

Cambourne's Green and Blue Infrastructure Framework

Stage 2 Addendum

FINAL DRAFT

Foreword

Cambourne's Spatial Framework

The Spatial Framework describes the opportunity to grow Cambourne to become a thriving regional town which is renowned for its natural environment. The arrival of East West Rail (EWR) and the Cambourne to Cambridge public transport scheme (CtoC) will increase the accessibility of Cambourne by public transport to Cambridge, Bedford, Milton Keynes and Oxford. This creates an opportunity for Cambourne to grow and provide new homes and jobs which will benefit from the improved connectivity.

The Spatial Framework illustrates the spatial form which Cambourne's expansion could take and describes the type of place it could be, supporting new neighbourhoods connected by a robust set of landscape features.

This report sits alongside a wider suite of evidence being submitted for the Regulation 19 stage of the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan. Together, these documents set out the planning, technical and environmental case for growth at Cambourne and should be read as a connected whole.



This Spatial Framework has been prepared in collaboration with the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service (GCSP) and other key stakeholders. It draws on a suite of evidence base documents which have been specifically prepared to inform growth at Cambourne and is a key document in informing the proposed strategic policy allocation in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

Developing a Spatial Framework for growth at this scale is complex and requires many considerations to be balanced against each other. The scale and nature of growth has been informed by the baseline evidence and engagement with technical and local stakeholders.

For more information, please [Visit the Regulation 19 consultation page \[LINK TO REG 19 PAGE\]](#).

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0 Introduction

This section introduces the purpose of this report, an overview of the context and the methodology used.

Introduction (1)

Background

The Greater Cambridge Local Plan identifies Cambourne North as a strategic growth area supported by the planned East West Rail (EWR) connection and the A428 improvements, which are currently under construction. A robust Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) network is essential to deliver sustainable, landscape-led growth that protects the area's ecological and landscape assets.

Purpose and scope

This Stage 2 GBI Framework Addendum for Cambourne North has been produced in support of the Regulation 19 consultation for Greater Cambridge Local Plan. It builds upon the GBI framework established at Stage 1 by expanding the evidence base and refining the spatial framework in response to updated ecology, landscape and transport assessments. The Stage 1 work is set out in *Cambourne's Spatial Framework Strategy* and the *Spatial Options Report*.

This document provides a high-level review of the Stage 1 GBI vision established in *Cambourne's Green & Blue Infrastructure Framework (2025)*, appended to this document, and further explores opportunities to successfully integrate the new development into the landscape. It has been informed by landscape, ecology and transport evidence base and analysis and a series of workshops held with council officers, stakeholders and landowners in early 2026. This addendum should be read alongside the *Initial Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA)*; *Ecology, Dark Corridors & Ancient Woodland – Ecology Strategy*; *Transport Planning Appraisal & Strategy*; and *Cambourne's Spatial Framework Addendum*.

Key considerations

This addendum addresses the relationships of Cambourne North to existing settlements, the integration and conservation of habitats including ancient woodland and the interfaces with the EWR/ A428 corridor. It establishes a series of landscape typologies and design principles to guide future masterplanning for the site.

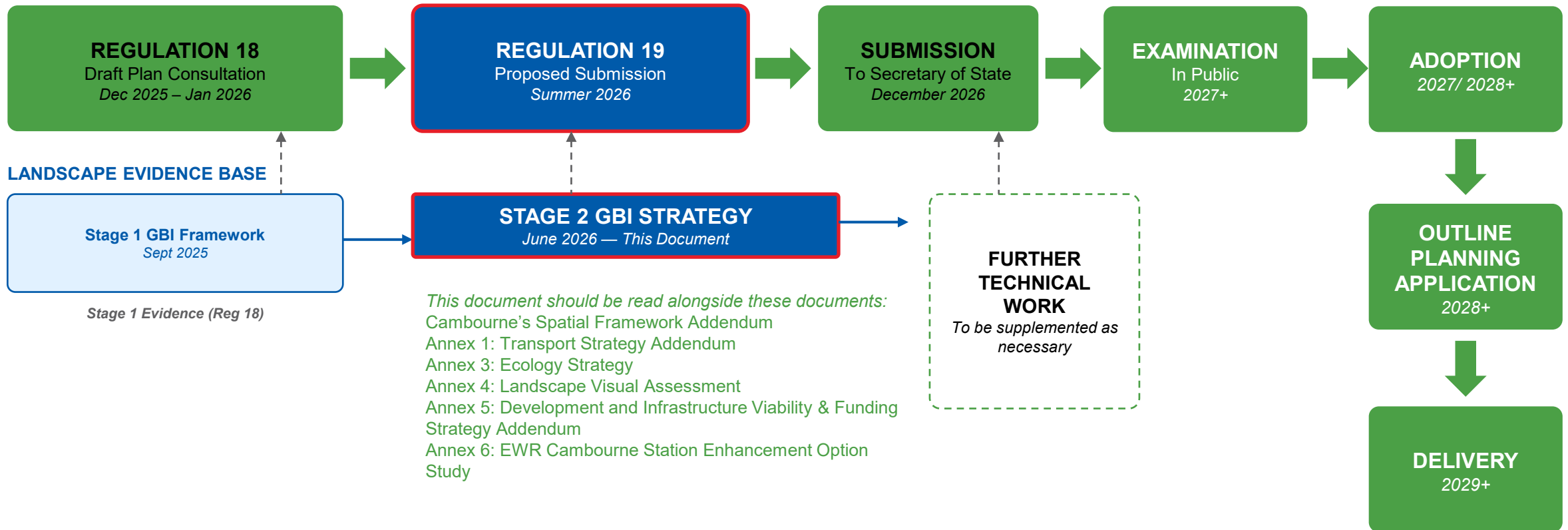


Stage 2 GBI Framework

Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Process & Evidence Base

How this Stage 2 Spatial Framework Addendum sits within the plan-making process and builds on the Regulation 18 evidence base

PLAN-MAKING STAGES



This report is part of a wider suite of evidence being submitted for Reg 19. For more information please see ([LINK TO REG 19 PAGE](#))

Area of Study

Study area surrounding Cambourne

The Area of Study sets the extent of land to be considered as part of technical evidence gathering and identification of spatial options through the Cambourne Growth Strategy Programme.

An Area of Study of 10 kilometres by 10 kilometres centred around the existing town of Cambourne was identified in the early stages of the commission. These distances were chosen in response to the scope of the project (to consider the shape and size of an expansion to Cambourne), the need for any expansion to be underpinned by the use of sustainable transport modes, and site-specific spatial patterns. The distances enable the full consideration of environmental and other factors effecting Cambourne, including surrounding villages and rural areas. The distances also allow a range of different spatial options to be considered for the expansion/growth of the existing settlement.

Legend

 Settlement boundaries



Vision

Cambourne 2060

In 2060, Cambourne is a **well-connected, sustainable, thriving and prosperous** town that is **rooted in nature**. Cambourne is famous across the region for the forest which wraps around the town – allowing nature to flourish and improving the wellbeing of local residents, employees and visitors. As one of the best connected places in Cambridgeshire, Cambourne is **a fantastic place to live, work or base a business**. Everyone who calls Cambourne home has easy access to a wealth of employment opportunities, services and facilities. Cambourne's excellent transport connections have also helped to make it **a destination in its own right**, with the Cambourne Forest, Events Hub, Leisure Hub and Cultural Hub all acting as major draws for visitors.

Vision (2)

Key elements of the vision explained



Well Connected Cambourne

Cambourne is one of the best connected places in Cambridgeshire, with the Cambourne to Cambridge Busway and East West Rail making it a fantastic place to live, work or base a business. New walking and cycling routes and excellent local transport connections mean that every neighbourhood is less than fifteen minutes from local amenities, the Town Centre and Station Quarter, making it easy to get to work and access services.



Thriving Cambourne

Cambourne's southern centre has been complemented by a new Town Centre north of the A428, with a new civic square playing host to an everchanging series of events including a regular market. New and improved connections across the A428 and EWR stitch the growing Cambourne together, with a landmark new 'landbridge' acting as an iconic connection between the main centres, Station Quarter, Leisure Hub and Events Hub.



Destination Cambourne

Cambourne has become a destination in its own right. People travel from across Cambridgeshire and the wider Oxford-Cambridge Region to visit an exhibition at the Cultural Hub, take in a show at the Cambourne Events Hub, go for a swim at the Leisure Hub or spend time in Cambourne's Forest.



A Place to Call Home

Each new neighbourhood of Cambourne has a unique character, with sensitively designed high quality sustainable homes that are entwined with nature. At the centre of each neighbourhood is a place to gather, with community uses, a corner shop, flexible employment spaces and a café or pub. Flexibility and resilience are built in from the start. People love living here because they can walk their kids to school, cycle to work and have culture, leisure and nature on their doorstep.



Prosperous Cambourne

Start ups, spin outs and mid-tech businesses have flocked to the new Cambourne Station Quarter due to its favourable location (and cheaper rents than Cambridge!). New employment locations are less than 10 minutes from the Cambridge Biomedical Campus by train, as well as less than thirty minutes from several economic hubs to the West. A new economic cluster is growing around an anchor institution which has moved its headquarters here - attracted by the improved quality of life Cambourne offers its employees.



Green Cambourne

Cambourne is famous across the region for the forest which wraps around the town - creating homes for nature and improving the wellbeing of local residents, employees and visitors. The whole town has nature at its core, with neighbourhoods and centres connected by green spaces and places, strengthening local ecosystems and creating a healthy, resilient and sustainable intergenerational community.

Objectives

What needs to be achieved to deliver on the vision for Cambourne

Rooted in Nature

1. Cambourne's expansion will create and enhance a comprehensive network of green links, spaces and places easily accessible to the public.
2. A new large-scale woodland will grow alongside the town, creating significant amenity, health and wellbeing value for both locals and visitors and creating a separation between Cambourne and surrounding villages.
3. Cambourne's expansion will protect, enhance and create homes and connections for nature, including the protection of 'nature-only' habitats and routes used by the rare species that call Cambourne home.
4. Buildings, spaces and neighbourhoods will be designed and built to ensure low levels of climate and resource impact and embed high levels of climate resilience.
5. The expansion of Cambourne will help mitigate the impacts and maximise the benefits of major infrastructure investment by integrating these sensibly into the wider landscape, and by integrating nature-based solutions into the implementation of infrastructure proposals.

