising that could impact on amenity in the surrounding area.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Homes Topic Paper (2025)
- Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2024-2029: Homes for Our Future and Annexes 1-8
- Housing Needs of Specific Groups in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire (2025)
- Build to Rent Market in Greater Cambridge and West Suffolk (Savills, June 2020)
- Build to Rent Market Strategic Overview and Summary of Site-Specific Appraisals (Arc4, March 2021)
- North East Cambridge Market Demand Appraisal Build to Rent (Arc4, March 2021)
- Northstowe Market Demand Appraisal Build to Rent (Arc4, March 2021)
- Waterbeach New Town Market Demand Appraisal Build to Rent (Arc4, March 2021)
- Bourn Airfield New Village Market Demand Appraisal Build to Rent (Arc4, March 2021)

# Policy H/CO:

## Co-living

### What this policy does

- 9.81** Co-living developments, also known as large-scale purpose-built shared living developments, comprise non-self-contained studios with extensive communal facilities that are under a single management company. Co-living developments have an emphasis on communal living, with large-scale shared dining, recreation and sometimes workspaces, as well as additional services and facilities such as room cleaning, provision of bed linen, an on-site gym, and a concierge service. This policy sets the criteria and standards that proposals for all Co-living homes (sui generis) must meet.

#### Policy H/CO: Co-living

1. Proposals for Co-living developments (sui generis) will be supported, where the proposal meets all of the following requirements:
  - a. Developments will be located in sustainable, highly accessible areas that are well connected to local services and employment by active travel or public transport, and where the development does not contribute to car dependency, and parking can be minimised reflecting the high level of accessibility.
  - b. Developments must be of good quality, well designed and contribute towards mixed and inclusive neighbourhoods. Schemes will not be supported where they result in an over concentration of this type of tenure within an area or harm the overall mix of housing to meet needs.
  - c. Developments will be of a moderate scale of between 50 and 200 units. A higher number of units will only be considered where need is clearly demonstrated. Financial contributions may be sought to mitigate pressures on services, should evidence of need be demonstrated.
  - d. The private units will provide suitable functional living space and layouts and must not be self-contained homes or capable of being used as self-contained homes. A sufficient proportion of the units must be designed to be accessible and adaptable (taking account of Policy H/SS) so that they are accessible and usable by those who have minimal mobility.
  - e. To meet the requirements of the intended number of residents, at a minimum services and facilities will include private en-suite studio rooms, internal communal space, external communal space, laundry and drying facilities, on site management, maintenance and cleaning services, a reception service, and large item and cycle storage provision.

- f. Public open space provision will be provided in accordance with Policy BG/EO.
  - g. Buildings will be designed and managed in a way that lowers barriers to social interaction, encourages engagement between people and creates a sense of community.
  - h. The Co-living development must be under a single management company or operator and have an agreed Management Plan.
  - i. All units will be available for rent, with minimum tenancies of three months.
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## Supporting information

- 9.82** National planning policy requires the size, type and tenure of homes needed for different groups in the community, including those who rent their homes, to be assessed and that the results of that assessment be reflected in planning policies. Co-living developments are becoming more popular, and can respond to a need by providing an alternative type of accommodation for single-person households to living in self-contained homes, houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) or flat shares. Whilst not currently commonplace in Greater Cambridge, developers are seeking pre-application advice on proposals for co-living developments, and therefore the Local Plan needs to be clear how these proposals will be considered.
- 9.83** Development of Co-living units will be directed to the most sustainable areas of Greater Cambridge, well connected to active travel routes, public transport links and services. Therefore, car use will not be relied on, and onsite car parking should be kept to a minimum. Details of any proposed car parking should be submitted with the planning application with justification of provision. New proposals should not result in over-concentration of Co-living units within an area or harm the delivery of a mix of housing to meet needs, and should contribute towards creating mixed and inclusive neighbourhoods.
- 9.84** Co-living developments are generally of at least 50 units, to allow for the provision of the additional on-site services and facilities. There is currently no clear guidance on the maximum number of units. Considering Co-living units are likely to be used on a transitional basis, unless there is clear evidence of need for a higher number of units, developments will be restricted to a maximum of 200 units. This is because Co-living developments should not compromise the delivery of self-contained homes.
- 9.85** Co-living developments must be well-designed and provide functional internal living spaces and external amenity spaces for their residents. Proposals should consider the internal and external residential space standards set out in Policy H/SS. For example, the internal residential spaces standards set out in Policy H/SS include specific requirements for the floorspace of bedrooms, which could be applied to Co-living developments, if the internal communal areas provided the remainder of the internal space standard requirements. Additionally, as Co-living developments have a similar format to HMOs in that they have communal areas such as kitchens, proposals should also consider the minimum size standards related to internal communal areas such as kitchens set out in licensing standards for HMOs (see Policy H/MO).

- 9.86** A proportion of units should be designed to be accessible and adaptable for those who have minimal mobility, taking account of the requirements set out in Policy H/SS.
- 9.87** Tenancies should be for a minimum of three months to ensure large-scale purpose-built shared living developments do not effectively operate as a hostel.
- 9.88** Policy BG/EO is used to signpost the requirements for public open space. Proposals specifically for co-living units will be required to contribute towards the delivery of affordable housing in line with Policy H/AH.
- 9.89** Management of Co-living developments by a single management company or operator, with an appropriate level of on-site daily management, will minimise any community risks arising from the development, and ensure that schemes are well-integrated into the community. A Management Plan showing how the whole development will be managed and maintained must be produced and submitted with the planning application, and the agreed Management Plan should be secured through a Section 106 agreement. The Management Plan should include, but not be limited to, detailed information on long term management and maintenance arrangements, such as:
- a. measures in place to manage any issues arising that could impact on amenity in the surrounding area,
  - b. security and fire safety procedures,
  - c. move in and move out arrangements,
  - d. how all internal and external areas of the development will be maintained,
  - e. how communal spaces and private units will be cleaned and how linen changing services will operate,
  - f. how deliveries for servicing the development and residents' deliveries will be managed, and
  - g. tenancies, including that sub-letting is not permitted.
- 9.90** Buildings should be designed and managed in a way that lowers barriers to social interaction and encourages engagement between people, such as:
- incidental meeting spaces should be provided in public and semi-public spaces within the building,
  - communal kitchen spaces should be designed for social interaction, such as shared kitchens with cooking stations facing each other,
  - amenity spaces should be of a size and quality that actively encourages their use and community engagement, and
  - where appropriate, entrance lobbies and public amenities such as restaurants and bars should encourage use by the surrounding local community as well as the internal community.
- 9.91** Co-living developments respond to a housing need, and like HMOs or flat shares will be the main or only residence for some people. Any Co-living developments will contribute

towards meeting our housing requirement on a pro-rata basis, in line with the ratio for other communal accommodation set out within the Housing Delivery Test rulebook (which is currently 1.9 units to one dwelling).

**9.92** Planning applications for Co-living developments should include the following information to enable the acceptability of the proposal to be assessed:

- a. private unit sizes and locations, including which of these are considered suitable for double occupancy,
- b. clear identification of communal internal and external spaces, including which are only for use by the Co-living residents, and which are semi-public or public and can be used by non-residents of the Co-living development,
- c. size and distance calculations that demonstrate how the kitchen and dining facilities are sufficient and appropriately located, and
- d. calculations that demonstrate how the facilities are sufficient for the intended number of users, including residents' visitors.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Homes Topic Paper (2025)
- Housing Needs of Specific Groups in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire (2025)

# Policy H/MO:

## Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

### What this policy does

- 9.93** This policy sets the criteria and standards that proposals for all houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) that require planning permission (C4 or sui generis) must meet.

#### Policy H/MO: Houses in Multiple Occupation

1. Proposals for HMOs that require planning permission (C4 or sui generis) will be supported, where:
    - a. the proposed HMO does not create an over-concentration of such a use in the local area or cause harm to residential amenity or the surrounding area;
    - b. would not result in an existing residential property (C3 use) being ‘sandwiched’ between two HMOs;
    - c. the building or site (including any outbuildings) is suitable for use as a HMO, with provision made for appropriate refuse and recycling storage, cycle and car parking, and drying areas; and
    - d. the HMO has access to sustainable modes of transport, shops and other local services.
  2. Appropriate management arrangements should be put in place in order to monitor and minimise antisocial behaviour and adverse impact on local residents. A condition to this effect may be applied to any planning consent.
  3. All new HMOs that require planning permission (C4 or sui generis) must meet the internal space standards required for a HMO to be licensed, in addition to the internal and external residential space standards set out in Policy H/SS.
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## Supporting information

- 9.94** HMOs form an important part of the housing market in Cambridge. About half are occupied by students. However, the high cost of housing in Cambridge also makes HMOs a more affordable option than self-contained accommodation for other groups including young professionals and lower paid staff more generally. HMOs form a smaller, but still significant, part of the housing market in South Cambridgeshire and it is important that the policy operates across Greater Cambridge as a whole.
- 9.95** This policy applies to any HMOs that require planning permission, whether they fall within use class C4 or sui generis. A HMO is a property rented out by at least 3 unrelated people in 2 or more households who use the HMO as their main or only residence. They share basic facilities like the bathroom and kitchen. 'Unrelated' means that the occupants do not have a relationship by blood, marriage or cohabitation.
- 9.96** Students, as well as migrants or asylum seekers, who do not occupy the property all year will be considered as occupying it as their main residence. Therefore, this will fall within Use Class C4 (if there are no more than 6 occupants) or Sui Generis (usually if there are more than 6 occupants).
- 9.97** The Councils are considering introducing an Article 4 Direction to require planning permission for a change of use between residential (use class C3) and a HMO (use class C4) in particular locations. The policy has been drafted so that it will apply to all HMOs that require planning permission, and therefore to smaller HMOs if an Article 4 Direction is enacted.
- 9.98** The Councils are also considering the impacts of increasing numbers of HMOs on the housing mix within Greater Cambridge, and in particular the current and future supply of family homes, and whether further refinement to policy criteria are required to address over concentration. Views on these issues would be welcome through the consultation.
- 9.99** HMOs are required to meet the internal and external residential space standards set out in Policy H/SS, which apply to all dwellings including HMOs. The internal residential spaces standards set out in Policy H/SS specify the overall floorspace for a dwelling (including HMOs) based on its number of bedrooms and the number of occupants, as well as specific floorspace for bedrooms.
- 9.100** All HMOs with 5 or more people (whether use class C4 or sui generis) must also be licensed. This licensing process operates outside of the planning system and includes a range of minimum room size standards related to bedrooms and communal areas such as kitchens. There are currently different licensing standards within Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. Cambridge City Council's [Private Rented Sector Housing Standard](#) sets out the licensing standards applicable in Cambridge. The licensing standards for South Cambridgeshire are set out in South Cambridgeshire District Council's [Guidance for Amenity Standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation](#).



## **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Homes Topic Paper (2025)
- Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2024-2029: Homes for Our Future and Annexes 1-8
- Housing Needs of Specific Groups in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire (2025)

# Policy H/SA:

## Student accommodation

### What this policy does

- 9.101** This policy sets out how and when proposals for new student accommodation for higher education institutions will be supported. The policy applies occupancy requirements for new shared student accommodation to ensure it is occupied by their intended users, and outlines how specific proposals for shared student accommodation will be assessed and the specific criteria to be applied. This policy applies to undergraduate, postgraduate and academic staff accommodation.

#### Policy H/SA: Student accommodation

1. Planning permission will be granted for the development of new student accommodation for undergraduate and / or postgraduate students subject to the development:
  - a. meeting the identified needs of an existing higher educational institution within Greater Cambridge in providing housing for students attending full-time courses of one academic year or more, and
  - b. restricting occupancy to students attending full-time courses of at least one academic year, and
  - c. within academic terms, the approved schemes being occupied solely as student accommodation for an identified higher education institution(s), and
  - d. the development not resulting in the permanent net loss of existing market or affordable housing, and
  - e. minimising any potential for antisocial behaviour, impacts on residential amenity, and if appropriate being warden-controlled, and
  - f. not significantly detracting from local amenity including parking provision, and where appropriate having management arrangements in place to discourage students from keeping cars in Cambridge and
  - g. having an agreed management strategy in place, where appropriate.
2. Development(s) for student accommodation provided in individual, self-contained units, either as part of a shared student accommodation development or an individual proposal, shall as appropriate also provide suitable facilities and open space for dependents.