One Cambourne

1. Cambourne will be centred around a landmark 'living station' at the heart of the town, which is a movement hub that also supports inclusive growth and acts as a focal point for healthy community life.
2. The town centre will be full of activity throughout the day, due to the mix of inclusive civic, cultural, community, commercial, retail, transport and residential uses. Local residents, and those in the surrounding villages and the wider area will be able to rely on Cambourne for their service needs.
3. Walking, cycling, wheeling and public transport will be the most convenient, safe and attractive choices for getting around, with high quality transport links between all neighbourhoods, centres, amenities and surrounding villages.
4. Cambourne will attract a range of a new employment opportunities that are complementary to those in the wider Region. It will secure an employment anchor tenant to become the cornerstone of a new economic cluster.
5. Cambourne will be a destination in the Region, with people choosing to travel by sustainable modes to access the high-quality jobs, services and amenities.

Complete Communities

1. Cambourne will be home to regionally significant cultural amenities, leisure/recreation/events facilities and green space. Together these will support the quality of life of people living in, working in or visiting Cambourne.
2. Neighbourhood centres in Cambourne will provide a range of services for daily life and public spaces for intergenerational communities to gather.
3. Homes in Cambourne will be designed to foster health and sustainability, accommodating people at all stages of life while offering opportunities for self-build and co-housing.
4. Buildings, public spaces, neighbourhoods, centres and services will all be designed to be flexible, allowing them to evolve to meet the changing needs of people, place and planet.
5. Stewardship of Cambourne's new assets will be community-led and managed, expanding Cambourne's distinctive community spirit and collaborative culture.



Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Context

This chapter covers the key context considerations informing the GBI Spatial Framework.

Landscape and Visual

Landscape character and visual receptors

The Stage 2 work provides greater detail on the landscape context, including landscape character, visual receptors and existing GBI features, to help inform opportunities for new GBI to successfully integrate the Cambourne North development into the landscape.

Landscape character

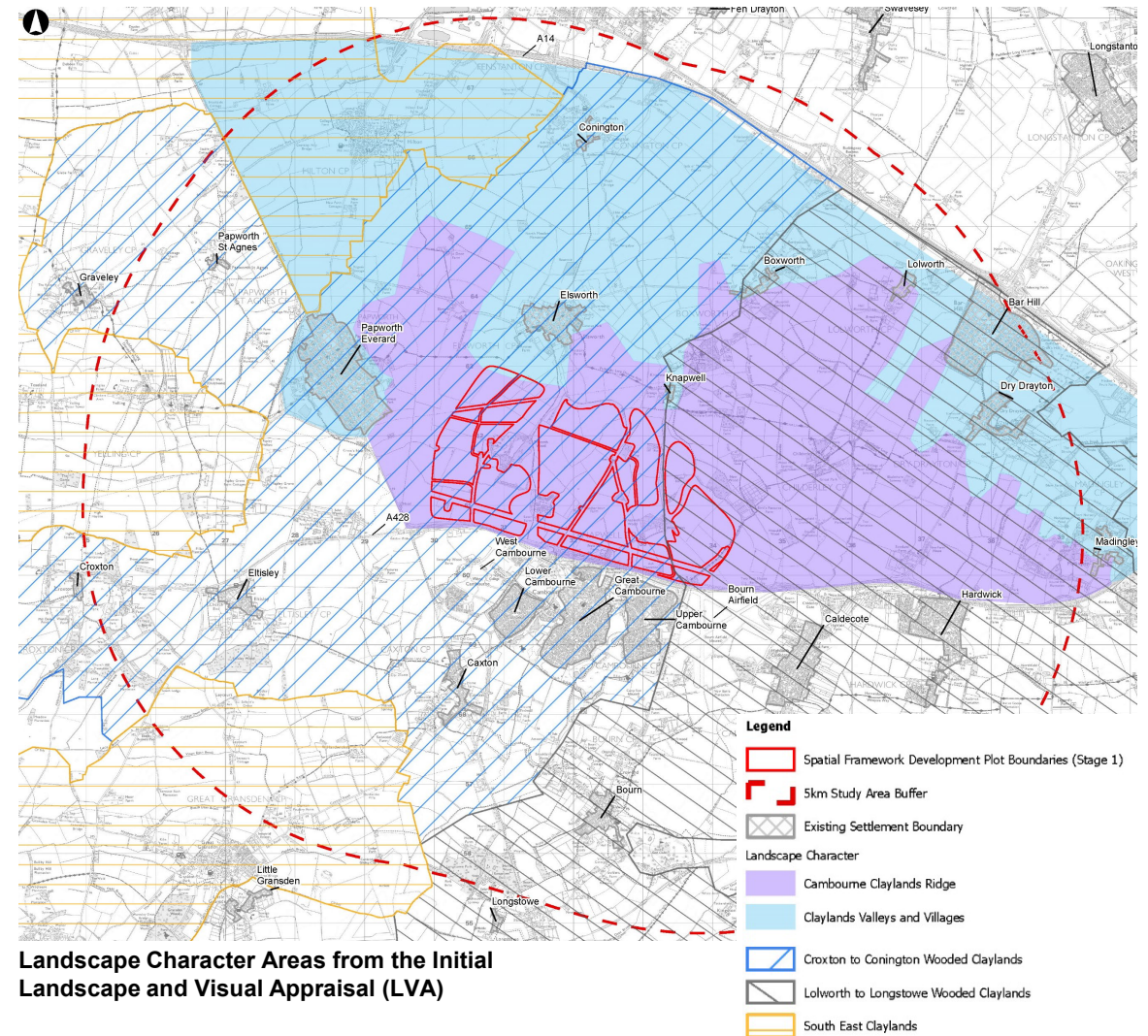
The initial Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has reviewed existing landscape character assessments from the national to district level. It identifies two local landscape character areas to inform the Strategic Framework:

- **Cambourne Claylands Plateau** – A broad, sparsely settled plateau of elevated land to the north of the A428. This area of principally arable farmland forms the watershed for several small watercourses which flow north towards the Fens.
- **Claylands Valleys and Villages** - Incised valleys of watercourses flow north from the Claylands plateau. A string of settlements, which are isolated in the rural landscape, line the valley slopes, connected by country roads.

Visual receptors

The initial LVA identifies the following sensitive visual receptors (people) with potential to experience views of the Cambridge North development:

- Settlements – Elsworth, Knapwell and Papworth Everard – there are no views of the Site within these settlements but some views from the southern edges.
- PRoWs – There are several PRoW within 0.5km of the Spatial Framework which will have stretches of uninterrupted views toward the Site.
- Elevated views north from Cambourne Nature Reserve across the existing roofscape of Cambourne.



Landscape Character Areas from the Initial Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA)

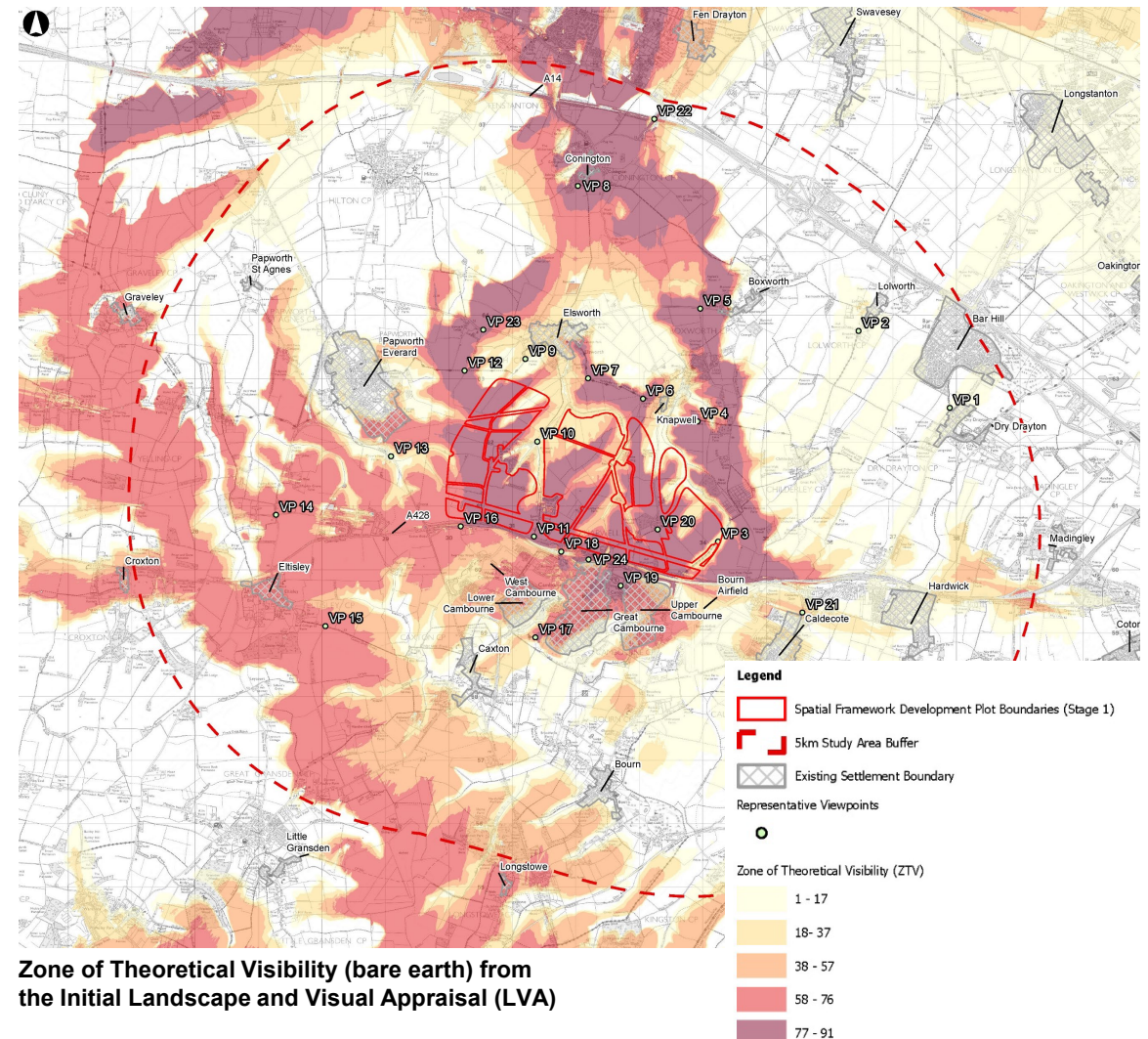
Landscape and Visual (2)

Landscape and visual sensitivities

The initial LVA identifies key features and characteristics of the landscape which are of value and are susceptible to the changes proposed by the Cambourne North development:

- Openness of the rural landscape, which is a product of intensive agricultural production, but nevertheless provides the setting to existing settlements.
- Sense of remoteness in the wider landscape away from existing settlements.
- Finer grain field patterns around existing settlements.
- Physical separation of existing settlements.
- Rolling topography and narrow valleys of watercourses which run north-south through the northern part of the Site.
- Blocks of ancient woodland and other woodland, which are relatively small and fragmented but contribute to a higher sense of enclosure locally.
- Views across the rural landscape from settlement edges, local roads and PRow, especially those which run through the Site where there are sometimes expansive open views across the Site with limited existing settlement visible.
- Tree lined skyline which characterises many views from the north.

The southern part of the site comprises a plateau of flatter, higher ground which is close to existing busy roads (A428 trunk Road and the A1198). Existing settlement in Cambourne extends across the skyline, particularly in the west and there are higher levels of activity.



Existing GBI Features

Existing rural GBI network and features

Although the Site and its surroundings are predominantly intensive farmland, they contain dispersed pockets of priority habitats and a locally important ecological network, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), County Wildlife Sites (CWS) ancient woodlands, hedgerows, and riparian corridors. Together, these features form a strategically important yet fragmented GBI network.

Through desktop study and fieldwork, key GBI features have been identified across the site and surrounding landscape which contribute strongly to the character and function of the area, and should be retained, enhanced, and integrated into the proposed GBI network.



Historic field boundaries – Varying condition, ranging from strong, continuous features with good species diversity to gappy.



Ancient woodland - A high value habitat, protected by law and planning policy, functionally connected with the Wimpole Woods SAC.



Riparian corridors – Narrow features within the Site, broadening out to the north and influencing the location and pattern of existing settlements.



Historic green lanes - Tree lined routes important for local recreational and ecological connectivity, but currently often isolated.



Country lanes – Tree lined roads providing access to existing villages, with wide grass verges, hedgerows and intermittent trees.



Settlement edge – More intricate and diverse field patterns, including small fields of pasture and grassland.

Existing GBI Features (2)

Existing GBI network and features within Cambourne

Cambourne was planned in the 1990s as three interconnected villages set within a GBI network, designed to support recreation, biodiversity and community identity. Originally intensive arable land, the few natural features present were deliberately retained and integrated to form the structural framework that now strongly and positively influences the settlement character.

A clear understanding of the existing morphology and character of Cambourne is essential to integrate the new Cambourne North development into the existing landscape framework and settlement pattern.



Nature reserves - Green spaces with mosaics of habitat integrated with urban areas in Cambourne. Informal paths facilitate public access.



Village greens – Form a focal point within each of the three connected villages of Cambourne. Informal spaces with few amenity features.



Formal parks and sports facilities - Concentrated centrally to the town and close to the A428, comprising playing pitches and courts.



Greenways/ Green connections – Active travel links through green spaces, providing connections away from the road network to the wider countryside.



Infrastructure mitigation planting – Continuous corridors of screen planting to the south of the A428, with footpath connections to the wider GBI network.



Other green spaces – Allotments, churchyards, cemeteries and accessible greenspaces incorporated throughout.

Future Green Space Requirements

Meeting the needs of the future population

The Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping (2021) identified that many villages in South Cambridgeshire are deficient in almost all types of open space and accessible natural greenspace. Future development driven by population growth is likely to exacerbate this pattern by adversely affecting how an area performs against established quantity standards. Consequently, there is a need for more green spaces of all typologies to meet current needs, in addition to addressing the additional demand from 12,000 – 15,000 new homes.

The GBI Framework should address these deficiencies and respond to opportunities by increasing and improving provision based on the analysis of spatially specific data. The Spatial Framework will incorporate a network of green spaces which meet Natural England's Accessible Greenspace Standards size and proximity criteria, with a focus on access to green and blue spaces within 15 minutes' walk from home.

The Natural England GI Framework Standards establish a minimum expectation of 3ha of natural greenspace per thousand population. Applying this benchmark suggests that a minimum 112.8ha of new green space would be required to meet the demand of the new population alone. Formal green space will be needed in addition. A review of Fields in Trusts Standards indicate that a total of 201.16ha would be required. This includes 67.68ha of natural and semi-natural green space. This does not include green space required as mitigation for environmental impacts, or to act as suitable alternative green space to relieve pressure from existing designated sites. We assume that proposed green space will be provided both within the plots, as well as outside of plots, within the wider GBI areas.

Greenspace Quantum			
Guidance	Policy	Greenspace type	Recommended area (ha)
Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework	Accessible greenspace – 3 hectares per 1000 people	Accessible greenspace	112.8
		Total	112.8
Fields in Trust Standard	Parks and gardens - 0.80 hectares per 1000 people	Parks and gardens	30.08
	Amenity green space - 0.60 hectares per 1000 people	Amenity greenspace	22.56
	Natural and semi-natural- 1.80 hectares per 1000 people	Natural and semi-natural	67.68
	Sport pitches - 1.20 hectares per 1000 people	Sport pitches	45.12
	Courts / greens / tracks / trails - 0.40 hectares per 1000 people	Courts / greens / tracks / trails	15.04
	Equipped designated play areas - 0.25 hectares per 1000 people	Equipped designated play areas	9.4
	Informal play provision - 0.3 hectares per 1000 people	Informal play provision	11.28
	Total		201.16

Green space requirements for new population at Cambourne North

Please note greenspace quantum is based on a population estimation of 37,600 people

2

GBI Framework

*This chapter covers the GBI Framework for a future settlement in Cambourne.
This includes a set of overarching principles and guidance.*

Towards Stage 2

Key findings

Context and evidence base

The Stage 2 updates to the GBI Framework are underpinned by three concurrent technical workstreams: the Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA), the Ecology Strategy, and the Transport Planning Appraisal and Strategy. Each of these workstreams has directly informed the spatial priorities, design parameters and mitigation measures embedded within the updated GBI framework. In addition, extensive engagement with stakeholders and landowners throughout Stage 1 and Stage 2 has provided critical feedback that has shaped and refined the updated proposals.

Central tension

A fundamental conflict has been identified between the need to conserve and enhance habitats for biodiversity, and the need to provide meaningful public access to nature for recreational amenity alongside active and sustainable transport corridors serving the Proposed Development. Resolving this tension is a core objective of this Stage 2 update to the GBI framework.

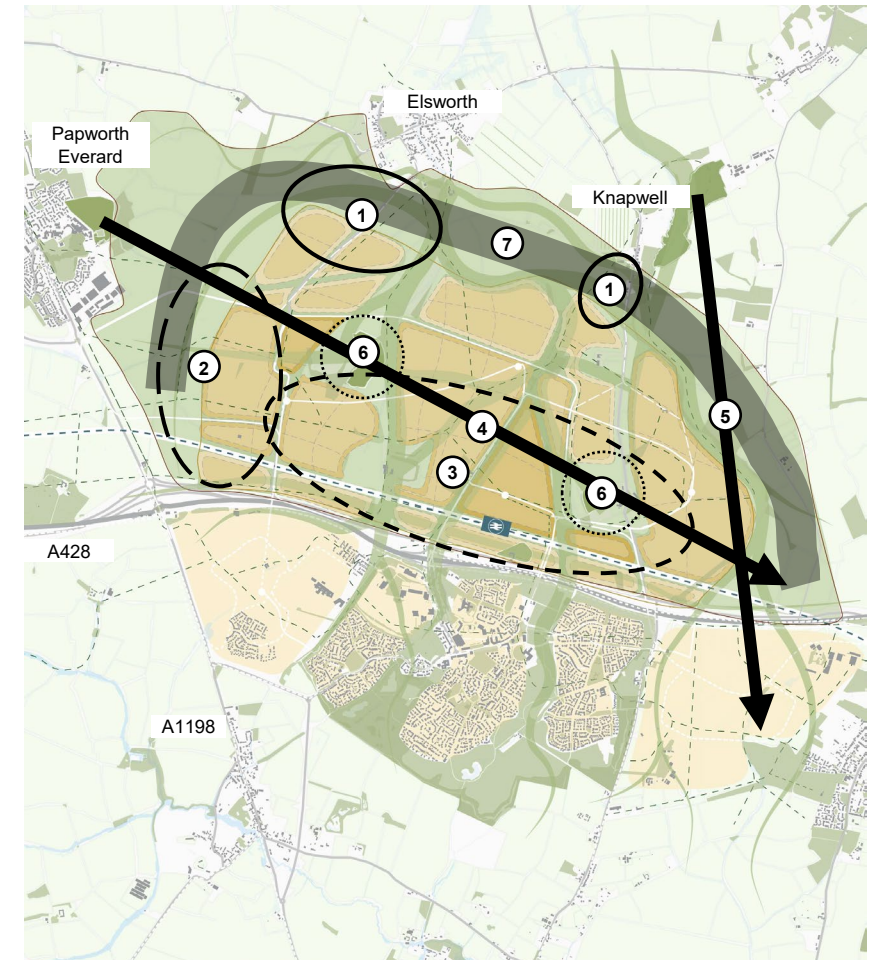
Key stage 2 findings

- The Spatial Framework should adopt a landscape-led approach, responding positively to existing landscape patterns and features. Primary linkages, dark corridors and strategic enhancement areas should be established first to shape the form and phasing of development and infrastructure. All GBI should be integrated within the site allocation as an integral component of the Proposed Development.
- Landscape and ecological evidence indicates lower susceptibility to new development in the south and west of the Site, with sensitivity increasing towards the north around the villages of Elsworth and Knapwell. Development should be avoided on the exposed higher ground between Papworth Everard and Elsworth to minimise visual impact and prevent coalescence.
- Strategic scale landscape buffers are required in the north to safeguard the setting of existing settlements, prevent coalescence, and deliver habitat creation, flood management and accessible greenspace.
- A clear hierarchy of linkages, prioritising the conservation and connection of ancient woodland, should strengthen ecological connectivity across the Site. An intermediate east–west green corridor connecting Papworth Wood, Elsworth Wood and Knapwell Wood would contribute to maintaining the characteristic tree-lined skyline visible from the north.
- Dark corridors are required for bat mitigation and must be continuous, unlit and separated from active travel and transport routes.
- Long-term governance, stewardship and funding mechanisms must be embedded from the outset to secure the delivery and enduring resilience of the GBI network.