3. Any accommodation for occupation by academic staff, will also be subject to the following conditions:
    - a. occupation by academic staff will generally be restricted to a maximum of 25 percent of the units provided by the development, and
    - b. for a minimum period of 6 months and up to a maximum period of no more than an aggregate of 3 years, and
    - c. meeting the identified needs of an existing educational institution within Greater Cambridge in providing housing for academic staff associated with the institution.
  4. All schemes for new student accommodation must provide:
    - a. evidence at application stage demonstrating that there is agreed interest to occupy with at least one existing educational establishment based in Greater Cambridge providing full-time courses of one academic year or more (for example an intention to occupy letter); and
    - b. written agreement/ confirmation prior to occupation that the intended occupiers have entered into a formal agreement with at least one existing educational establishment based in Greater Cambridge providing full-time courses of one academic year or more to demonstrate compliance with the occupancy requirements as set out by this policy.
  5. Condition(s) and/or obligations shall be applied to implement the above, and for the future management and maintenance of the student accommodation. The interest to occupy and formal agreement will confirm that the proposed accommodation is suitable in type, layout, and maintenance regime for the relevant institution.
  6. All new student accommodation will be located:
    - a. in an appropriate location for the institution it is intended to serve, and
    - b. in a location well served by sustainable modes of transport.
  7. Planning permission will not be granted for development which results in a net loss of existing student accommodation, unless the net loss is compensated with better quality accommodation or, it can be demonstrated that the accommodation is no longer needed.
  8. Where students do not attend full-time courses of one academic year or more, or for academic staff whose length of stay is less than six months, their accommodation requirements will be expected to be provided within the site of the institution which they attend; or by making effective use of existing student accommodation within Cambridge outside term time; or by use of home-stay accommodation.
  9. Permanent purpose built student accommodation will not be supported on sites allocated for housing, or with an extant planning permission for residential development, unless in exceptional circumstances where no overall net loss of housing can be demonstrated through alternative off site housing provision and this is capable of being legally secured.
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## Supporting information

- 9.102** Higher education institutions are an important aspect of Cambridge's character and the students, academic staff and academic visitors who attend these institutions make up a significant proportion of the population of Cambridge. If adequate provision is not made for the identified needs of existing higher educational institutions in suitable locations, significant pressure will be placed on the local housing market. Our evidence demonstrates that there is a continued identified need for the development of new student accommodation and staff accommodation in Greater Cambridge (evidenced through local growth projections informed by consultation between the councils and higher education institutions).
- 9.103** For student accommodation, existing permissions and allocations (including strategic sites) are anticipated to deliver an over provision against the identified need. For staff accommodation, North West Cambridge (Eddington) delivers key worker accommodation which exceeds the staff accommodation needs identified by the University of Cambridge Colleges. This policy steers how future student and staff accommodation development should be delivered and provides general support for the development of new student accommodation for students attending full-time courses of one academic year or more and for academic staff for a maximum of 3 years (subject to specific criteria), where it is identified that development of accommodation is needed to help to meet the growth needs of an existing educational institution in Greater Cambridge.
- 9.104** The provision of student accommodation can contribute to the development of balanced and mixed communities, but careful consideration needs to be given to the scale and impact of the development on local residential amenity and on the character of residential areas. Accessibility by public transport is also important as most students in purpose-built accommodation do not usually have access to cars, although parking needs for disabled people should be explored to ensure developments are accessible. The policy ensures students can live in an appropriate and sustainable location, within suitable and well-managed developments.
- 9.105** Policy controls requiring a formal legal agreement with at least one existing educational establishment based in Greater Cambridge and for the future management and maintenance of the student accommodation, prevent sub-division to allow these units to be sold on the open market and/or to be occupied independently from the student accommodation. This ensures that these units are only used by their intended occupants and are not treated or sub-divided for Use Class C3 residential occupancy (or other use), without planning consent. The requirement of a formal legal agreement also ensures that student accommodation is well designed, provides appropriate internal and/or amenity space and facilities (including provision for disabled students and staff needs).
- 9.106** Encouraging more dedicated student accommodation can provide lower-cost housing that takes pressure off the private rented sector and increases the overall housing stock. The development of new student accommodation reduces demand for private accommodation occupied by full-time students and may release housing back onto the market to cater for wider housing needs. Any student bedrooms will contribute towards

meeting our housing requirement on a pro-rata basis, in line with the ratio for student accommodation set out within the Housing Delivery Test rulebook (which is currently 2.4 bedrooms to one dwelling). A financial contribution for the provision of affordable housing will be sought from developments of student accommodation in line with the requirements set out in Policy H/AH.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Homes Topic Paper (2025)
- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Development Strategy Topic Paper (2025)
- Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2024-2029: Homes for Our Future and Annexes 1-8
- Housing Needs of Specific Groups in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire (2025)

# Policy H/DC:

## Dwellings in the countryside

### What this policy does

- 9.107** This policy sets out the types of residential development that may be acceptable in the countryside outside of defined development extents (previously known as settlement boundaries or development framework boundaries).

#### Policy H/DC: Dwellings in the countryside

### Reuse of buildings in the countryside for residential use

1. The change of use and adaptation of redundant or disused buildings outside a settlement (shown as Defined Development Extents on the Policies Map) to residential use will only be permitted where:
  - a. It has been demonstrated through marketing the property for at least 12 months at a realistic price that there is no demand for their development for employment use, or the buildings are unsuitable for employment use;
  - b. The buildings are structurally sound, not makeshift in nature and are of permanent, substantial construction as evidenced by a structural survey;
  - c. There will be an enhancement to the immediate setting of the buildings;
  - d. The form, bulk, design, landscaping and materials used in the change of use and adaptation and any associated extensions are sensitive to the character and appearance of the building and locality; and
  - e. There is a safe vehicular site access.

### Replacement dwellings in the countryside

2. The one-for-one replacement of dwellings within a curtilage, outside a settlement (shown as Defined Development Extents on the Policies Map), will be permitted where:
  - a. If the replacement dwelling is not on the footprint of the original dwelling, that the original is demolished within a month of the replacement dwelling's first occupation;
  - b. In considering countryside impact and effect on local character only the removal of existing buildings currently lawfully used for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the original dwelling can be taken into account and they must still be standing at the time of the application;

- c. The replacement dwelling is in scale and character with the local area; and
  - d. If in the Green Belt, that the replacement dwelling is not materially larger than the one it replaces.
3. Caravans and mobile homes are distinct from permanent dwellings since they can be removed. Given the restrictions on development in the countryside the replacement of caravans and mobile homes with permanent dwellings will not be permitted outside a settlement (shown as Defined Development Extents on the Policies Map).

### **Countryside dwellings of exceptional quality**

4. Outside the Green Belt, and outside a settlement (shown as Defined Development Extents on the Policies Map), single new bespoke dwellings of exceptional quality will be permitted in the countryside providing all of the following criteria are met:
- a. The dwelling would reflect the highest standards in architecture, being recognised as truly outstanding or innovative;
  - b. The dwelling would significantly enhance its immediate setting;
  - c. The nature and size of the site, and the design of the dwelling, its landscaping and location on site are sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area and to wider views; and
  - d. That there are no existing dwellings on the site capable of being replaced.

### **Extensions to dwellings in the Countryside**

5. Extensions to dwellings outside settlements (shown as Defined Development Extents on the Policies Map), will be permitted where:
- a. The development would not create a separate dwelling or be capable of separation from the existing dwelling;
  - b. The existing home is of permanent design and construction;
  - c. The extension is in scale and character with the existing dwelling and would not materially change the impact of the dwelling on its surroundings;
  - d. If in the Green Belt, the extension would not result in a disproportionate addition to the original dwelling; and
  - e. If the original dwelling is subject to an occupancy condition, it must be demonstrated through an independent review undertaken by an appropriate professional consultant, that the resultant dwelling can be supported by the viability of the site / holding or rural enterprise and that the cost of its occupation would not be unaffordable to workers employed in agriculture, forestry or another business where a rural location is essential.

## Dwellings to support a rural-based enterprise

6. Proposals for permanent dwellings outside a settlement (shown as Defined Development Extents on the Policies Map) for full-time workers in agriculture or forestry or in another business where a rural location is essential, will be permitted if the proposal demonstrates that the following criteria are met:
  - a. There is a clear existing functional need for one or more workers to be readily available at most times;
  - b. The enterprise has been established for at least three years and is, and should remain, financially viable as evidenced by an independent review undertaken by an appropriate professional consultant;
  - c. There is no other accommodation within the site / holding or nearby which is currently suitable and available, or could be made available and suitable through conversion and change of use, as evidenced through the provision of a sequential test, proportionate to the scale of the proposal and needs of the enterprise;
  - d. A dwelling or building suitable for conversion to a dwelling within the site / holding has not been sold on the open housing market without an agricultural or other occupancy condition in the last year;
  - e. The proposed dwelling is no larger than that required to meet the reasonable needs of the enterprise; and
7. Where criterion 6b cannot be met or it is a new enterprise on a well established site / holding, the development of a temporary dwelling may be permitted for up to three years where all the other criteria in part 6 are met, and there is clear evidence demonstrating:
  - a. A firm intention and ability to develop the enterprise;
  - b. That the enterprise has been planned on a sound financial basis as evidenced by an independent review undertaken by an appropriate professional consultant; and
  - c. That the functional need cannot be fulfilled by another existing building on the site / holding or any existing accommodation.
8. Where a new dwelling is permitted, this will be the subject of a condition ensuring the occupation will be limited to a person solely or mainly working, or last working in the locality in agriculture, forestry or in another business where a rural location is essential, or a surviving partner of such a person, and to any resident dependents.
9. The relaxation of an occupancy condition will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:
  - a. There is no longer a continued need for the dwelling on the site / holding or for the enterprise, or to house surviving partners and any resident dependents;
  - b. There is no long term need for a dwelling with restricted occupancy to serve need in the locality;



- c. The property has been effectively marketed for a minimum of 12 months at a rate which is comparable to local market value reflecting the existence of the occupancy condition, and it has been demonstrated that the current use on site is no longer viable or necessary; and
  - d. If other buildings are associated with the dwelling, the marketing must include the dwelling being offered for sale independently of the other buildings.
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## Supporting information

- 9.108** South Cambridgeshire is a predominantly rural district with an attractive and much valued open environment. The development strategy in this local plan focuses development in sustainable locations, but it is also important to support the rural economy and appropriate residential uses. The policy uses a range of criteria to control development that needs planning permission in a way that supports rural communities, reduces unsustainable living patterns and minimises the carbon impacts of new housing.
- 9.109** Assessment of the design quality, scale, countryside impact, and effect on local character of the proposed development will be considered against other policies in the Local Plan.
- 9.110** For replacement dwellings in the countryside, planning conditions may be used to remove permitted development rights for extensions to these dwellings, both within and outside the Green Belt.
- 9.111** For extensions to dwellings in the countryside, in determining what constitutes ‘a disproportionate addition’, account will be taken of the extent to which the dwelling has been previously extended or could be extended under permitted development rights, and the character of the area. Also, ‘original’ is defined as the size of the dwelling as it was built or as it existed as of 1 July 1948, whichever is the oldest date.
- 9.112** Where criterion 5b requires an existing home be of permanent design and construction this will be assessed on a similar basis to criterion 1b whereby it should be structurally sound, not makeshift in nature and of permanent, substantial construction. However, a structural survey will not necessarily be required.
- 9.113** Occasionally the nature of agricultural and other rural enterprises make it essential for someone to live on, or in close proximity to the enterprise. Applications for new dwellings in such circumstances will need to demonstrate that the enterprise or intention to engage in an enterprise is genuine, will be sustained for a reasonable period of time, and that the enterprise needs one or more workers to be readily available at most times. Such dwellings may be exceptionally permitted in open countryside only because of the needs of the enterprise.
- 9.114** For dwellings to support a rural based enterprise, the Council will require evidence of the viability of proposed enterprises and where future viability is uncertain will resist new permanent dwellings in the countryside.

- 9.115** Where the policy requires evidence in the form of an independent assessment undertaken by an appropriate professional consultant, it is recognised that what is appropriate will vary according to the nature of the evidence required and the nature of the business involved. Appropriateness could be evidenced by professional qualifications / membership, references and relevant experience of having undertaken similar assessments.
- 9.116** Regarding equestrian based rural enterprises, it should be noted that the security of horses is not considered to be sufficient in itself to justify the provision of a dwelling as site security can be achieved by other methods.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Homes Topic Paper (2025)

# Policy H/RM:

## Residential moorings

### What this policy does

- 9.117** This policy sets out the criteria to be used when considering proposals for new residential moorings in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire.

#### Policy H/RM: Residential moorings

1. Proposals for residential moorings will be permitted where the proposal:
  - a. Provides demonstrable evidence of need for the type of mooring proposed;
  - b. Is located within, or is well related to, an existing settlement (shown as Defined Development Extents on Policies Map);
  - c. Is of a scale appropriate to the location taking into account where the settlement sits within the settlement hierarchy (Policy S/SH) and the cumulative impact of the proposal when considered with other existing and planned moorings;
  - d. Integrates successfully and positively with the surrounding landscape and/or townscape;
  - e. Is served by adequate pedestrian, cycling, public transport, and vehicular access (including access for emergency services);
  - f. Is served by appropriate electricity, water supply, sewerage and refuse disposal facilities;
  - g. Has no significant negative effect on the amenity, visual character, water quality, historic and ecological value of the river or nearby land;
  - h. Is close to existing services and amenities;
  - i. Only provides minimal essential external lighting, which shall be located so as to minimise glare and/or visual intrusion;
  - j. Does not impede navigation and/or the use of any footpath;
  - k. Has a design that is appropriate for the intended use and elements such as flood risk and manoeuvrability have been considered; and
  - l. Provides details of how the moorings will be managed and maintained.

## Supporting information

- 9.118** Residential moorings are an existing part of the housing provision within Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. Houseboats meet the housing requirements of some groups whilst also contributing to the diversity and supply of different forms of housing in the area. It is important to have a policy within the Greater Cambridge Local Plan so that there are clear requirements for any new moorings so as to take account of the different river users, houseboat occupiers and any neighbouring uses.
- 9.119** A criteria based policy approach is considered appropriate because the Accommodation Needs Assessment of Gypsies, Travellers, Travelling Showpeople and Bargee Travellers and other caravan and houseboat dwellers found no specific need for more residential moorings.

### Supporting topic paper and evidence studies

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Homes Topic Paper (2025)
- Accommodation Needs Assessment of Gypsies, Travellers, Travelling Showpeople, Bargee Travellers, and other caravan and houseboat dwellers for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire (2024)

# Policy H/GT:

## Gypsy and Traveller pitches and Travelling Showpeople plots

### What this policy does

- 9.120** This policy sets out the requirements for any new Gypsy and Traveller pitches or Travelling Showpeople plots, including specifying where they should be located and how they should be designed.

#### Policy H/GT: Gypsy and Traveller pitches and Travelling Showpeople plots

1. Any proposals for new Gypsy and Traveller pitches or new Travelling Showpeople plots on unallocated sites must:
  - a. demonstrate a clear need for the new pitch(es) or plot(s), and why the need cannot be met by an existing available lawful pitch(es) or plot(s),
  - b. set out who the proposed residents are, including how they meet the definition of a Gypsy and Traveller or Travelling Showperson as set out in the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2024) or a successor document,
  - c. be in a sustainable location, with access to a range of services and facilities, particularly a primary school and healthcare facilities,
  - d. be located where the needs of the residents can be met without placing undue pressure on existing local services and facilities,
  - e. respect the scale of the nearest settled community, and not dominate it when considered individually or in combination with other existing and planned sites,
  - f. provide an appropriate environment for residents in terms of health, safety, and living conditions, and therefore not be located on contaminated land or where there are noise, dust, air quality or other issues, unless suitable remediation or mitigation can be provided prior to occupation, and
  - g. consider the impacts on the surrounding area, and not have an unacceptable adverse impact, when considered individually or with other existing and planned sites, on: the amenity of surrounding land uses, the built environment, landscape character, heritage assets or their setting, biodiversity, or the amenity of public rights of way.

2. All Gypsy and Traveller pitches or Travelling Showpeople plots on allocated or unallocated sites must be well designed, and any proposals must:
    - a. set out the number of pitches or plots proposed, and be appropriate for the size and location of the site proposed,
    - b. have a clear layout that includes demarcation between pitches or plots, and also between the site and the surrounding land uses, using appropriate boundary treatments and landscaping that are in keeping with the surrounding area and provide safety and security for residents,
    - c. have safe and appropriate access into and out of the site for vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians, and not have unacceptable adverse impacts on the safety of the public highway from the traffic generated,
    - d. have sufficient space within the site for the safe movement, including turning and parking, of caravans, vehicles (including emergency vehicles and refuse/recycling vehicles), pedestrians and cyclists,
    - e. have sufficient space within a Travelling Showperson site for the storage, maintenance, and testing of equipment,
    - f. include provision of essential utilities including water, electricity, drainage, sewerage, and the collection of refuse and recycling,
    - g. clearly differentiate between public communal spaces and private spaces, and between residential and non-residential areas,
    - h. provide space for play within a communal area of the site, if the site proposed is for 10 or more pitches or plots,
    - i. minimise the harm to the surrounding area, and therefore any developments within the countryside must have limited built development,
    - j. include amenity buildings that are of an appropriate scale and design for the location and the size of the pitch or plot, and
    - k. not result in overcrowding or unnecessary sprawl, and therefore pitches or plots must be an appropriate scale for the number of caravans and residents to be accommodated.
  3. A varied choice, type and mix of housing will be provided within all strategic sites to meet the needs of different groups in the community including Gypsies and Travellers. Any unallocated strategic site of up to 5,000 dwellings will provide one area of serviced land that is 1 hectare to accommodate approximately 12 Gypsy and Traveller pitches, and any unallocated strategic site of over 5,000 dwellings will provide two areas of serviced land that are each 1 hectare to each accommodate approximately 12 Gypsy and Traveller pitches. The site(s) provided will be located within but on the edge of the strategic site, or outside but in close proximity to the strategic site. Access to the site(s) must not rely on minor residential roads.
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## Supporting information

- 9.121** National planning policy for travellers sets out that the government's overarching aim is to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community. It also requires local authorities to ensure that traveller sites are sustainable (economically, socially and environmentally), and to very strictly limit new traveller sites in open countryside that is away from existing settlements.
- 9.122** Our evidence shows that there is a need for additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches and Travelling Showpeople plots within Greater Cambridge, but that there are also existing vacant pitches and pitches that are not being occupied by those meeting the definition of a Gypsy and Traveller. It is therefore important that any new pitches or plots that are proposed demonstrate a clear need for the new pitches or plots, provide details on how the proposed residents meet the definition of a Gypsy and Traveller or Travelling Showperson, and are located in a sustainable location, with the design and layout of any new sites providing healthy, safe and secure living conditions for their occupants. Any proposals for Gypsy and Traveller pitches and Travelling Showpeople plots within the Green Belt and/or within areas of flood risk will be considered against the relevant national and local planning policies.
- 9.123** Proposals for Gypsy and Traveller sites are predominantly residential uses and therefore will generally be acceptable within settlement boundaries, provided that the requirements in other policies in the Local Plan are also met. However, proposals for Travelling Showpeople sites generally include both residential and non-residential uses, as these sites tend to include areas for the storage and maintenance of equipment, and therefore will need to be located where a mix of uses can be accommodated within the site without impacting on the living conditions of either the proposed occupants of the site or the existing neighbouring uses.
- 9.124** Each Gypsy and Traveller pitch or Travelling Showpeople plot should be designed to provide appropriate accommodation for a household, and will normally include space for the siting of a mobile home, a touring caravan, an amenity building containing kitchen and bathroom facilities, car parking and a turning circle for vehicles, and external amenity space. Proposals for family sites, such as to accommodate an extended family rather than one household, must identify the number of pitches the site is capable of providing if it were to be occupied by individual households, in order for the impacts of the site to be fully considered. A condition will be included on any planning permission for Gypsy and Traveller pitches or Travelling Showpeople plots that sets out the number of static and touring caravans that can be stationed on each pitch or plot permitted.
- 9.125** Strategic sites provide an opportunity to deliver Gypsy and Traveller pitches, alongside other types and tenures of housing, to ensure that new communities meet the needs of different groups in sustainable locations with access to services and facilities. New communities that accommodate Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community from their conception allows for the different land uses to be considered in a co-ordinated and integrated manner through the masterplanning and design process.

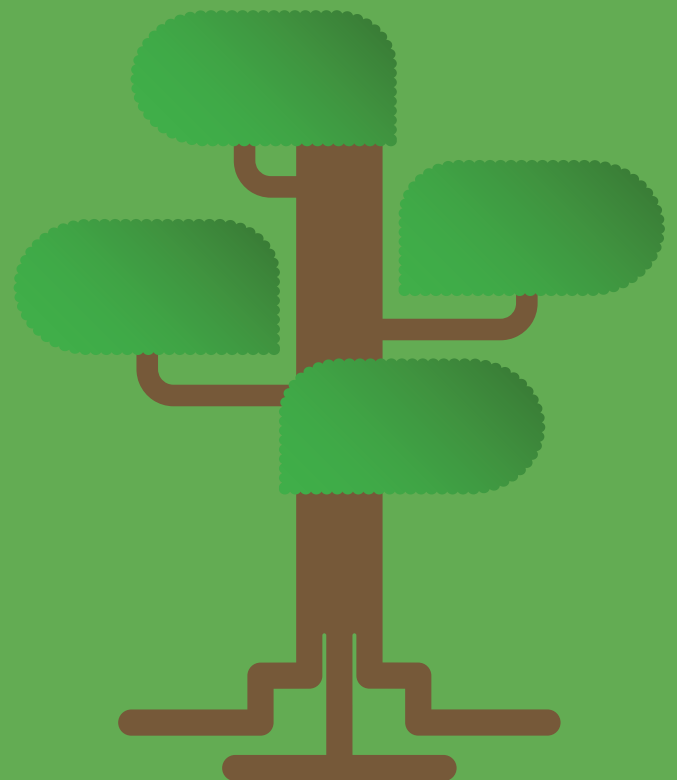
## **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Homes Topic Paper (2025)
- Accommodation Needs Assessment of Gypsies, Travellers, Travelling Showpeople, Bargee Travellers, and other caravan and houseboat dwellers for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire (2024)
- Addendum to Accommodation Needs Assessment of Gypsies, Travellers, Travelling Showpeople, Bargee Travellers, and other caravan and houseboat dwellers for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire (2025)



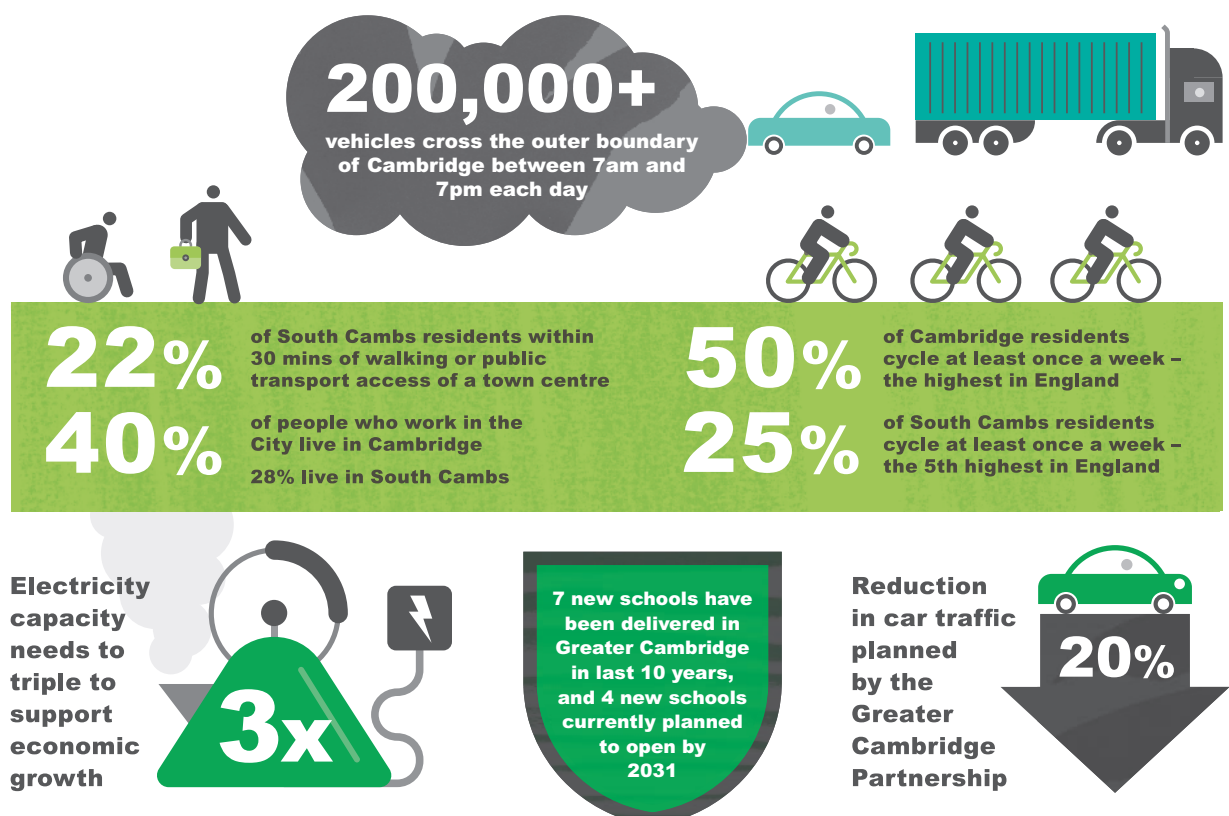
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# Infrastructure



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# Introduction

- 10.1** In the Infrastructure theme, we set out policies which require infrastructure to support development proposals, delivered when it is required.

## How community engagement helped shape the infrastructure policies

- 10.2** Through consultation feedback you told us how important it was having the right services, facilities and transport opportunities available. You also told us of the importance of locating developments where they could be supported by infrastructure, and that it should be funded by new development. A wide range of infrastructure needs were highlighted, in particular related to transport, and water supply.

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## Our strategic priority for our infrastructure policies

- 10.3** **Strategic Priority:** Plan for transport, water, energy and digital networks; and health, education and cultural facilities; in the right places and built at the right times to serve our existing and growing communities.

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- 10.4** The relationship between homes, jobs, and sustainable transport opportunities has been a key influence on the development strategy proposed. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority is preparing a Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy which will identify measures needed to support the development identified in the Local Plan. A range of transport measures and transport corridor improvements are already planned, such as those being brought forward by the Greater Cambridge Partnership. The policies in the local plan require developments to be located and designed so that sustainable travel choices are available. They also require developments to contribute towards the cost of these transport schemes, to mitigate the impact of development.

- 10.5** The Local Plan has been informed by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Through engagement with a range of stakeholders this identifies the infrastructure, services and facilities that are needed to support the developments that have been proposed. The plan has also been subject to a Viability Assessment, which tests a variety of development types and the policy requirements of this plan, to demonstrate they are viable and can help fund the infrastructure that is needed. Even with contributions for development, the scale of infrastructure needed means that government funding, such as the £500m secured for transport improvements through the Greater Cambridge City Deal, will be needed.

- 10.6** Our policies require developments to enable the consolidation of goods to support local deliveries, charging points for electric vehicles, and broadband infrastructure. With electricity demands in the area expected to triple, a Cambridgeshire Local Area Energy Plan is currently being prepared to help ensure that the right energy infrastructure is in place to support growth and the transition to a low carbon future. Large developments we be required to prepare energy masterplans.
- 10.7** Finally, our policies safeguard important local infrastructure, such as the Mullard Radio Astronomy Observatory. They also ensure the impact of proposals for aviation related activities are fully considered.

### **What our infrastructure policies do**

- Detail how the transport impacts of development should be managed, and how new development should be located, designed and connected to the transport network to enable travel by sustainable modes;
- Support the development of new travel hub sites and seeks to support improvements to the quality and attractiveness of existing park and ride sites;
- Set out the requirements for cycle and vehicle parking, including infrastructure for electric vehicle charging;
- Ensure adequate provision for servicing and deliveries, the approach to micro-consolidation centres, and overnight and long-term lorry parking on industrial and distribution centres;
- Identify important infrastructure that should be safeguarded from adverse impacts that may arise from development;
- Control development related to aviation to take account of potential impacts on quality of life, amenity, the environment and aviation safety;
- Establish requirements for energy infrastructure masterplanning for large scale developments, to help facilitate decarbonisation and make best use of grid infrastructure;
- Require developers to contribute towards infrastructure delivery, to meet the requirements arising from the new development;
- Set out how developments should provide access to broadband, telecommunication infrastructure and smart infrastructure;
- Detail the construction management measures required to ensure that the environment and residential amenity are properly protected.