Towards Stage 2 (2)

Summary of feedback on the developing Stage 2 spatial framework

What we heard	How this has been taken forward
Concerns that landscape buffer near Elsworth and Knapwell is too narrow. Fear about coalescence, encroachment and maintaining rural feel for existing villages to the north.	Wider landscape buffer near Elsworth and Knapwell for meaningful visual screening and to preserve rural character. (1)
	Rebalance of development with extension further west towards the A1198 Ermine Street across the plateau of higher ground influenced by its proximity to infrastructure and existing settlement at Cambourne and Papworth Everard. (2)
	Higher density and taller development to the south of the site alongside the A428 and proposed EWR station and rail line. (3)
Importance of incorporating dark corridors to avoid and mitigate potential impacts to bats.	Dark corridors for bat mitigation to connect east-west between Papworth, Elsworth and Knapwell Woods. (4)
	Dark corridors for bat mitigation to connect north-south between Overhall Grove and Bourn Airfield. (5)
Need for bigger, better and more connected woodland habitats required.	Buffer and expansion of ancient woodland extent at Knapwell and Elsworth Woods to make them more resilient to disturbance and change. (6)
Concerns that the Strategic Enhancement Area should not comprise a 'forest' but a mixture of habitats, including nature-friendly farming.	Strategic Enhancement Area to include a mosaic of semi-natural habitat types. (7)





Illustrative diagram of Stage 1 Framework Drawing Identifying Proposed Key Updates for Stage 2


Stage 2 GBI Strategy


Strategic GBI areas

The GBI Framework is structured around four overarching strategic GBI areas, each defined by its strategic role, spatial scale, function and character. Together, these areas establish a coherent, landscape-led framework that guides the planning, design and integration of GBI across the site. By prioritising the establishment of landscape areas ahead of built development, the framework ensures that proposals are GBI-led, delivering a connected, multifunctional GBI network.

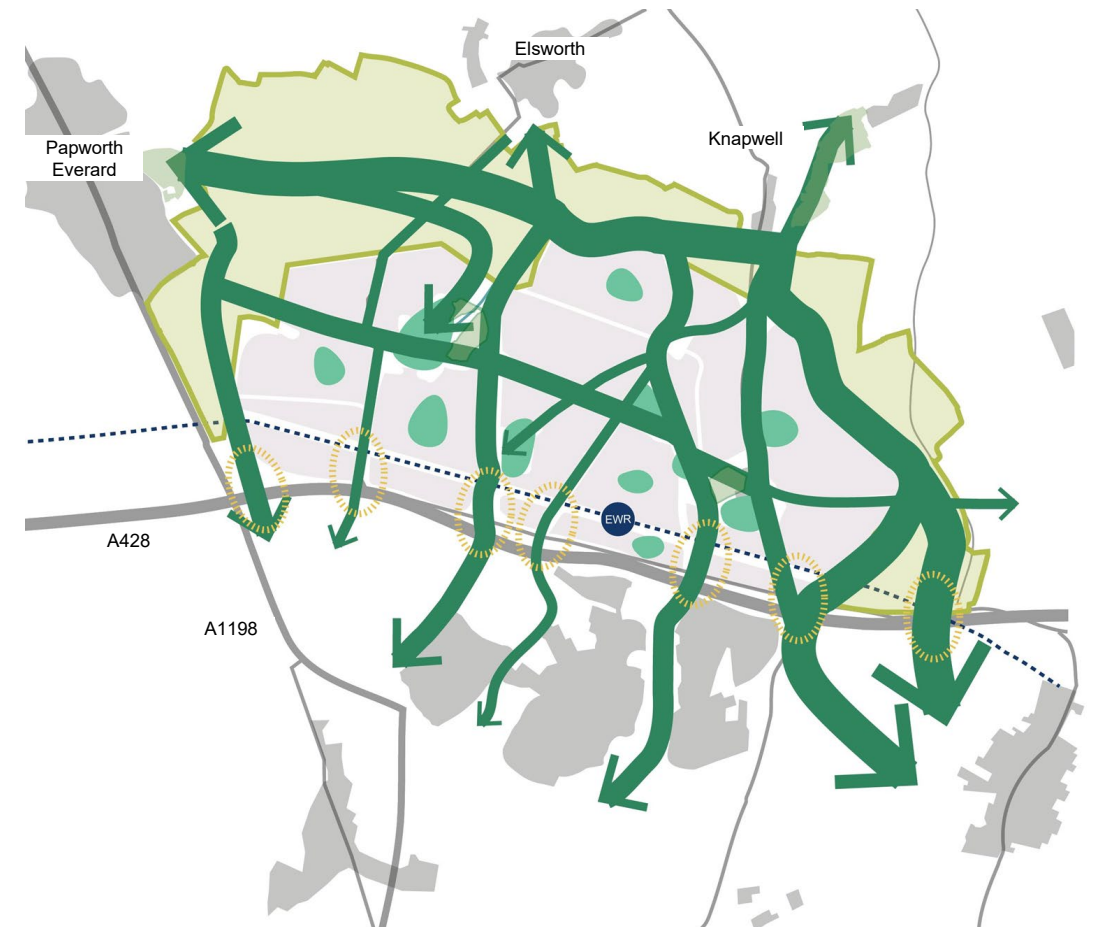
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Forest arc: A continuous area of accessible, multi-functional GBI comprising diverse GBI assets, with a minimum of 30% woodland cover. Conserves the openness of the rural landscape and the physical separation between the existing settlements to the north and the proposed Cambourne North development. This relates to the Strategic Enhancement Area, which will be referred to as the forest arc within this strategy.
- 

Green linkages: Multifunctional GBI corridors for people and nature, linking urban areas to the wider landscape. Balances the need to conserve important habitats including ancient woodland, integrating 'dark corridors' for bat mitigation and supporting active travel.
- 

Green spaces: Accessible community spaces within the proposed town and local centres, as stepping stones connected to the wider GBI network. Focuses on amenity and meeting needs for green space, sports, and play in line with standards.
- 

Crossings: Habitat and active travel crossings over EWR and the A428 create a connected network of linkages and reduce severance. May include wildlife and multi-use overpasses, underpasses/ green tunnels, and incorporate 'dark corridors'.



Stage 2 GBI Strategy

Stage 2 GBI Strategy (2)

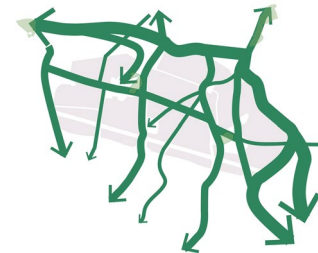
GBI illustrative typologies

Each strategic GBI area comprises a range of proposed GBI typologies, designed to create a rich and diverse place that serves both people and nature. These typologies span from wildlife-friendly farmland and rewilding areas within the forest arc, to equipped designated play spaces and pitch sports embedded within the green spaces at the heart of the urban area. Each typology is tailored to respond to its specific landscape and ecological context, while collectively contributing to the GBI framework. The definitions align with the Fields in Trust Standards and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Future Parks Open Space Standards Toolkit where applicable, and the Wildlife Crossings Structures Handbook referenced in the Natural England Green Bridges literature review.



Forest arc typologies

- **Natural and semi-natural green spaces** – Woodland, scrub, grassland, heath or moor, wetlands, open and running water and open access land.
- **Parks** – Country parks, regional parks and forest parks.
- **Trails** – Nature trails, forest trails and outdoor gym trails.
- **Wildlife-friendly farmland** - Agricultural land managed to support biodiversity alongside production.
- **Rewilding** - Areas where natural processes are restored and ecosystems allowed to recover with minimal human intervention.
- **Green lanes** – Tree lined routes important for local recreational and ecological connectivity.
- **Dark corridors** – Unlit routes allowing nocturnal species to move safely across the landscape at night.



Green linkages typologies

- **Green lanes** – Tree lined routes important for local recreational and ecological connectivity.
- **Dark corridors** – Unlit routes allowing nocturnal species to move safely across the landscape at night.
- **Riparian corridors** – Vegetation along watercourses that provide connected habitat for wildlife.
- **Linear parkland** - Green space through development for recreation and ecological connectivity.
- **Greenways** - Continuous traffic-free routes through green space, for walking and cycling and linking habitats and communities

Stage 2 GBI Strategy (3)

GBI typologies



Green spaces typologies

- **Amenity green space** – Informal recreation spaces, communal green spaces in and around housing, village greens, urban commons, allotments and other incidental spaces.
- **Parks and gardens** – Urban parks and squares, and formal gardens.
- **Pitch sports** – Football, rugby, hockey and cricket pitches etc.
- **Courts and greens sports** – Tennis, netball, basketball, padel ball, volleyball and bowling greens, etc.
- **Tracks, trails and sports equipment** – Nature trails, athletics tracks and outdoor gym trails.
- **Equipped designated play spaces** – Local Area of Play (LAPs), Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAPs), Neighbourhood Equipped Areas of Play (NEAPs).
- **Informal play** – Pump tracks or multi-use games areas and playful features integrated and distributed within the development.
- **Semi-natural green spaces** - Woodland and grassland.
- **Green roofs** – Vegetated roof systems.



Crossings typologies

The Natural England Green Bridges literature review identifies a range of typologies, from wildlife-only to multi-use crossings. The results of detailed ecological surveys should further inform and refine the location and type of crossings.

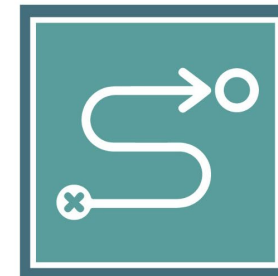
- **Wildlife overpass** – Designed exclusively for wildlife use.
- **Multi-use overpass** – Designed for mixed wildlife–human use.
- **Canopy crossing** – Designed exclusively for species that commonly use canopy cover for travel.
- **Underpasses/ green tunnels** – Wildlife crossing beneath the road, railway or other transport corridor.
- **Culverts** – Enclosed crossings beneath the road, railway or other transport corridor.

Stage 2 GBI Strategy (4)

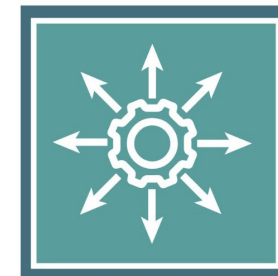
Application of the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework

The Natural England GI Framework (shown opposite) sets out the key attributes describing what good quality GBI should look like. These characteristics have been used as the guiding principles informing the development of the GBI framework and inform the design principles for the strategic GBI areas set out on the following pages.