# Policy I/ST:

## Sustainable transport and connectivity

### What this policy does

- 10.8** This policy sets out how the transport impacts of development should be managed, and how new development should be located, designed and connected to the transport network to enable travel by sustainable modes.

#### Policy I/ST: Sustainable transport and connectivity

1. Development must be located and, through a vision-led approach, designed to reduce reliance on the car, and promote sustainable travel appropriate to its location.
2. Planning permission will only be granted for development where the site has (or will attain) sufficient integration and accessibility by walking, wheeling, cycling or public and community transport, having regard to:
  - a. Ensuring development is designed around the principles of walkable neighbourhoods and healthy towns through provision of safe, direct routes within permeable layouts that facilitate and encourage short distance trips by walking, wheeling and cycling between home and nearby centres of attraction, and to bus stops, mobility (travel) hubs or railway stations, to provide real travel choice for some or all of the journey;
  - b. Ensuring major developments are supported by high quality public transport linking them to Cambridge city centre and major centres of employment,
  - c. Provision of new mobility (travel) hubs enabling interchange between different modes including walking, wheeling and cycling with public transport, located within walking, wheeling and cycling travel distance of residents and incorporating facilities tailored to its location, such as secure cycle parking, dockless cycles and e-scooters, digital information, well designed wayfinding, pick-up/drop-off point, and may include other facilities such as parcel collection, café and public toilets.
  - d. Provision of high-quality new cycle, wheeling, walking and, where appropriate, equestrian routes that connect to existing networks, including the wider Rights of Way network, to strengthen connections between neighbourhoods, villages, towns, Cambridge, and the wider countryside;
  - e. Protection and improvement of existing walking, wheeling and cycle routes, including the Rights of Way network, to ensure the effectiveness and amenity of

- these routes is maintained, including through maintenance, crossings, signposting and waymarking, and, where appropriate, widening and lighting;
- f. Securing appropriate improvements to public and community transport (including infrastructure requirements);
  - g. Ensuring that where new road or road access is provided within or into the site it accords with the following:
    - i. it is designed to give appropriate priority to the needs of pedestrians, wheelers and cyclists over vehicular traffic, including their safety;
    - ii. it restricts through access for general motor traffic where appropriate;
    - iii. it minimises additional car traffic in the surrounding area; and
    - iv. there is safe and appropriate access to the adjoining road for all users.
  - h. Ensuring development is designed to be flexible to accommodate future growth, new forms of mobility and technological changes.
3. Developments will only be permitted where they do not have an unacceptable transport and highways safety impact. Developers will be required to demonstrate they will make adequate provision to mitigate the likely impacts (including cumulative impacts) of their proposal including environmental impacts (such as noise and pollution) and impact on amenity and health. This will be achieved through direct improvements and/or or contributions through planning obligations, community infrastructure levy or its successor, to address transport infrastructure in the wider area including across the district boundary, services or behavioural change measures to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport. Such measures should be provided to meet the first or early occupation of a site in order to influence travel behaviour from the outset.
4. Developers of 'large developments' or where a proposal is likely to have 'significant transport implications' will be required to demonstrate they have maximised opportunities for sustainable travel and will make adequate provision to mitigate the likely impacts through provision of a vision-led Transport Assessment and Travel Plan. Outline planning applications are required to submit a framework for the preparation of a Travel Plan. All other developments (other than householder applications) will be required to submit a vision-led Transport Statement.
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## Supporting information

### 10.9

The development strategy identified by this local plan seeks the co-location of homes close to jobs, services and facilities so people can meet their day to day needs locally, to widen travel choice, reduce the reliance on the car, and to support travel by walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport. It is important that individual development proposals also support sustainable travel opportunities.

- 10.10** New developments should make high quality places, designed around people, with slow traffic speeds and giving pedestrians and cyclists priority. New active travel infrastructure should be high quality and designed in accordance with LTN 1/20 and the Active Travel Strategy (and Toolkit).
- 10.11** The policy requires developers to consider the whole journey including the first/last mile and interchange between modes, to help break down physical and perceived barriers to improve connectivity. It is important that new development gives priority to appropriate public transport solutions, taking into consideration its context and location within the plan area, and is designed to be future proof, to respond to future growth, changing patterns of mobility and technological innovations such as autonomous vehicles and Mobility as a Service (MaaS).
- 10.12** This policy also ensures development will not have an unacceptable transport impact; increasing vehicular trips on already congested roads or generating more trips using public transport or the existing walking, wheeling and cycling network than there is currently capacity to safely accommodate. Wider impacts on health and the environment, including cumulative impacts, will also be taken into consideration. A vision-led Transport Assessment and Travel Plan will be required for larger development proposals which trigger the thresholds set out in Cambridgeshire County Council's Transport Assessment Requirements and developments with 'significant transport implications' including those located in particularly congested locations and/or generating larger numbers of trips and/or where there are particular local travel problems. Travel Plans must have measurable outputs, be related to the aims and objectives in the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan and provide monitoring and enforcement arrangements. Planning obligations may be an appropriate means of securing the provision of some or all of a Travel Plan, including the requirement for an annual monitoring and progress report. Submission of area-wide Travel Plans will be considered in appropriate situations.
- 10.13** The policy sets out clear requirements regarding transport infrastructure provision and connectivity that is expected to address increased demand arising from new developments through the planning application process. The Local Plan Transport Evidence Report demonstrates congestion within Greater Cambridge needs to be addressed to accommodate future growth, and there will likely need to be a vehicular 'trip budget' applied to mitigate the transport impacts of the strategic site allocations to carefully manage the number of additional vehicular trips using the local highway network during the busiest peak periods, which could be accompanied by limitations on car parking.
- 10.14** The policy reflects the aims of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (prepared by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) (as the local transport authority) and other documents adopted by CPCA and Cambridgeshire County Council including the Bus Strategy and Active Travel Strategy, addressing the specific challenges and local vision and opportunities. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority are currently preparing the Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy (GCTS), a 'child document' to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Transport and Connectivity Plan.

## **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic paper 8: Infrastructure (2025)
- Greater Cambridge Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2025)
- Greater Cambridge Local Plan Transport Evidence Report (2025)
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (2023)



# Policy I/TH:

## Travel Hub facilities

### What this policy does

- 10.15** This policy supports the development of new travel hub sites and seeks to support improvements to the quality and attractiveness of existing park and ride sites in order to optimise their contribution towards delivering modal shifts away from private car use within the City in line with the adopted Transport Strategy objectives. It also seeks to protect existing park and ride sites.

#### Policy I/TH: Travel Hub facilities

1. Proposals for new travel hub sites in appropriate locations and the intensification of existing travel hub sites will be supported in principle, subject to the satisfactory assessment of the proposed development's transport effects, and the demonstration of the need for and feasibility of such development.
2. Subject to other development plan policies, applications for supporting facilities at existing travel hubs or park and ride sites will be supported where it can be demonstrated that:
  - a. they complement and do not undermine the site's primary function as a strategic public transport facility. Drive-through facilities will not be supported;
  - b. they are integrated as part of the wider travel hub site in such a way that enhances the experience of public transport users and helps to promote public transport use;
  - c. existing buildings have been used, where possible;
  - d. any new buildings, street furniture and signage are of a scale and design appropriate to the location;
  - e. they do not undermine the vitality and viability of designated retail centres; and
  - f. they support the extended, safe use of park and ride sites throughout the day and into the evening for workers, guests and day visitors.
3. Proposals seeking to redevelop existing travel hubs or park and ride sites such that they can no longer serve a strategic public transport function will only be considered acceptable where it is demonstrated that there is no local need for the facility and suitable alternative provision is available to serve the needs of the wider transport network. This must include an assessment of the transport impacts of the proposed development.

## Supporting information

- 10.16** To maintain a high-quality environment across Greater Cambridge and reduce congestion on our transport network, we need to make it easy for car users, particularly those travelling to the City, to complete their journeys using alternative, sustainable modes of transport. The ability for people to change between transport modes is integral to improve the efficiency of the transport system and can be an important factor in reducing car dependency for whole journeys. The traditional form of “interchange” is the Park & Ride (P&R). P&R sites in Greater Cambridge are serviced by a high-frequency, direct bus service and form part of a wider transport strategy, which promotes modal shifts from private vehicle to public transport and active travel.
- 10.17** The Local Plan seeks to build on the success of Cambridge’s P&R facilities to ensure they can continue to be a viable, realistic sustainable alternative to car use for whole journeys, both day and night. There is great potential for the function of traditional P&R sites to be expanded to become “travel hubs” (or “mobility hubs”) that enable interchange between a range of modes transport and in a range of directions, rather than solely moving people from their car to a bus, or from Cambridge’s periphery to the city centre. This includes increasing the service and facility offer at traditional P&R sites and other strategic improvements identified in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Transport and Connectivity Plan. The creation of travel hubs and the creation of linked trips can play an important role in reducing road-traffic congestion in urban areas, vehicle-related pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, and the risks of road-traffic accidents.
- 10.18** Supporting facilities can enhance the offer of travel hub sites and enable linked trips. Supporting facilities can include safe and secure cycle parking, micro mobility hire and charging stations (for electric bikes and e-scooters), electric vehicle charging points, and walking infrastructure. More widely, they could also include complementary facilities such as renewable energy generation, micro-consolidation centres, cafés, and small shops, which will be considered and supported subject to impact assessment. Drive-throughs and other such uses that are considered to be in conflict with the travel hub’s primary function of transferring people from cars to other sustainable modes of transport to complete their onwards journey will not be considered supporting facilities when applying this policy.
- 10.19** Supporting facilities should complement the Travel Hub site’s primary transport functions. The design and location of park and ride facilities should be sympathetic to the character of the area, and they should not result in any significant harm to highways safety. Where cafés, and small shops are proposed, the Local Planning Authorities will expect planning applications to consider the commercial viability of the proposed development through the submission of a Business Case. Planning conditions and obligations may also be used to secure aspects of the development needed to sustain the long-term viability of the supporting facility or the wider travel hub site (e.g. controlling the operational hours of a supporting facility or securing contributions towards or the cross-subsidy of proposed facilities).

- 10.20** Travel hubs do not need to be limited to large-scale, edge-of-city sites, but can also include smaller, more local, mobility hubs. Such hubs can be tailored to meet the need of the locality and include a mix of transport opportunities relevant to the travel demand of the place.
- 10.21** Where proposals seek to introduce or redevelop travel hubs, the Local Planning Authorities will expect planning applications to include a Transport Assessment that, in addition to other requirements set out within the Development Plan, provides details of:
- changes to the overall modal share created by the proposal;
  - the future viability of public transport services, including those that will experience loss of patronage as a result of the new facility; and
  - any mitigation measures required to address any negative highways or transport impacts caused by the development.
- 10.22** Where proposals are located in the Green Belt, they will need to comply with national green belt policy requirements.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic Paper 8: Infrastructure (2025)
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (2023)

# Policy I/EV:

## Parking and electric vehicles

### What this policy does

- 10.23** This policy sets out the requirements for cycle and vehicle parking, including infrastructure for electric vehicle charging.
- 10.24** Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority as the local transport authority are currently preparing the Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy (GCTS), a 'child document' to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Transport and Connectivity Plan. The GCTS will set out the local vision and opportunities within Greater Cambridge and address the specific challenges and opportunities of the area.
- 10.25** As this transport strategy is still in development this may need to be updated to take account of it, and further guidance on parking may be included in the submission version of the local plan.

### Policy I/EV: Parking and electric vehicles

1. Provision for car and cycle parking within new development must be justified through a vision-led Transport Assessment / Statement using a design-led approach, taking into consideration:
  - a. the location and accessibility of the development;
  - b. the type and mix of uses;
  - c. the availability of local services and facilities;
  - d. car ownership levels and provision of electric vehicle charging facilities;
  - e. the need for disabled and inclusive parking;
  - f. the need for parking for visitors and deliveries;
  - g. the need for safe, secure, and convenient cycle parking to accommodate all types of cycles;
  - h. the availability of public transport and active travel routes; and
  - i. highway and user safety issues.
2. Cycle parking must:
  - a. Be conveniently sited;
  - b. Be Accessible and easy to use;
  - c. Be safe and secure;

- d. Be fit for purpose;
  - e. Be attractive;
  - f. Minimise conflicts between cycles, motor vehicles and pedestrians;
  - g. For shared cycle parking, include a cycle maintenance stand, be well managed and well maintained;
  - h. For residential development, be located in a purpose-built area at the front of the house or within a garage;
  - i. For residents, students and employees, be covered;
3. Cycle parking provision:
- a. At least 5-10% of cycle parking provision must be designed to accommodate non-standard cycles and should consider appropriate provision for electric charging points.
4. Developments likely to be used by people with mobility scooters should incorporate accessible, covered, and secure storage areas, and consider appropriate charging facilities.

**Use: Residential dwellings**

- Minimum standard: 1 space per bedroom

**Use: Guesthouses and hotels**

- Minimum standard: 2 spaces for every 5 members of staff, 2 spaces for every 10 bedrooms (minimum 2 spaces)

**Use: Nursing homes**

- Minimum standard: 2 spaces for every 5 members of staff, 1 visitor space for every 6 residents (Minimum 2 spaces)

**Use: Retirement homes/sheltered housing**

- Minimum standard: 2 spaces for every 5 members of staff, 1 space for every 6 residents. 1 visitor space for every 6 residents (minimum 2 spaces)

**Use: Student residential accommodation, residential schools, college or training centre**

- Minimum standard: 1 space per 2 bedspaces within City Centre, 2 spaces per 3 bedspaces for the rest of the city and South Cambs, 1 space for every 3 members of staff, 1 visitor space per 5 bedspaces

**Use: Hospitals**

- Minimum standard: 2 spaces for every 5 members of staff, 2 visitor spaces per consulting/treatment room, 1 visitor space for every 6 bedspaces

**Use: Food retail**

- Minimum standard: 1 space per 25m<sup>2</sup>

**Use: Non-food retail**

- Minimum standard: 1 space per 25m<sup>2</sup>

**Use: Retail warehouses**

- Minimum standard: 1 space per 25m<sup>2</sup>

**Use: Financial and professional services**

- Minimum standard: 1 space per 30m<sup>2</sup>

**Use: Food and drinks**

- Minimum standard: 2 spaces for every 5 members of staff, 1 space per 10m<sup>2</sup>

**Use: Pubs and bars**

- Minimum standard: 1 space per 20m<sup>2</sup>

**Use: Museums, Exhibitions Venues**

- Minimum standard: 2 spaces for every 5 members of staff, some visitor parking on merit

**Use: Sports and recreational facilities and swimming baths**

- Minimum standard: 2 spaces for every 5 members of staff, 1 for every 15 seats provided for spectators and;
- 1 space for every 25m<sup>2</sup> net floor area or 1 space for every 10 m<sup>2</sup> of pool area

**Use: Places of assembly, including: cinema, theatres, stadia, auditoria and concert halls**

- Minimum standard: 2 spaces for every 5 members of staff, 1 space for every 4 seats

**Use: Place of worship, public halls and community centres**

- Minimum standard: 1 space for every 3 seats

**Use: Offices**

- Minimum standard: 1 per 30m<sup>2</sup>

**Use: General Industry**

- Minimum standard: 1 space for every 3 members of staff, 1 space per 40m<sup>2</sup>

**Use: Storage and other B use classes**

- Minimum standard: On merit

**Use: Clinics and Surgeries**

- Minimum standard: 2 spaces for every 5 members of staff, 2 spaces per consulting room

**Use: Non-residential schools**

- Minimum standard: 2 spaces for every 5 members of staff, Cycle spaces to be provided for 50% of primary school children to include a scooter parking area, and 75 per cent of secondary school children, some visitor parking

**Use: Non-residential higher and further education**

- Minimum standard: 2 spaces for every 5 members of staff, Cycle parking for 70% of students based on anticipated peak number of students on site at any one time.

**Use: Crèches and nurseries**

- Minimum standard: 2 spaces for every 5 members of staff, 1 visitor space per 5 children, an area to be provided for the parking of cargo bicycles/trailers

5. Wherever parking is provided provision must be made for designated accessible car parking spaces for disabled motorists and passengers (Blue Badge holders). Minimum levels of car parking provision for blue badge holders will be required in line with national guidance. Designated disabled parking must:
    - a. Be distributed to minimise pedestrian travel distances to destinations and as close as is feasible to the accessible entrance to the building with which the parking spaces are associated;
    - b. Be provided as a minimum in accordance with Table 2 of the BS 8300-1;
    - c. For uses such as hospitals, medical centres and surgeries, provide evidence reviewing local need and respond with a higher percentage of designated parking if necessary;
    - d. Where charging points for electric vehicles are provided, equivalent provision should also be made;
  6. A site-wide Electric Vehicle charging strategy must be provided for large-scale Major sites detailing the location and phasing of the charge point installations, and grid capacity. Implementation of which would be secured by condition or S106.
- 

## Supporting information

- 10.26** There is a higher propensity to cycle in Greater Cambridge than nationally, and increased use of electric cycles is enabling longer journeys. The plan supports this sustainable mode of travel by requiring space for parking of all types of cycles which is secure and convenient.
- 10.27** Cycle parking must be at least as convenient to access as car parking, located as close as possible to the main entrance or exit points of buildings and have good lighting and natural surveillance. It must not be sited where it obstructs pedestrian or vehicle movement. All cycle parking is to be easy and safe to access and use. Routes to cycle parking must be well-maintained and lit, clearly signed, and provide unobstructed, step-free access, avoiding inconvenient detours, steep slopes, narrow paths, or tight turns.
- 10.28** Cycle parking must be secure, with high-quality equipment and materials that provide strong support and enable both the frame and wheels to be locked. Spaces should be



internal where practicable and appropriate. Facilities must be inclusive for all users and all types of cycles, avoiding any need to lift, drag, or perform difficult movements to park a cycle. Long stay cycle parking should be covered. The design of cycle parking should complement their surroundings, be visually attractive, and be clearly identifiable to users with visual impairments.

- 10.29** In residential developments, cycle parking should be located in a purpose-built area at the front of the house or within a garage. It may only be located in a rear garden if placing it at the front would conflict with the established character of the surrounding area and if there is no garage available. Shared cycle parking must have a funded maintenance programme and include provision for monitoring and removing abandoned cycles.
- 10.30** Larger developments and those within accessible locations will need to be able to accommodate space for dockless cycle and scooter hire schemes, such as at mobility (travel) hubs and key destinations. Cambridge City Cycle Parking Guide provides further guidance on the provision and design of cycle parking.
- 10.31** Car Parking is important so vehicles can be stored safely where they don't cause highway problems. Parking displacement and inappropriate car parking impacts on quality of place, causes nuisance and can hinder emergency services. However, car parking is land hungry, can be unsightly, undermines the quality of place, and can discourage travel by sustainable modes.
- 10.32** It is therefore important that the right levels of car parking are provided in the right places. In areas where there are alternatives for travel, such as close to a High Quality public transport interchange and well served by active travel, this could mean limited provision or car free development could be acceptable. In more rural areas where people are more reliant on cars more spaces may be needed. A design-led approach responding to the location and the opportunities it provides is required. The approach will be kept under review prior to the proposed submission stage of this local plan, as the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority review the transport strategy for the area.
- 10.33** Innovative and flexible solutions to reduce car parking in appropriate locations, such as through smart parking and the provision of car clubs and shared parking, including car barns on the edge of accessible larger developments, are encouraged whilst avoiding displacement parking. Ahead of the proposed submission stage the Councils will give further consideration to the potential for car free development in particular contexts, including the relationship of this with cycle standards.
- 10.34** Residential garages will only be counted towards car and cycle parking provision where they meet a minimum size requirement; 3.3m x 6m for a car, with an additional 1m at the end and/or 650-750mm at the side of a garage to park cycles.
- 10.35** Guidance on the design and provision of designated accessible car parking spaces for blue badge holders is set out in BS 8300-1:2018 – Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment – External environment. Code of practice (British Standards institute, 2018), Inclusive Mobility: A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrians and Transport Infrastructure (DfT, 2021) and National Building Regulations. In



developments such as hospitals, medical centres and surgeries, which often attract a high number of blue badge holders, applicants must review local need and it will likely be necessary to exceed the minimum standards set out in BS 8300-1.

- 10.36** Building Regulations require Electric Vehicle charging provision for residential and non-residential developments but it is important that in large and strategic developments site wide Electric Vehicle charging needs for other land uses and visitors are considered holistically. Developers must ensure infrastructure for Electric Vehicles is considered and designed-in from the outset and is located so that it does not cause street clutter or conflict with active travel routes and users, and should have regard to section 2.5xvii of Cambridgeshire County Council's On-street Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Policy which complements the Cambridgeshire Highways Development Management General Principles for Development – January 2023 – Amended, and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic paper 8: Infrastructure (2025)
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (2023)

# Policy I/SD:

## Servicing and last-mile deliveries

### What this policy does

- 10.37** This policy sets out how development proposals should include adequate provision for servicing and deliveries. It also establishes the Local Planning Authority's approach to micro-consolidation centres and overnight and long-term lorry parking on industrial and distribution centres.

#### Policy I/SD: Servicing and last-mile deliveries

1. All new development must include adequate provisions for servicing appropriate to the scale, form and location of the proposal, including provision for commercial vehicles to park and turn safely within the development with on-street parking bays only being used where this is not possible. Where on-street loading bays are proposed, this must avoid causing illegal or dangerous parking.
2. A Delivery and Servicing Plan will be required for proposals where the delivery and/or servicing operations and requirements have the potential to negatively impact highway safety and/or the road network. Alternative delivery and servicing practices and emerging technologies should be considered as part of development proposals, for example: use of existing or provision of new micro-consolidation centres; re-timing of deliveries; smart or joint procurement measures; cargo bikes, cycle freight, electric and low or zero-emission vehicles; and delivery lockers in residential developments.
3. Proposals for new or enhanced micro-consolidation centres will be supported in principle where they will serve local areas that have an identifiable need, provided that they:
  - a. do not cause unacceptable impacts on Greater Cambridge's strategic road networks;
  - b. reduce road danger, noise and emissions from freight trips; and
  - c. enable sustainable last-mile movements, including by cycle, electric vehicles and/or innovative delivery solutions.
4. Proposals for any new industrial and distribution centres that will generate significant freight traffic must provide sufficient facilities for long-term and overnight lorry parking.

## Supporting information

- 10.38** Development proposals should facilitate safe, clean, and efficient deliveries and servicing to minimise impacts on the amenity of neighbours, the environment, and the safety of the highways network. These should be integrated into the design of any development at an early stage.
- 10.39** Growth in the demand for home deliveries increased during the COVID-19 Pandemic following the surge in online ordering. The resulting, sustained rise in deliveries generated a greater number of vehicle movements to homes and businesses across the UK. In built-up areas like Cambridge, this can add to vehicle congestion, reduce air quality, and create conflicts between freight movement operations and vulnerable road users.
- 10.40** Micro-consolidation centres (sometimes called last-mile hubs) are an alternative delivery and servicing practice that can help to mitigate the negative impacts of increased delivery movements. They are small-scale facilities, located within or close to urban or neighbourhood centres, where parcels and other orders can be grouped before they are delivered to their final destination. Micro-consolidation centres help to reduce the number of separate, individual deliveries that are made to homes and businesses. Their location means that last-mile trips in the delivery chain can be made in a more sustainable, less impactful manner, for example, using cargo bikes or electric vans for bulkier goods. Micro-consolidation centres can also help to ensure that deliveries are targeted at off-peak travel periods, thereby further helping to reduce traffic congestion during peak travel periods.
- 10.41** Other innovative and flexible solutions to local delivery needs and last-mile logistics are also encouraged. Digital and online infrastructure can support better management of delivery timing and vehicle movements. Future proofing consolidation facilities will also help to facilitate the integration of technological improvements such as the use of drones and autonomous delivery vehicles.
- 10.42** Delivery and Servicing Plans will help to ensure that an appropriate strategy is in place for delivery and servicing operations to be undertaken safely and without significant detriment to local communities and the environment – these can be integrated into wider Travel Plans. Delivery and Servicing Plans will typically include:
- the physical design and layout of the site, and how it provides adequate provision for delivery and servicing activity from the commencement of the site's use;
  - the day-to-day policies and measures that will be implemented so that deliveries and servicing are appropriately managed, and how the local disruption and environmental impacts of that activity will be minimised over time. It should set appropriate targets for continuous improvement; and
  - the forecast trip rates for the site.
- 10.43** Delivery and Servicing Plans should be incorporated into a Travel Plan where they are required.

- 10.44** Planning conditions and planning obligations will be used to help secure and enforce appropriate arrangements.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic paper 8: Infrastructure (2025)

# Policy I/Sl:

## Safeguarding important infrastructure

### What this policy does

- 10.45** This policy sets out the important infrastructure that should be safeguarded from any adverse impacts that may arise from development.

#### Policy I/Sl: Safeguarding important infrastructure

1. The following land, identified on the Policies Map, are subject to Safeguarding Directions:
  - a. A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet Improvement Scheme
  - b. East West Rail Scheme
2. Existing rail freight facilities and sidings at Duxford, Foxton, Fulbourn and Whittlesford, safeguarded for rail freight and interchange facilities.
3. Development, including change of use, which is likely to lead to an increase in the number of people living, working or congregating on land within the Cambridge Airport Public Safety Zone, as identified on the Policies Map, will not be permitted.
4. Development proposals within Cambridge Airport's Air Safeguarding Zones will be the subject of consultation with the operator of the airport and the Ministry of Defence. Restrictions in height, or changes to the detailed design of development may be necessary to mitigate the risk of aircraft accident and maintain the operational integrity of the airport.
5. Development proposals within Duxford Aerodrome's Air Safeguarding Zone will be the subject of consultation with the operator of the aerodrome.
6. Development proposals within the Lord's Bridge Restricted and Consultation Areas
  - a. Within the 'Lord's Bridge Restricted Area' (defined on the Policies Map), planning permission will only be granted for development that would not result in any risk of interference to the Mullard Radio Astronomy Observatory at Lord's Bridge.
  - b. Within the 'Lords Bridge Consultation Area 1' (defined on the Policies Map), development proposals that could adversely affect the operation of the Mullard Radio Astronomy Observatory at Lord's Bridge will be subject to consultation with the University of Cambridge, and account will be taken of the risk of interference to the equipment being used at the Observatory. Planning permission will be