- **Multi-functional** – GBI should deliver a range of functions and benefits;
- **Varied** – GBI should comprise a variety of types and sizes of green and blue spaces;
- **Connected** – GBI should function and connect as a living network for both people and nature;
- **Accessible** – GBI should promote access to greenspaces which are inclusive, safe, well-managed and accessible for all; and
- **Respects local character** – GBI should contribute to the conservation, enhancement and protection of landscapes.



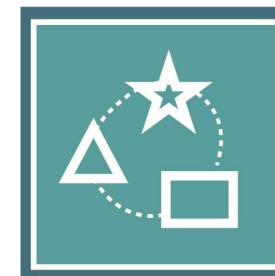
Connected



Multi-functional



Accessible



Varied



Respects local
character

GBI Strategic Areas

Forest arc

A continuous area of accessible, multi-functional GBI comprising diverse GBI assets with a minimum of 30% woodland cover. Conserves the openness of the rural landscape and the physical separation between the existing settlements to the north and the proposed Cambourne North development.

Design principles

Multi-functional

- **Nature-rich, beautiful:** A wide area for nature recovery and habitat creation informed by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). Provides accessible semi-natural greenspace to divert visitors from sensitive sites such as the ancient woodlands. Avoids sports provision that requires lighting or other activities which would impact sensitive habitats or detract from rural character.
- **Active and healthy:** Delivers a legible network of walking, cycling, running and horse-riding routes for recreational use and commuting. Includes natural play, community spaces, recreation and viewpoints integrated within the rural landscape.
- **Thriving and prosperous:** Retains some arable farmland to support green jobs, skills, and community stewardship. Routes integrated with nearby amenities to support local businesses and the rural economy.
- **Water management:** Restores natural hydrology, mitigating flood risk to valley villages. Incorporates landscape-scale SuDS including attenuation basins designed for biodiversity value.
- **Resilient and climate positive:** Maximises carbon sequestration through woodland creation and soil restoration. Designed for climate adaptation with cooling, shading, and natural flood attenuation, building long-term ecosystem resilience.



Native woodland © Arup

GBI Strategic Areas (2)

Forest arc

Varied: A rich mix of semi-natural and green space typologies which support habitats including dense woodland, open glades, diverse edges, rides, and wet features.

Connected: An integrated ecological and movement network linking settlements, new development, and the wider landscape. Prevents coalescence by maintaining a green buffer between villages and development.

Accessible: Provides accessible greenspace for existing and new communities, to both meet requirements for the new population, whilst addressing deficiencies identified in surrounding villages. Designed through co-creation with communities, ensuring inclusive access for all ages and abilities.

Respects local character: Responds to existing topography and landscape patterns. Respects the setting of Elsworth and Knapwell with open pastoral structure near Elsworth transitioning to denser planting further away.

Typologies

- Natural and semi-natural green spaces
- Parks
- Trails
- Wildlife-friendly farmland
- Rewilding areas
- Green lanes
- Dark corridors



Parkland, Manor Park, Sheffield © Arup



Wildlife-friendly farmland © Ma Ti, Unsplash

GBI Strategic Areas (3)

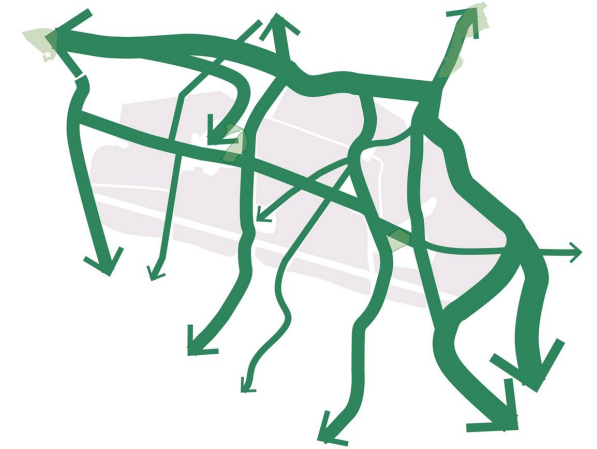
Green linkages

Multifunctional GBI corridors for people and nature, linking urban areas to the wider landscape. Balances the need to conserve important habitats including ancient woodland, integrating 'dark corridors' for bat mitigation and supporting active travel.

Design principles

Multi-functional

- **Nature-rich, beautiful place:** Integrates existing rural habitats, including tree lines and riparian corridors, with proposed habitats to extend the ecological network into the urban areas. Dark corridors provided for bat mitigation ensuring ecological function is maintained.
- **Active and healthy:** Embeds active travel routes within GBI-led corridors to encourage healthier lifestyles, routine physical activity, and facilitates regular contact with nature, contributing to physical and mental wellbeing.
- **Thriving and prosperous:** Creates a high-quality setting for development, enhancing place identity and long-term value. This improves the attractiveness of the development for residents, visitors and investors.
- **Water management:** An integrated SuDS strategy manages water through on-street rain gardens and swales, which are designed as visible, celebrated features. These enhance the character of the place and respond to flood risk, water quality and climate adaptation.
- **Resilient and climate positive:** Supports urban cooling, carbon sequestration, air quality improvement and habitat resilience.



Primary movement corridors, Grey to Green, Sheffield © Arup

GBI Strategic Areas (4)

Green linkages

Varied: A hierarchy of green linkages varying in scale, character and function, ranging from linear parkland through urban areas, to quieter, more rural-character routes at the settlement edge, including unlit green lanes that also perform a dark corridor function.

Connected: Green space through the built environment creates continuous connections between neighbourhoods, local centres, transport hubs, and the wider countryside. They provide seamless movement routes for people and reinforce strategic ecological connections, including links between ancient woodland.

Accessible: Designed to serve new residents and existing communities, providing convenient, safe and inclusive routes that are easy to navigate and well overlooked.

Respects local character: Integrate with the existing landscape structure, following historic ecological, hydrological and movement corridors wherever possible. Design reinforces local distinctiveness through the incorporation of green lanes, country lanes, tree lines and riparian features. Together, these elements will ensure the green linkages feel rooted in the landscape and support the scale and ambition of the new development.

Typologies

- Green lanes
- Dark corridors
- Riparian corridor
- Linear parkland
- Greenways



Dark corridors © Unsplash



Greenways, Mill River Corridor © Shutterstock

GBI Strategic Areas (5)

Green spaces

Accessible community spaces within the proposed town and local centres, as stepping stones connected to the wider GBI network. Focuses on amenity and meeting needs for green space, sports, and play in line with standards.

Design principles

Multi-functional

- **Nature-rich, beautiful place:** Designed to balance amenity and habitat value. Attractive green spaces reduce recreational pressure on existing designated sites and wildlife areas and buffer and expand ancient woodland in line with the LNRS. Facilities that create light spill, such as sports pitches, are carefully sited and managed to avoid impacts on sensitive habitats and dark corridors.
- **Active and healthy:** Green spaces close to homes support daily activity, play and social interaction, contributing to physical and mental wellbeing.
- **Thriving and prosperous:** Well-designed green spaces enhance the quality and identity of the settlement. Green urban centres encourage people to spend more time locally, supporting long-term economic resilience.
- **Water management:** SuDS features are designed to be compatible with public access and amenity use, with a focus nature-based solutions, rainwater harvesting and greywater recycling.
- **Resilient and climate positive:** Urban trees and vegetation provide shade, cooling, carbon sequestration, improved air quality and increase habitat diversity. There are opportunities for community education and awareness.



Play and youth area, Pounds Park, Sheffield © Arup

GBI Strategic Areas (6)

Green spaces

Varied: A clear hierarchy of green spaces of different scales, characters and functions provides choice and variety, from small doorstep spaces to larger neighbourhood parks and productive landscapes.

Connected: Green spaces within the settlement and the wider landscape are connected to homes, amenities and sustainable movement networks by the green linkages.

Accessible: Designed to meet Natural England Green Infrastructure Standards, so that everyone has access to good-quality green and blue spaces within a 15-minute walk from home. Proposals include doorstep, local and neighbourhood accessible greenspace.

Respects local character: Green spaces draw on existing typologies within Cambourne and surrounding villages, such as local greens and tree lines, incorporating best practice in landscape and play design. This approach helps create distinctive, recognisable places that foster community ownership and long-term stewardship.

Typologies

- Amenity green space
- Parks and gardens
- Pitch sports
- Courts and greens sports
- Tracks, trails and sports equipment
- Equipped designated play spaces
- Informal play
- Semi-natural green spaces
- Green roofs



Neighbourhood parks, Sowerby Park and Sports Village © Glenrate Project Management



Amenity and ecological grassland, Lovedon Fields © Jim Stephenson

GBI Strategic Areas (7)

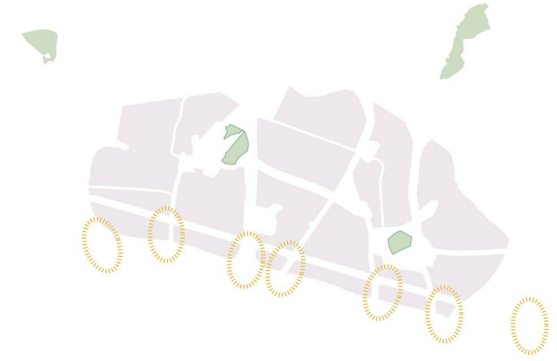
Crossings

Habitat and active travel crossings over EWR and the A428 create a connected network of linkages and reduce severance. May include wildlife and multi-use overpasses, underpasses/ green tunnels, and incorporate 'dark corridors'.

Design principles

Multi-functional

- **Nature-rich, beautiful place:** Crossing designs mimic the surrounding landscape to encourage wildlife usage. Wildlife overpasses are ecologically functional and create vegetated landmark structures.
- **Active and healthy:** Crossings provide safe, attractive routes for pedestrians and cyclists, integrating active travel with ecological connectivity to encourage walking and cycling between the existing town and proposed development.
- **Thriving and prosperous:** Well-designed crossings enhance place quality and reduce severance between communities, supporting local economic vitality by reconnecting neighbourhoods, schools and services.
- **Water management:** Underpasses/ green tunnels and culverts maintain natural watercourse continuity and incorporate sustainable drainage, preserving hydrological connectivity beneath infrastructure.
- **Resilient and climate positive:** Low-carbon materials and native vegetation sequester carbon and provide climate-adapted corridors that allow species to migrate in response to changing conditions.