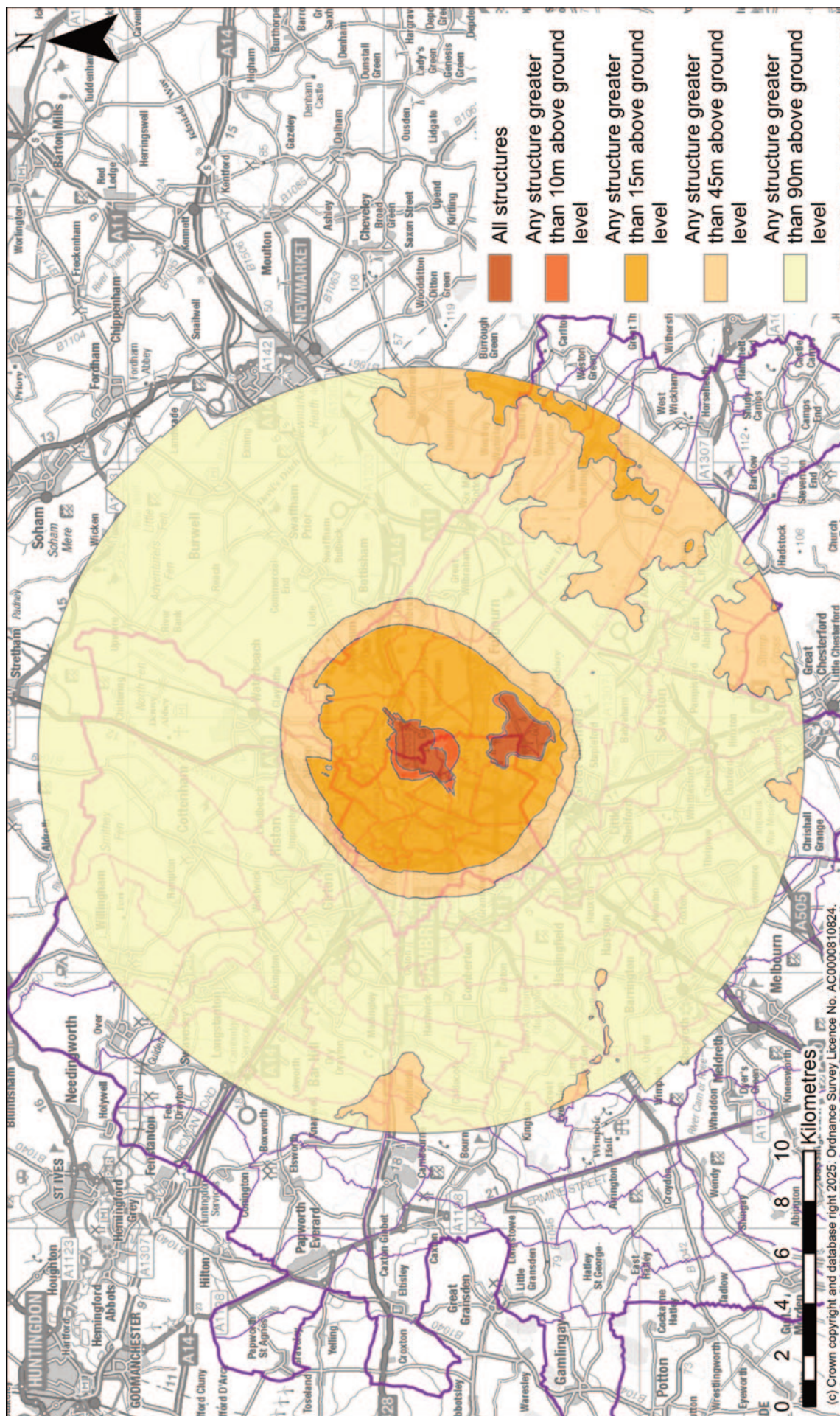
refused where interference would be caused that could not be overcome by conditions or by the use of planning obligations.

- c. Within the 'Lords Bridge Consultation Area 2' (defined on the Policies Map), development proposals for telecommunications and microwave operations that could adversely affect the operation of the Mullard Radio Astronomy Observatory at Lord's Bridge will be subject to consultation with the University of Cambridge, and account will be taken of the risk of interference to the equipment being used at the Observatory. Planning permission will be refused where interference would be caused that could not be overcome by conditions or by the use of planning obligations.
  7. Development required for operational defence purposes within and around Bassingbourn Barracks and Barton Road Rifle Range, as identified on the Policies Map, will be supported if it sustains the ongoing functionality and viability of these defence establishments. Non-defence development will only be supported where it would not adversely affect defence related operations.
  8. Development proposals within the East 2 WAM Network safeguarding areas, will be the subject of consultation with the MOD where development triggers the consultation requirement of the safeguarding area. Planning permission will be refused where interference to the East 2 WAM Network would be caused that could not be overcome by conditions or by the use of planning obligations.
- 

## Supporting information

- 10.46** Greater Cambridge has an expansive infrastructure network that helps support many important functions both nationally and locally. It is important that infrastructure is protected from development proposals that would adversely affect their operation.
- 10.47** The Secretary of State for Transport issued Safeguarding Directions for the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet highway improvement scheme (8 September 2022) and East West Rail (14 November 2024), to protect the land needed for delivering the transport projects. The Local Planning Authority is required to consult National Highways and/or East West Rail Company on any proposals for development within the safeguarded areas, shown on the policies map, to ensure that any potential conflicts between proposed developments and the transport projects are identified and addressed early on.
- 10.48** The Greater Cambridge Partnership has submitted applications through the Transport and Works Act Order process to obtain authorisation for the construction and operation of new public transport schemes on three corridors into Cambridge; the Cambourne to Cambridge, Waterbeach to Cambridge and Cambridge South East Transport (Phase 2) schemes. Such routes may be subject to future safeguarding.
- 10.49** Rail has an important role in the movement of freight. There are a number of railway sidings within Greater Cambridge, which either are used, or have the potential to be used in the future, which have been safeguarded in successive local plans. It is





**Figure 135:** Cambridge Airport Safety Zone



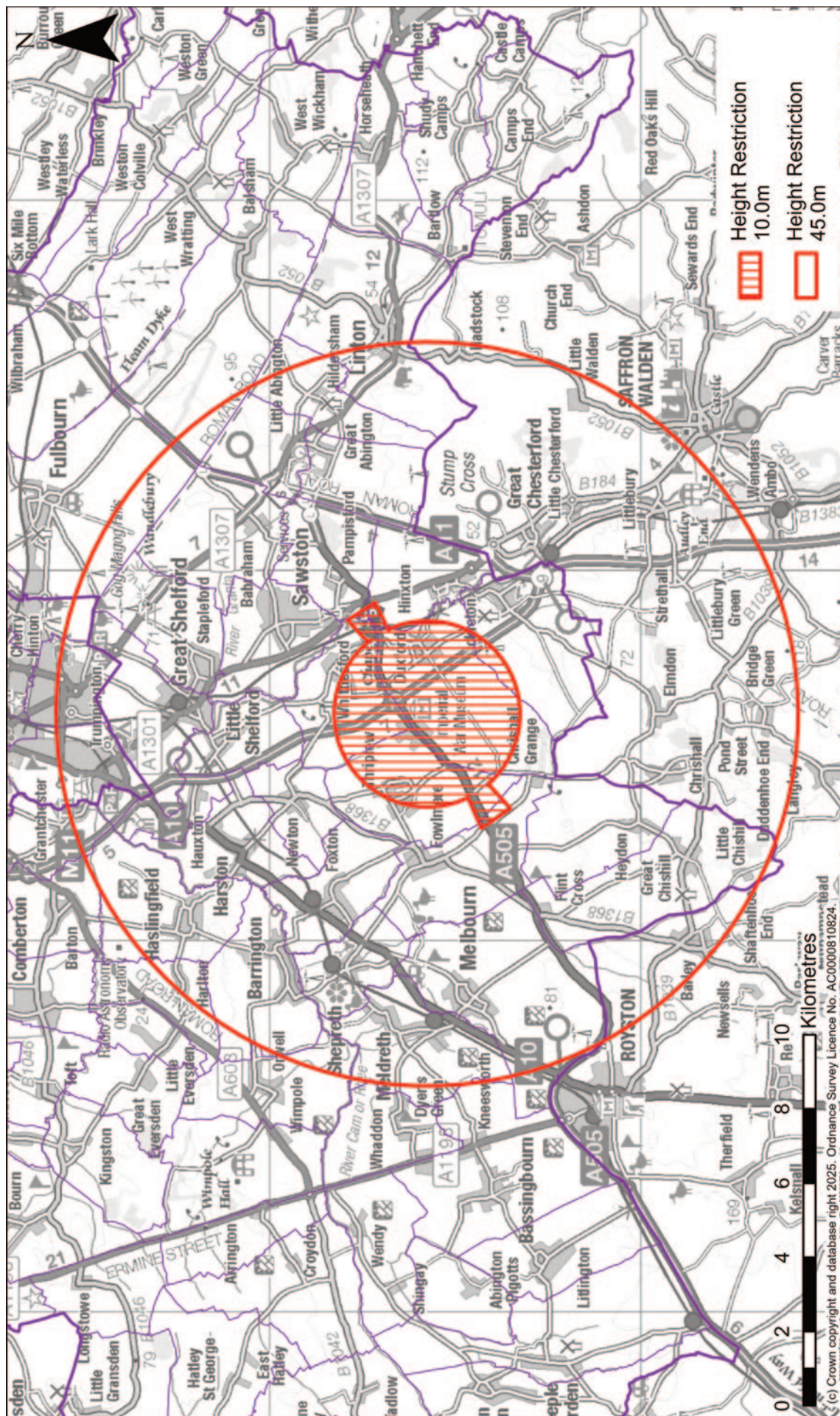
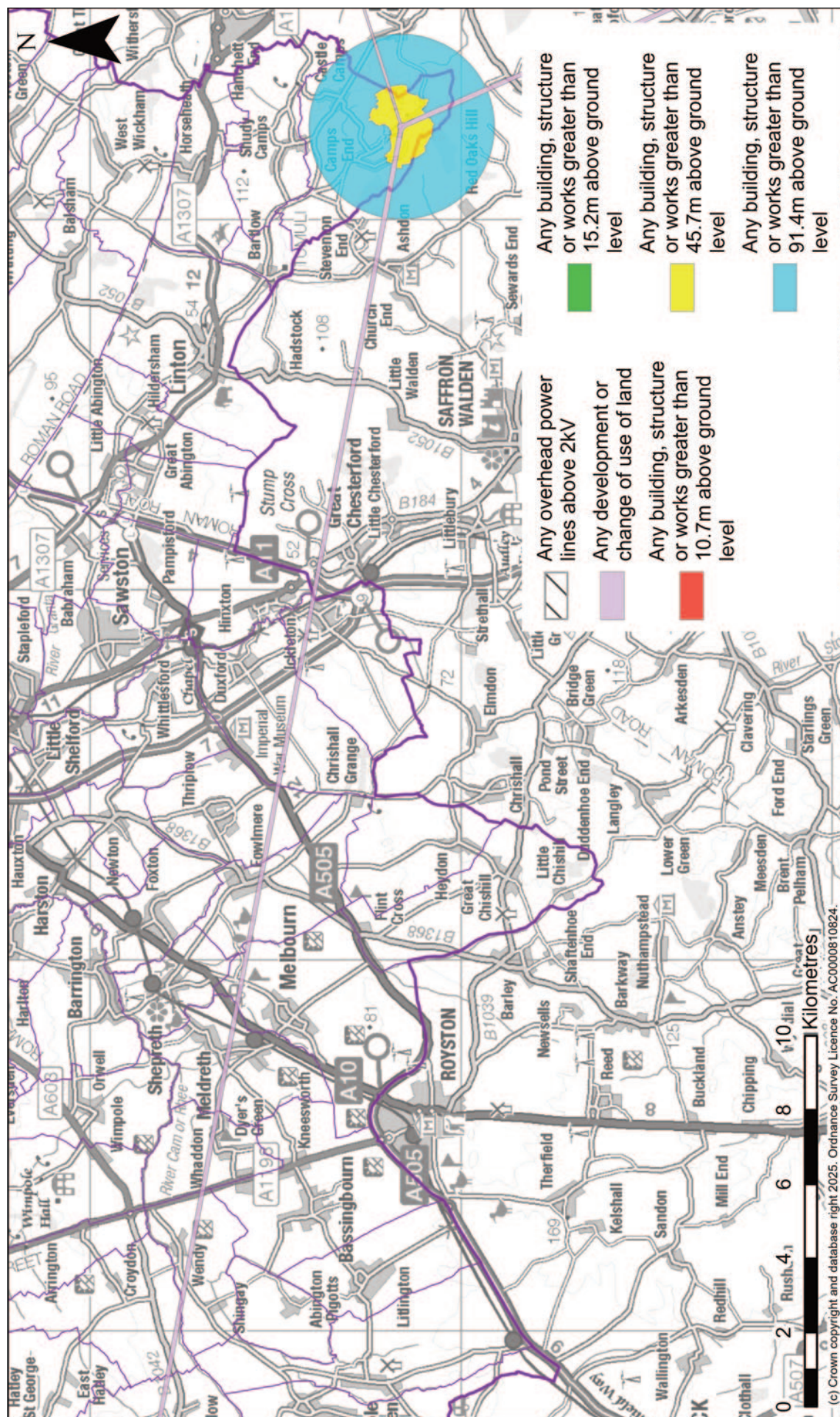


Figure 136: Duxford Aerodrome Safety Zone





understood that the sidings at Fulbourn are no longer connected to the rail network, so is not proposed to be carried forward into this plan.