Green overpass © BeeldBank, Shutterstock

GBI Strategic Areas (8)

Crossings

Varied: Crossings range from wildlife and multi-use overpasses, to underpasses/ green tunnels and culverts, each scaled to serve target species, with some also providing pedestrian and cyclist movement.

Connected: Crossing structures are strategically located to link fragmented habitats and active travel routes, forming continuous corridors that enable wildlife movement and safe pedestrian passage across infrastructure barriers created by EWR and the A428, connecting the settlement together, north to south, to create one community.

Accessible: Multi-use crossings balance design requirements of people and wildlife with lighting for pedestrian safety where required, gentle gradients, clear sightlines, and natural substrates and vegetation to encourage use by wildlife and people.

Respects local character: Crossing structures are integrated into the local landscape through native planting, natural soil profiles and forms that complement local topography.

Typologies

- Wildlife overpass
- Multi-use overpass
- Canopy crossing
- Underpasses/ green tunnels
- Culverts



Green Overpass © Yves Adams, National Park Hoge Kempen



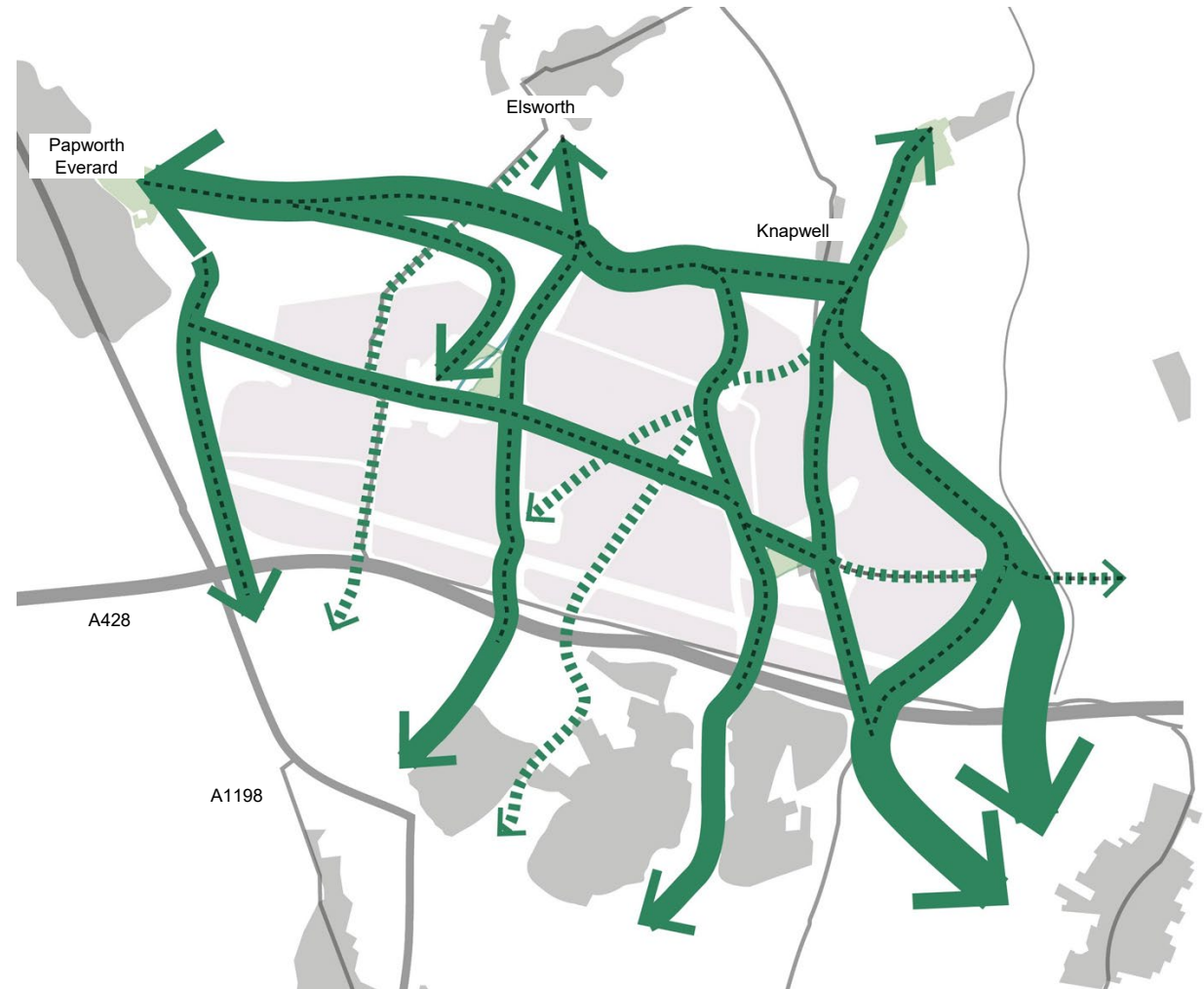
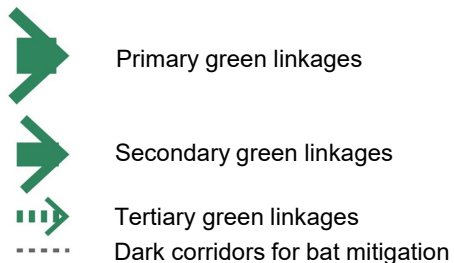
Culvert © Boulder-Buzz (cc-by-sa/2.0)

GBI Development

Hierarchy of green linkages

The GBI framework establishes a hierarchy of green linkages defined by ecological importance, particularly for barbastelle bats, whilst providing pedestrian connectivity and placemaking value. The results of detailed ecological surveys should further inform and refine the location and hierarchy of linkages.

- **Primary green linkages** connect Papworth and Bourne Airfield across the Forest arc.
- **Secondary green linkages** provide north-south and east-west connections between ancient woodland, the wider countryside and Cambourne.
- **Tertiary green linkages** use the existing Brockley Road which leads to Elsworth and field boundary habitats to create a finer grain of connectivity within and through the development.
- **Dark corridors**, which provide unlit routes for wildlife movement, are integrated across routes of each hierarchy where required.



Hierarchy of green linkages

GBI Development (2)

Rational for primary and secondary linkages

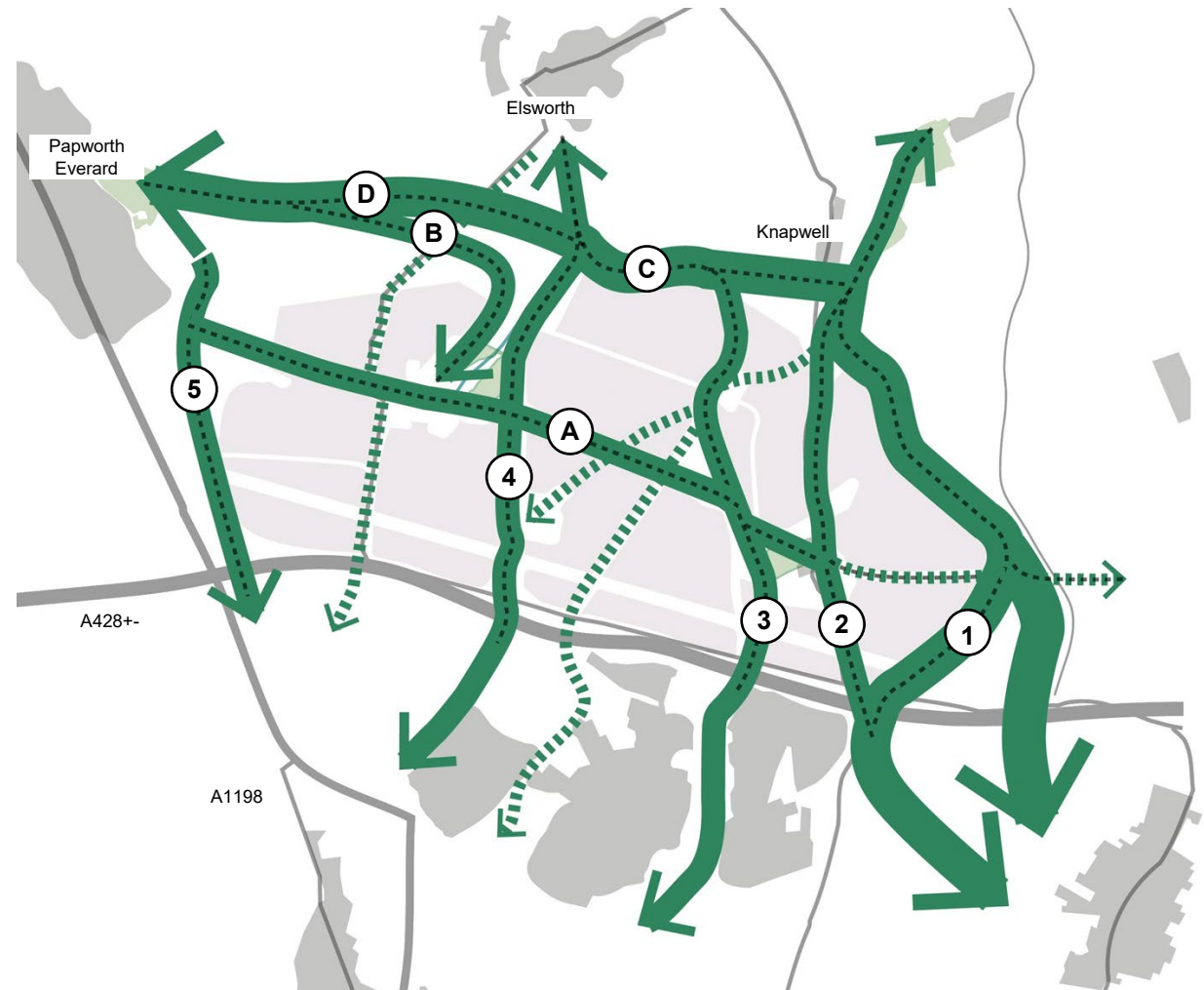
The network of green linkages builds on the Stage 1 work, with further refinement of location, alignment, and function. The results of detailed ecological surveys should further inform and refine these linkages.

North-south

1. Refined dark corridor in the east for bat mitigation to connect between Overall Grove and Bourn Airfield. Follows existing watercourses and habitats and incorporates the existing green lane to south.
2. Refined dark corridor for bat mitigation between Overall Grove and Bourn Airfield, extended beyond Knapwell Wood.
3. Follows the existing riparian corridor to Elsworth Wood with the dark corridor extended south.
4. Follows the existing riparian corridor, CWS, Elsworth Wood and PRow.
5. Refined dark corridor connects Papworth Wood, with flexible alignment.

East-west

- A. New dark corridor for bat mitigation to connect east-west between Papworth, Elsworth and Knapwell Woods, with flexible alignment.
- B. Amended dark corridor for bat mitigation to connect east-west between Papworth Wood and Elsworth Wood, with flexible alignment.
- C. Follows existing watercourse.
- D. Refined dark corridor to connect to Papworth Wood with flexible alignment.



Rational for green linkages

GBI Development (3)

Integration of dark corridors

Ecological purpose

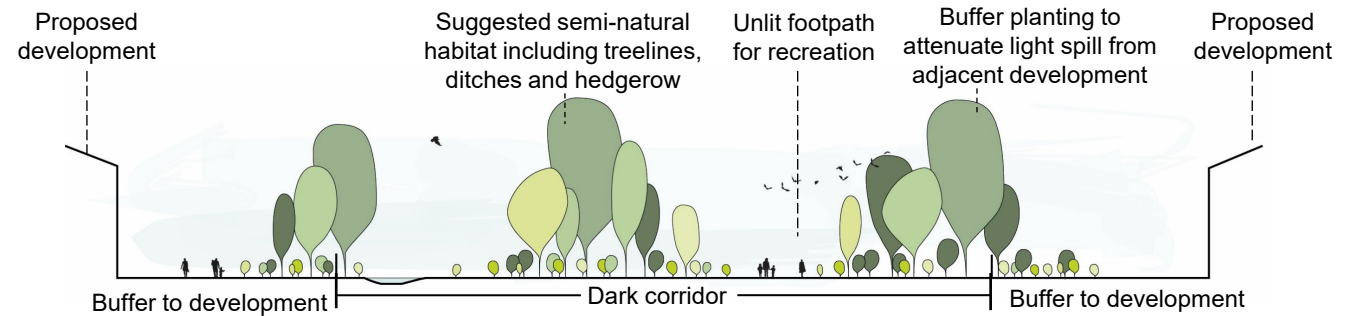
Dark corridors are a core element of the proposed GBI network. They should be designed to maintain and establish continuous nocturnal habitats at the highest practicable level of natural darkness, safeguarding the movement, foraging and roosting requirements of light-sensitive species. The primary objective is to enable the free and unrestricted passage and dispersal of barbastelle bats between new and existing woodland blocks and across the wider landscape, through unbroken and unlit corridors of semi-natural habitat. A well-connected habitat mosaic will maintain the favourable conservation status of barbastelle bats in the region, for which Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC is designated.

Design and lighting principles

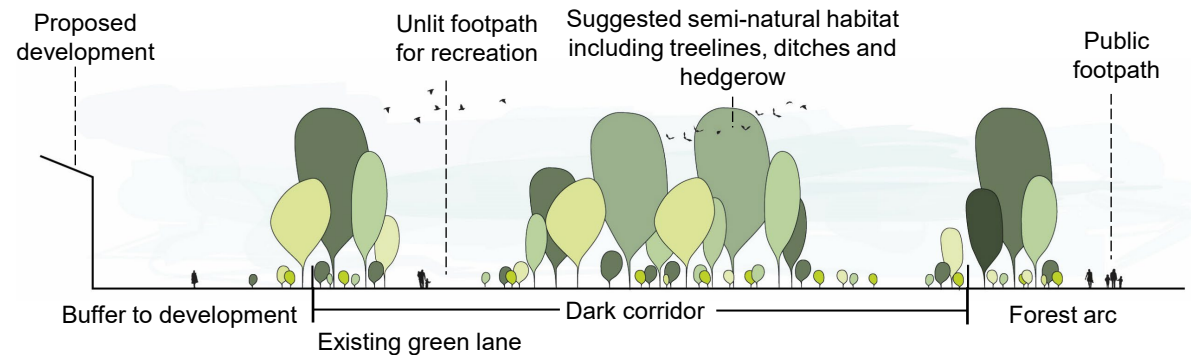
Dark corridors should be provided separately from transport corridors and active travel routes, except where it is certain that the active travel routes will remain unlit. Where breaks in a corridor are unavoidable, an assessment will be made of the legitimate pedestrian and cyclist safety requirements and the provision of an alternative dark route across the break area. In addition to retaining and enhancing existing habitat features that form and serve as dark corridors, opportunities should be sought to create new dark corridors where existing connectivity is poor, such as through daylighting of buried watercourses. We currently assume a minimum dark corridor width of 60–100m, to be confirmed at the masterplanning stage with Natural England and other wildlife stakeholders.

For further detail please refer to the *Ecology, Dark Corridors & Ancient Woodland – Ecology Strategy*.

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Illustrative section through typical dark corridor between plots, showing unlit route and buffer to development



Illustrative section through typical dark corridor at the edge of plots, showing unlit route, buffer to development, and interface with the forest arc

GBI Development (4)

Buffers to ancient woodland

Woodland expansion and connectivity

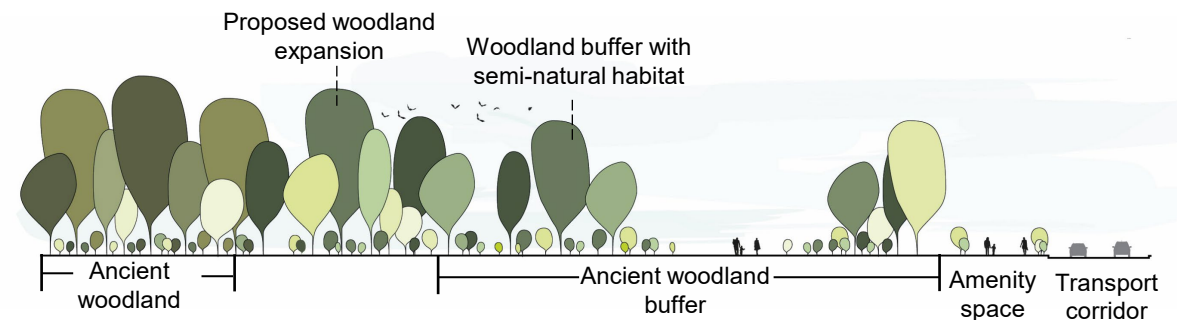
The primary objective is to create and enhance a more resilient network of ancient woodlands across the wider Cambridge landscape. This will assist in creating larger, better-connected sites through functional ecological corridors, and subject to positive conservation management. GBI proposals seek to at least double the wooded extents of Elsworth and Knapwell Woods to establish a combined woodland and buffer area of approximately 40 hectares. Concurrently, opportunities shall be pursued to expand the extent of Overhall Grove SSSI strengthening its long-term viability as a designated site.

To counter further habitat fragmentation, an uninterrupted east-west corridor shall be established between Elsworth and Knapwell Woods, alongside a north-south corridor linking Overhall Grove to Bourn Airfield. These connections comprise continuous green corridors formed of hedgerows, tree lines, ditch lines, and associated semi-natural habitats, maintaining an unbroken ecological link. The wider forest arc strategy incorporates new woodland areas delivered as individual blocks and groups of interlinked woodlands, collectively reinforcing landscape-scale connectivity.

For further detail please refer to the *Ecology, Dark Corridors & Ancient Woodland – Ecology Strategy*.

Management and access

All existing ancient woodland sites and newly created woodland areas shall be proactively managed through tailored management plans that acknowledge their ecological sensitivities. Management regimes shall promote natural regeneration, native species composition, and structural diversity. Public access will be maintained and sensitively integrated, ensuring recreational use does not compromise biodiversity objectives. Access restrictions will be maintained where these exist for the benefit of biodiversity. We currently assume a minimum 50 metre buffer of semi-natural habitat will be established around all ancient woodland boundaries to protect habitats from the adverse effects of adjacent development, to be confirmed at the masterplanning stage with Natural England and other wildlife stakeholders.



Illustrative section through typical ancient woodland edge, showing suggested buffer