- 10.50** Although the Local Plan anticipates the Cambridge Airport site being redeveloped, whilst it remains operational planning decisions must take full account of safety requirements.
- 10.51** Public safety zones are identified where development is restricted whilst the airport is operational in order to minimise the number of people at risk of death or injury in the event of an aircraft crash on take-off or landing. The Airport Safeguarding zone is in place to ensure the safety of aircraft, their passengers and crew while taking off or landing or while flying in the vicinity of Cambridge Airport. This is achieved by assessing proposed development so as to:
- protect the air through which aircraft fly;
  - protect the integrity of radar and other electronic aids to air navigation;
  - protect visual aids, such as approach and runway lighting, by preventing them from being obscured, or preventing the installation of other lights; and
  - avoid any increase in the risk to aircraft of a bird strike.
- 10.52** Applications for development within Cambridge Airport's Air Safeguarding Zone (shown in **Figure 135**) will be the subject of consultation with the operator of the airport and the Ministry of Defence. Restrictions in height, or changes to the detailed design of development may be necessary to mitigate the risk of aircraft accident and maintain the operational integrity of the airport.
- 10.53** A similar Aerodrome Safeguarding Zone applies to the Imperial War Museum Duxford (Shown in **Figure 136**). Applications for development within Duxford's Air Safeguarding Zones will be the subject of consultation with the aerodrome operator.
- 10.54** The internationally important Mullard Radio Astronomy Observatory at Lord's Bridge contains unique radio and optical telescopes which are highly susceptible to many forms of interference, specifically electrical interference, light pollution and mechanical vibration. Arrangements are made to consult the University of Cambridge about the technical consequences for the observatory of proposed development. Harm caused to the Observatory will be overcome with use of conditions or planning obligations to regulate the installation and use of equipment likely to interfere with the operation of the observatory.
- 10.55** Bassingbourn Barracks and Barton Road Rifle Range have been identified as sites that play a role in supporting national defence activities. National planning policy sets out that planning policies should recognise and support development required for operational defence and security purposes. As per national planning policy, these operational defence sites will be protected from adverse impacts that may arise from other developments.
- 10.56** The East 2 WAM Network contributes to aviation safety by feeding into the air traffic management system in the Eastern areas of England. There is the potential for development to impact on the operation and/or capability of this technical asset which

consists of nodes and connecting pathways. Development proposals within East 2 WAM Network safeguarding areas (shown in **Figure 137**), will be the subject of consultation with the MOD where development triggers the consultation requirement of the safeguarding area. Harm caused to the East 2 WAM Network will be overcome with use of conditions or planning obligations.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic paper 8: Infrastructure (2025)



# Policy I/AD:

## Aviation development

### What this policy does

- 10.57** This policy guides development proposals related to aviation, and sets out in what circumstances, and how, developments should take account of potential impacts on quality of life, amenity, the environment and aviation safety (see also Policy I/SI: Safeguarding Important Infrastructure).

#### Policy I/AD: Aviation development

1. Aviation development at Cambridge Airport will only be supported where it would not have a significant adverse impact on the environment and on residential amenity.
2. In assessing any planning applications for new airfields or flying sites, or for the expansion or intensification of use of any existing airfields or flying sites, the Local Planning Authority will take account of the following factors:
  - a. The economic, employment or emergency services advantages likely to accrue to the area;
  - b. The likely noise impact of the proposal on local residents and the users / occupiers of any other noise-sensitive buildings in the area, including (where relevant) any cumulative impacts of flying in the area;
  - c. Any resulting increase in the range of recreation provision in the area;
  - d. Any safety issues arising from the proposal, including the safety of users of public rights of way close to, or crossing, the site;
  - e. The effect of the proposal on sites with the potential for renewable energy generation.
3. Aircraft noise impacts, including engine testing, will usually need to be assessed in terms of aircraft noise exposure contours values for daytime and night-time using the noise metrics, Lden (day-evening-night average), LAeq,16h (daytime- 0700 to 2300hrs) and LAeq,8hr (nighttime- 2300 to 0700hrs), to assess the impact of aircraft noise , supplemented as appropriate by other considerations such as a single event levels (SELs) of individual events.
4. In assessing the impact of noise, consideration will be given, where relevant, to the types of flying activities that are proposed at the site (or are likely to be associated with it), e.g. aerobatics, aero-towing, ballooning, flying training (including ab-initio flights), helicopters, historic aircraft, parachuting, and special event days. Applicants will be required to state what types of flying activities are proposed, and on what scale.

5. Other factors relevant to a judgement as to whether or not a development would give rise to an unacceptable amount of noise could be:
  - a. The type and weight of aircraft to be operated from the airfield;
  - b. The total number of proposed movements in and out of the airfield;
  - c. The type of aircraft activities proposed including any touch-and-go movements or circuit training;
  - d. The proposed total number of daily movements;
  - e. The proposed hours of operation.

Where necessary or appropriate, conditions may be imposed to cover these and any other essential matters. In certain cases, such conditions may allow for a limited number of exceptions above the imposed restriction.

6. In all cases the Local Planning Authority will require applicants to state whether their proposals are intended to provide for these kinds of activities and, if so, to describe their intended scale. In appropriate cases the significance of any potential adverse impact on quality of life / amenity arising from proposed flying activities may be assessed by:
  - a. the use of on-site demonstrations, or
  - b. by the imposition of a temporary permission to give a reasonable 'trial run' during which a careful programme of monitoring will be undertaken.
7. Development proposals on small airfields / airstrips in rural areas should demonstrate the ability to use the site for activities beyond recreation and low-level activity without detrimentally affecting the character, appearance, and residential amenity of the surrounding area.
8. Where planning permission is granted, conditions may be imposed in appropriate circumstances to restrict matters such as:
  - a. The total number of take-offs and / or touch-and-go movements (normally on a daily maximum basis);
  - b. The types or weights of aircraft to be operated; and
  - c. The hours of operation of the site.

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## Supporting information

- 10.58** Although the Cambridge Airport site is intended to be closed as part of the Cambridge East Development proposals, it may still be operational during the early years of this local plan. The policy therefore provides a context for considering any development proposals necessary for its operation in the short term. The health impact assessment submitted alongside planning applications will need to demonstrate that the potential impacts on health have been considered at the planning and design stage.

- 10.59** South Cambridgeshire has a long association with flying and, in addition to Cambridge Airport there are a number of established aerodromes and smaller airfields in the district, including IWM Duxford with its large collection of flying historic aircraft and internationally renowned air shows. Aviation contributes to national, regional and local economies and there are a number of industries established on local airfields. However, airfields can also raise environmental issues which need careful consideration to balance the different interests that can be in conflict. In particular, noise resulting from flying activities has been a source of complaints in the past and is still a very sensitive issue in some areas of the district.
- 10.60** This policy is intended to provide a framework within which any individual proposal can be considered in the light of all the particular local circumstances. Aircraft noise will usually be assessed in terms of the daytime/night time noise metrics supplemented as appropriate by other considerations such as the maximum noise level of individual events. It may also be necessary to adopt acceptability criteria for the noise exposure level appropriate to local circumstances, for example to account for public perception of increased annoyance where local background noise conditions are unusually low or where flying activities are already experienced from the use of other local airfields.
- 10.61** Certain types of flying activity may result in a different level or type of potential impact from that caused by conventional modern aeroplanes taking part in 'normal' flights. Such disturbance may often (but not always) be more severe. For example, the noise impacts from helicopters can be considerable in an urban environment like Cambridge, where there are few locations where a heliport could be located without having major impacts on residents. Accordingly, proposals for new heliports will need very careful consideration.
- 10.62** It will be helpful in the determination of planning applications if the promoters of any proposal are able to demonstrate the existence (or proposed existence) of a local liaison committee comprising representatives of a suitable range of interested local bodies. The completion of a Section 106 planning obligation may be an appropriate way of demonstrating this commitment.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic paper 8: Infrastructure (2025)

# Policy I/EI:

## Energy infrastructure masterplanning

### What this policy does

- 10.63** This policy sets out requirements for energy infrastructure masterplanning for large scale developments, to help facilitate decarbonisation and make best use of grid infrastructure.

#### Policy I/EI: Energy infrastructure masterplanning

1. Developments of either 250 or more dwellings or 10,000m<sup>2</sup> or more of non-residential floorspace will be required to provide Energy Masterplans of a scale and nature that would allow for the benefits of smart energy management to be identified and secured. These masterplans should include an assessment of:
  - a. the capacity of infrastructure to support the development.
  - b. any necessary reinforcements to grid infrastructure.
  - c. the approach to energy provision to support net zero carbon development in line with the requirements of policy CC/NZ.
  - d. Measures to help reduce peak demands on the electricity grid including incorporation of smart meters and provision for battery storage and smart energy management of electric vehicle charge points in order to shift demand away from peak times and help to smooth demand profiles.
2. To help support necessary grid reinforcements land adjacent to existing grid infrastructure, for example primary sub-stations, shall be safeguarded from other forms of development.

### Supporting information

- 10.64** Work carried out to assess electricity grid capacity for Greater Cambridge has highlighted the need to triple capacity to support the development planned in the area under existing local plans and support the electrification of transport. The electricity grid serving the area has also seen a significant growth in renewable and low carbon energy generation.



- 10.65** While these capacity issues can be resolved through traditional grid reinforcement routes, there are opportunities to take a more joined up approach to infrastructure provision in order to support the transition to a net zero carbon society and open up the potential for some infrastructure to be forward funded to help speed up the delivery of key development sites.
- 10.66** Work is currently underway by the Cambridgeshire local authorities and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (Combined Authority) to develop a digital Cambridgeshire Local Area Energy Plan, which will identify the infrastructure required to support growth and decarbonisation across the area, data that will be shared with UK Power Networks to help inform their business planning. The Local Area Energy Plan will be at a strategic level and will present a picture of capacity at a moment in time. As more detailed work on masterplanning of strategic developments progresses, greater clarity can be provided as to the actual energy requirements and the infrastructure required to support development, data that can be used to keep the Cambridgeshire Local Area Energy Plan up to date.
- 10.67** This policy seeks to ensure that this approach is integrated at a very early stage, via the development of energy masterplans for strategic developments. This approach can also help to support funding of such infrastructure, for example as was the case for the provision of new infrastructure to support the development of the Cambridge East Grid and Trumpington Primary Sub Station, where the case was made for full Ofgem funding for the infrastructure given the level of employment growth that the new infrastructure would help to support. Note that the approach to grid infrastructure capacity to support new renewable energy generation is considered as part of policy CC/RE.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic paper 8: Infrastructure (2025)

# Policy I/ID:

## Infrastructure and delivery

### What this policy does

- 10.68** This policy seeks to ensure there is sufficient infrastructure capacity to support and meet all the requirements arising from the new development, and at the time when they are needed. Developers will be required to deliver infrastructure directly, or fund infrastructure in full or part through financial contributions including Section 106 planning obligations and/or Community Infrastructure Levy or its successor.

#### Policy I/ID: Infrastructure and delivery

1. Planning permission will only be granted for proposals that have made suitable arrangements for the improvement or provision of infrastructure necessary to make the scheme acceptable in planning terms. Where necessary developers will be required to deliver infrastructure directly, or contribute through planning obligations, Community Infrastructure Levy or its successor. The nature, scale and phasing of any obligations sought will be related to the form of the development and its potential impact upon the surrounding area.
2. New development must be co-ordinated and phased in tandem with the provision of appropriate physical and social infrastructure. In instances where the infrastructure provision is to be phased, the planning application must be accompanied by a phasing strategy. Infrastructure provision should reflect the needs of the area as identified within Development Plan policies and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
3. Proposals for new development will be required to demonstrate adequate capacity exists or can be secured both on and off site to serve the development. Where existing infrastructure will be placed under strain due to the impact of new development, improvements to existing infrastructure or compensatory provision should be made so that an appropriate level of infrastructure is maintained. Where appropriate, contributions may also be required towards the future maintenance and upkeep of facilities, either in the form of initial support or in perpetuity, in accordance with Government guidance.
4. The infrastructure needs of development proposals that form part of a potentially wider site will be assessed in terms of the capacity of the site as a whole.
5. Applicants should take account of the Development Plan policies and any applicable Community Infrastructure Levy, or its successor, when developing proposals and acquiring land.

## Utilities Statements

6. A Utilities Statement will be required for all planning applications for major development. A Utilities Statement should provide details of how the proposed development will connect to existing utility infrastructure systems, including:
  - a. Electricity;
  - b. Gas;
  - c. Telecommunications and digital infrastructure;
  - d. Potable water supply;
  - e. Foul and surface-water drainage.
7. A Utilities Statement should demonstrate that the development will not result in undue pressure on the delivery of those services. Where new infrastructure or improvements to existing infrastructure are needed to accommodate the needs of the proposed development, the Utilities Statement should include details of any engagement and agreements made with network operators or utilities providers that have informed the planning application.

## Viability

8. Development proposals will be expected to comply with all relevant policy requirements established in the Development Plan. If an applicant wishes to make a case that viability should be considered on a development-specific basis, they should provide clear evidence of the specific issues that would prevent delivery, including measures assessed to address these.
  9. A viability assessment will need to be submitted that demonstrates that the proposed development cannot be viably developed at the current time. That assessment will be subject to independent review for which the applicant will bear the cost.
  10. Where the Councils determine the benefits of the development outweigh any harm arising due to not fulfilling the policy requirements, the Councils will determine the balance of planning obligations and will, where appropriate, require a review and clawback mechanism to be incorporated into legal agreements to ensure that additional contributions are provided overtime should viability improve.
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## Supporting information

- 10.69** Infrastructure is an all-encompassing term that includes but is not limited to roads; public transport; active travel; utilities; the public realm; community safety; public art; facilities and services such as schools, libraries, healthcare, waste management, community centres and halls, cultural and faith facilities as well as parks, open spaces, playgrounds, indoor and outdoor sports facilities, biodiversity, and burial spaces.

- 10.70** All new development in Greater Cambridge must be supported by the provision of adequate infrastructure to support the development proposal and the delivery of sustainable, healthy communities. This may include new facilities and services or enhancements to existing provision. The impact of a development on local infrastructure will depend on the type of development proposed, its scale, and what existing provision is available to accommodate the needs arising.
- 10.71** Meeting development standards, such as those prescribed in local planning policy, site-specific works, and contributing towards infrastructure improvements, are an integral part of the acceptability of a development proposal in planning terms and are normally required to be implemented as part of the delivery of a development scheme. It is therefore important that the cost of these is factored into the cost of a development, including the land value to acquire a development site.
- 10.72** For the Greater Cambridge area, the infrastructure needed to support planned growth over the plan period, and deliver the spatial strategy, is set out the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), which has been informed through engagement with relevant services providers. Where appropriate, account has been had to ongoing management and maintenance, the need fund initial establishment, and any monitoring requirements. The infrastructure identified in the IDP will be delivered through a combination of public and private sector investment, including through the use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and planning obligations.
- 10.73** Major developments, particularly within strategic growth sites, provide opportunities for new on-site infrastructure provision to serve the development and the needs of the wider area. The site allocation policies and IDP help to identify requirements and considerations for infrastructure within specific sites and areas. This can and should be supplemented with site-wide master-planning to ensure the delivery of infrastructure and services is coordinated – it is the right size, in the right location, phased to support the pace of development, integrated into development proposals in accordance with a design-led approach, and issues of future management and transfer are addressed. Development which is poorly programmed can lead to infrastructure problems and can negatively impact local services and communities. In addition, developers are encouraged to design to adoptable standards and seek adoption of roads and spaces where possible.
- 10.74** Some public services can successfully share facilities such as libraries, health facilities and meeting rooms. Co-location can make service provision more efficient and provide opportunities to minimise on-going costs. Service providers and other stakeholders should be engaged early in the planning process to enable such opportunities to be realised.
- 10.75** Individual development proposals within strategic growth areas will be required to contribute fairly and equitably towards the infrastructure needs of the growth area, through both on-site provision and financial contributions to relevant off-site requirements.
- 10.76** While smaller developments, not part of strategic growth sites, offer less opportunity for on-site provision, individually and cumulatively they are likely to require physical works or other forms of improvement to support them.

**10.77** The introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will ensure that new development helps to fund the cost of the new or enhanced infrastructure and services. CIL will work in tandem with planning obligations that are required to manage site specific requirements and impacts. To assist developers and others to understand what infrastructure will fall to CIL to fund and the types of planning obligations that may be sought, and how these may be best met, the Council will update its Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document.

**10.78** Where development is likely to trigger a requirement for planning obligations, it is expected that applicants engage in pre-application discussions with the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service to agree draft Section 106 Heads of Terms that will be submitted with each application. Where management or ongoing maintenance fees are applied the Councils would encourage developer to keep these affordable and proportionate.

### **Viability considerations**

**10.79** The policies of the Local Plan and CIL Charging Schedule are subject to assessments of viability to ensure that what is sought is viable in the local context. It will therefore be for an applicant to demonstrate, to the Councils satisfaction, that the applicable policy requirements and any obligations due cannot be met in full because of exceptional viability circumstances.

**10.80** Where an applicant is concerned with the viability of their proposal, they are strongly encouraged applicant's to engage the Council in pre-application discussions and will need to provide an open book viability assessment to support their application.

**10.81** Where viability considerations are accepted, the Councils will determine the balance of obligations and will likely require a future review and, where appropriate, clawback mechanisms to account for circumstances where the scheme viability improves prior to completion.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic paper 8: Infrastructure (2025)

# Policy I/DT:

## Digital and telecommunications infrastructure

### What this policy does

- 10.82** This policy sets out how developments should contribute to Greater Cambridge's access to broadband, telecommunication infrastructure and smart infrastructure.

#### Policy I/DT: Digital and telecommunications infrastructure

1. Telecommunications and digital infrastructure development shall be permitted in accordance with other policies within the development plan where, as appropriate to the scale and nature of the development, it is demonstrated that:
  - a. Street clutter is minimised including the number, size, and prominence of equipment cabinets;
  - b. Where on a building, the location and design does not have a detrimental impact to that building's appearance and setting;
  - c. The proposal has special regard to the natural and historic environment where the quality of the landscape or townscape may be particularly sensitive to the intrusion of communications infrastructure;
  - d. The development does not cause severe impacts on the road network; and the development will not cause detrimental impacts to safety or functioning of active travel infrastructure or highways; and
  - e. There will be no significant and irremediable electromagnetic interference with other electrical equipment, air traffic services, instrumentation operated in the national interest, or other operations and equipment that are sensitive to electromagnetic pollution.

### Digital infrastructure

2. The improvement of the digital communications network across Greater Cambridge, including the provision of digital infrastructure upgrades or community facilities that provide publicly accessible Wi-Fi, will be supported subject to compliance with relevant development plan policies.

3. Proposals for new public and commercial premises should include gigabit-capable connections to each premises, unless an agreement with network operators cannot be reached to provide such a connection due to the remoteness of the site. Where no agreement can be reached, Superfast Broadband may be accepted provided clear evidence is presented to the Local Planning Authority that:
  - a. all reasonable efforts have been made to engage and reach an agreement with network providers; and
  - b. the development has been designed in such a way that it can be adapted to enable the provision of gigabit-capable connectivity in the future.
4. Provision for high-capacity broadband (such as ducting for cables) should be designed and installed as an integral part of development to minimise visual impact and the potential for future disturbance during maintenance.

## Telecommunications infrastructure

5. All telecommunications infrastructure should be designed to be capable of responding to changes in technological requirements over the period of the development. Proposals for larger developments and tall buildings should consider the impact of building design on mobile coverage for existing and future occupants and take appropriate action to mitigate any adverse impacts.
6. Planning applications that include either 30 dwellings or more, or commercial floorspace of 1,000m<sup>2</sup> or more must include suitable infrastructure that would support any future rollout of appropriate telecommunications equipment such as small cell mobile communications technology or mobile masts and towers.
7. Planning applications that include the development of either 250 dwellings or more or 10,000m<sup>2</sup> or more commercial floorspace must assess the suitability of mobile coverage in meeting the needs of the proposed development and, where mobile coverage deficiencies are identified, provide details of proposed improvements and agreements with network operators or neutral host providers that address identified mobile coverage deficiencies.

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## Supporting information

**10.83** Fast and reliable digital connectivity is essential in today's economy and in every aspect of how people live, work and participate in society. As a result, high-quality connectivity is becoming an integral requirement for new developments. Designing this requirement into the development helps mitigate more expensive and disruptive retrofitting of technologies whilst also ensuring that the equipment can be hosted in an appropriate location which will likely speed up deployment.

**10.84** Access to fast and adaptable digital and mobile infrastructure is not only important in supporting business growth; network connectivity is increasingly vital in supporting the digital and social inclusion of local residents and the wellbeing of local communities.



The absence of network connectivity can impact on the educational, employment, financial and health outcomes of individuals and families. Therefore, early provision of high-quality broadband and securing strong mobile coverage also serve an important social function for Greater Cambridge. In locations where gigabit capable connectivity (download speeds of at least 1 Gigabit) is currently available, the development will be expected to include the infrastructure to connect to these services and make them available to occupiers.

- 10.85** Proposals for new residential dwellings are required to provide for gigabit-capable network connectivity by Approved Document R: Infrastructure for Electronic Communications of The Building Regulations 2010, unless the next fastest broadband speed can be justified on the basis of exemptions stated within The Regulations. Meanwhile, applications for new commercial and community premises are also expected to provide gigabit-capable connections to further support the delivery of high-quality digital connectivity in Greater Cambridge.
- 10.86** There can be feasibility challenges to the delivery of gigabit-capable connectivity or strong mobile network connectivity in new development, particularly in remote locations that are not readily linked to or covered by existing infrastructure. In situations where securing gigabit-capable connectivity is not feasible with current technology, applicants should demonstrate how their development has been adapted to ensure that it can facilitate high-level digital connectivity in future (such as the installation of ducting within the site for future use).
- 10.87** The Government has committed to being a world leader in 5G – the next generation of wireless communications technology – with the aim of having the majority of the population benefitting from 5G coverage by 2027. Greater Cambridge's economy is driven by businesses in knowledge-based sectors, with many businesses in the area relying on the use of cutting-edge digital technology. 5G is likely to require improvements to existing infrastructure and the introduction of new mobile infrastructure and small-cell technology in order to provide the capacity needed for the large numbers of users that are expected to require digital support in Greater Cambridge's near future.
- 10.88** The design of the development should consider the impact of building design on mobile coverage for existing and future occupants and take appropriate action to mitigate any adverse impacts. Mobile Network Operators utilise a range of technologies to build and improve their networks, such as low-power, short-range wireless transmission (or "small cell") systems that can cover localised, geographical areas. Small Cells now offer the opportunity to provide more localised improvements where the installation of a large mast, street works monopole or rooftop site would be prohibitively expensive to deploy for a small area requiring mobile coverage improvements.
- 10.89** Applicants will be expected to provide the following information as part of their planning application:
- a. Agreements with broadband network operators for the provision of gigabit capable services. Where agreements are not possible, evidence that all reasonable efforts have been made to engage and reach an agreement with network providers and that the development has been designed in such a way that it can be adapted to enable the provision of gigabit-capable connectivity in the future;

- b. The ways in which digital infrastructure and associated street furniture, such as ducting and broadband street cabinets, have been integrated into the design and layout of the development; and
- c. Where policy thresholds are met, an assessment of whether the current mobile coverage and capacity is suitable for the proposed new development and details of any agreements with Mobile Network Operators or neutral host providers outlining any improvements that will be delivered as part of the development and how any telecommunications infrastructure will be maintained.

**10.90** For major planning applications, the Local Planning Authority will expect the above details to be included as part of a Utilities Statement in line with the requirements in Policy I/ID. For minor planning applications, where required, details can be provided as part of a Design and Access Statement or Planning Statement for the proposed development.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic Paper 8: Infrastructure (2025)

# Policy I/CM:

## Construction management

### What this policy does

- 10.91** This policy sets out the construction management details that need to be agreed with the local planning authority prior to the commencement of development in Greater Cambridge to ensure that the environment and residential amenity are properly protected.

#### Policy I/CM: Construction management

1. All major development, infrastructure development, or development that, due to its nature or location, is likely to have an adverse impact on the local environment and amenity during construction must be informed by a Noise and Vibration Demolition Environmental Management Plan (DMP) and Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), or a combined Demolition and Construction Environmental Management Plan (DCEMP), which should be agreed by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development. For phased development, a CEMP or DCEMP should be prepared for each phase of the development.
2. The level of information provided as part of a CEMP or DCEMP should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposed development and may include registration with the Considerate Constructors Scheme. DMPs, CEMPs and DCEMPs should provide the following details:
  - a. traffic management – vehicular access to and egress from the site during construction and/or demolition activities (including arrangements for deliveries and the provision for the cleaning of vehicle tyres to avoid the deposition of mud / debris on the public highway);
  - b. material and equipment storage during construction and/or demolition;
  - c. site operation and working hours, including delivery and dispatch times, and staff welfare facilities;
  - d. measures to be incorporated during demolition and/or construction to mitigate, control and monitor impacts arising in relation to artificial lighting, noise, vibration, surface water, dust, odour and other pollutants;
  - e. safeguards and controls to minimise the risk of land contamination and the pollution of groundwater arising from demolition and/or construction activities;
  - f. measures to reduce the use of potable water and promote the use of alternative water sources during demolition and/or construction, where possible;
  - g. safeguards and controls to minimise the risk of harm to trees, protected habitats and protected species that could arise during demolition and/or construction;

- h. soil management plans in line with DEFRA's Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites (or successor documents) for the reuse of site-won soils and aggregates, and for the importation of off-site soils and aggregates;
    - i. the process for communication and liaison with the public, including contact details of the site manager(s);
    - j. details of how compliance with the named document will be monitored; and
    - k. commitment to a Considerate Constructors Scheme or Considerate Contractor Scheme.
  - 3. Materials already on-site or brought to the site during construction should be carefully managed to reduce the amount of residual waste produced and maximise the reuse or recycling of materials either onsite or locally.
  - 4. Any construction spoil reused within the development should take account of potential land contamination and the landscape character; the creation of features alien to the local topography should be avoided.
  - 5. Wherever practicable, construction traffic will be required to be routed to avoid roads passing through residential areas. Any temporary haul roads must:
    - a. be agreed with the Local Planning Authority;
    - b. be located, designed and landscaped in such a way as to avoid any adverse impacts on existing residents and businesses; and
    - c. have an agreed methodology for where they cross public rights of way.
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## Supporting information

**10.92** Demolition and construction and the byproducts of these activities can adversely affect the amenity of neighbouring land users and the local environment through the generation of noise and vibration, odour, dust, visual pollution or other adverse impacts. The construction process for new development can also use a significant amount of natural resources and produce construction waste and spoil.

**10.93** DMPs, CEMPs and DCEMPS are often used to set out how any potential adverse impacts from construction sites to the surrounding community, neighbouring land uses and the natural environment will be managed in line with industry best-practice. The level of detail required in a CEMP (or similar document) will depend on the type and scale of development proposed. Justification should be provided to demonstrate why certain control measures to be used during demolition and/or construction will be the most effective and suitable, taking account of the best practical means available to mitigate. DMPs, CEMPs, DCEMPS should be prepared in accordance with the supplementary guidance set out within the Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2020), or successor document.

**10.94** The local planning authority has a preference for DMPs, CEMPs or DCEMPs to be submitted as part of a planning application for the proposed development, particularly in cases where demolition and/or construction activity could have a significant adverse impact on nearby sensitive premises or natural assets. The document will need to be reviewed and agreed by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development. This may include registration with the Considerate Constructors Scheme (CCS) – a national initiative established by the construction industry. Any construction sites and companies that register with the scheme are monitored against a Code of Considerate Practice, which includes guidelines for respecting the community by considering the impact on their neighbours, and for protecting and enhancing the environment. Applicants should also consider signing up to the Considerate Constructors Scheme.

### **Supporting topic paper and evidence studies**

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Topic Paper 8: Infrastructure (2025)