Stage 2 Framework

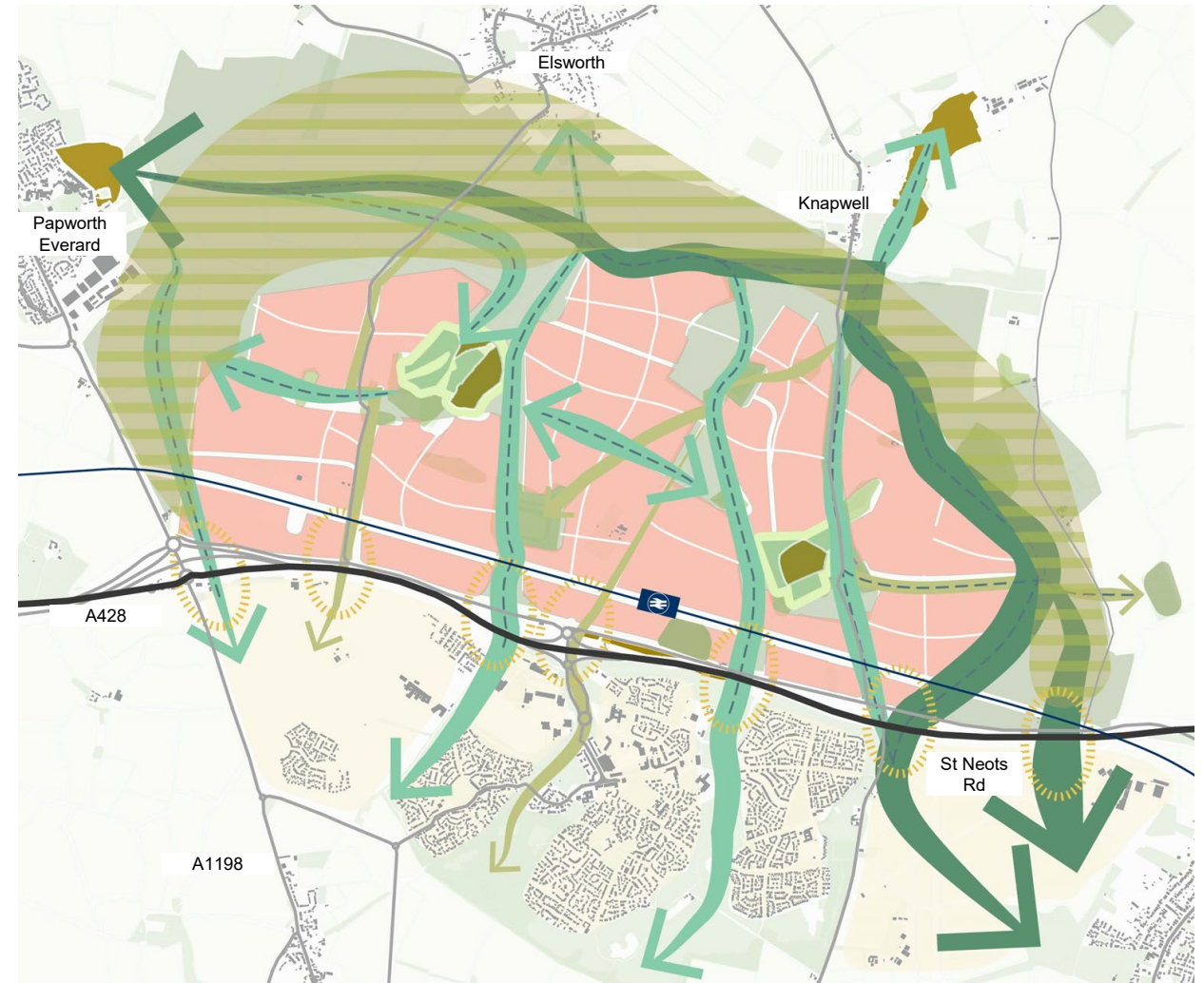
GBI proposals

The Stage 2 GBI Framework establishes a multifunctional, landscape-scale network of green and blue infrastructure for Cambourne North. The proposals deliver a connected hierarchy of green linkages, dark corridors for bat mitigation, ancient woodland buffers and expansion areas, wildlife crossings, buffers to existing villages and accessible green spaces, that collectively address the central tension between biodiversity conservation and public access.

Key interventions include doubling the wooded extent of Elsworth and Knapwell Woods, establishing uninterrupted east-west and north-south habitat corridors, integrating dark corridors to safeguard barbastelle bat populations, and delivering a range of green spaces that meet Natural England open space standards.

Legend

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Ancient woodland |  Illustrative forest arc |
|  Illustrative expansion and buffer to Ancient woodland |  Suggested crossings |
|  Existing green areas |  Development clusters |
| <i>Ecological protection and enhancement corridors</i> | |
|  Primary green linkages |  Existing and planned Cambourne |
|  Secondary green linkages | |
|  Tertiary green linkages | |
|  Dark corridors | |



Stage 2 GBI Framework

Appendix

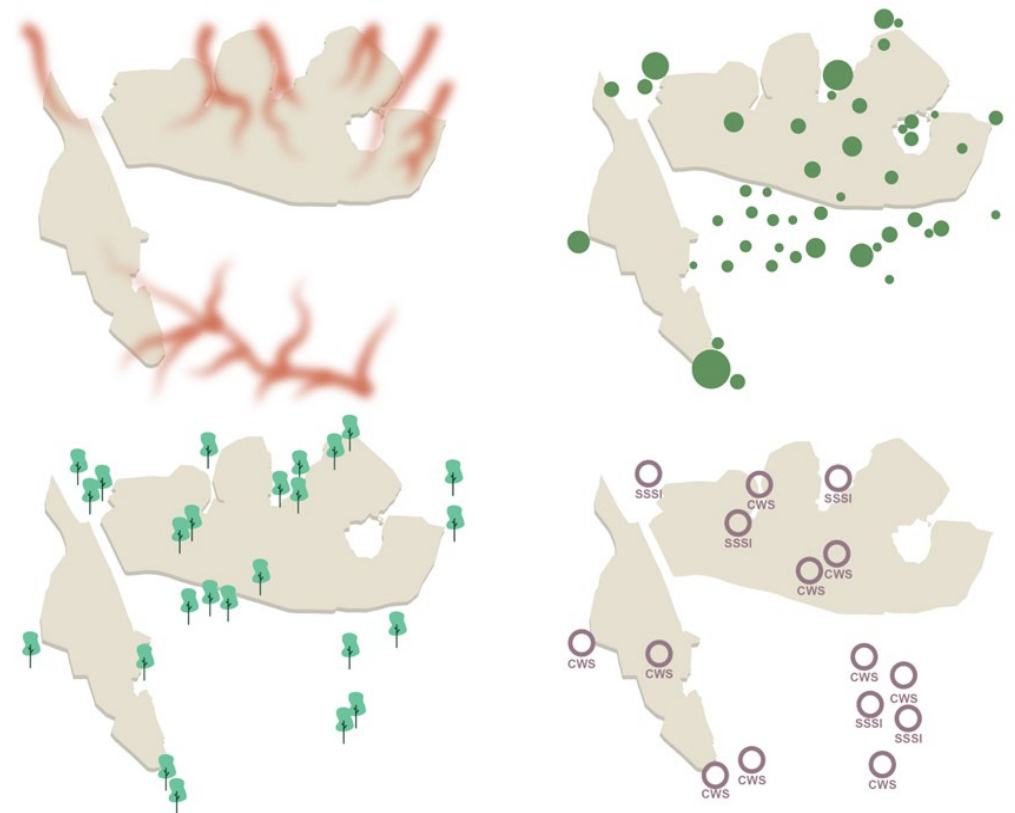
Stage 1 Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Framework

Stage 1 GBI Framework

How the existing context has informed the development of the GBI network

The baseline context was analysed to inform the GBI approach – see summary below:

- **Topography** - The landform reflects the underlying geology of rolling Gault Clay ridges. Long views are afforded where the highest part of the gently undulating plateau (north of Cambourne) slopes northwards the Fens.
- **Existing GBI assets** – Woodland, hedgerows, public rights of way (PRoW), and river networks follow an intricate pattern across the wider landscape.
- **Tree cover** – Tracts of woodland provide a well-defined GBI structure that frame settlements and contribute to the distinct landscape character of the area, as well as its strong sense of place.
- **Nature conservation designations** – Eversden and Wimpole Woods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (6.4km south at the closest point) is designated for the maternity roost of barbastelle bat (*Barbastella barbastellus*), one of the UK's rarest mammals. The area to the north contains three sites of special scientific interest (SSSI), and a county wildlife site (CWS) designated for the ancient semi-natural woodland habitat and associated vascular plants they support. All the SSSIs are in unfavourable condition, two of them declining. Brockley End Meadow to the north, as well as Caxton Moats and Manor Farm Meadows to the south and east are all CWS designated for their wet grassland communities.

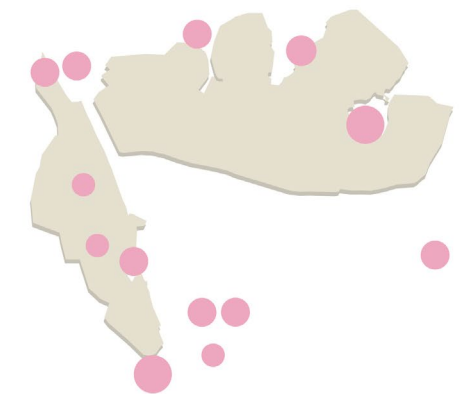
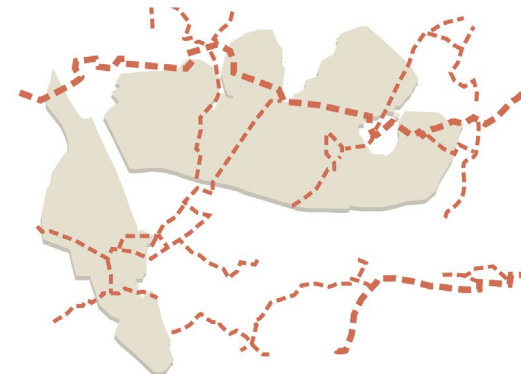
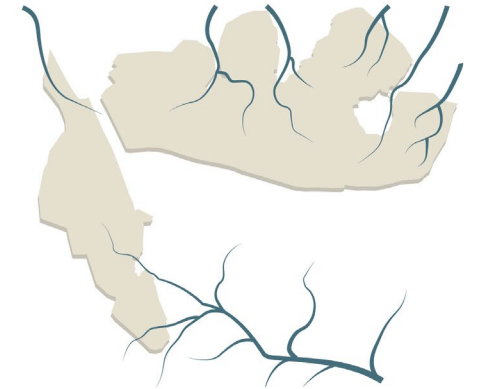
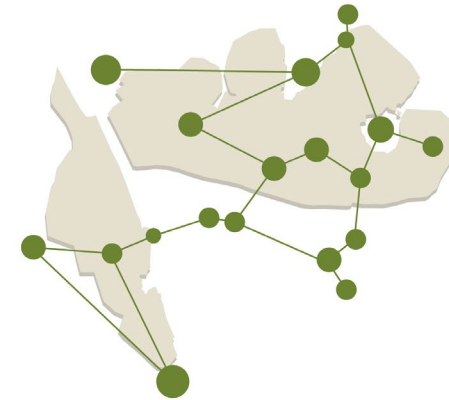


Stage 1 GBI Framework (2)

How the existing context has informed the development of the GBI network

- **Habitat networks** - The landscape to the north is dominated by arable farming with pockets of priority habitats and a locally important network of habitats providing connectivity across the intensively managed landscape. Tracts of ancient woodland are considered irreplaceable. RSPB's Hope Farm lies adjacent to the north east boundary and is managed positively to support farmland birds.
- **Blue infrastructure** - Flood risk, water quality and groundwater recharge issues exist within the clay catchment. Linear open ditches along field boundaries form drainage features and are of biodiversity value, providing important habitat and connectivity for protected and priority species.
- **Access networks** – A network of PRow and long-distance footpaths cross the landscape, broadly following the boundaries of field boundaries or minor tracks.
- **Heritage assets** – The landscape exhibits evidence of time depth due to the moated site at Knapwell (scheduled monument) and Childerley Hall Registered Park and Garden. Several of the villages surrounding Cambourne are also designated as conservation areas with concentrations of listed buildings.

Refer to Phase 1 – Evidence (GBI and Biodiversity) and Appendix C for further details relating to the baseline analysis.











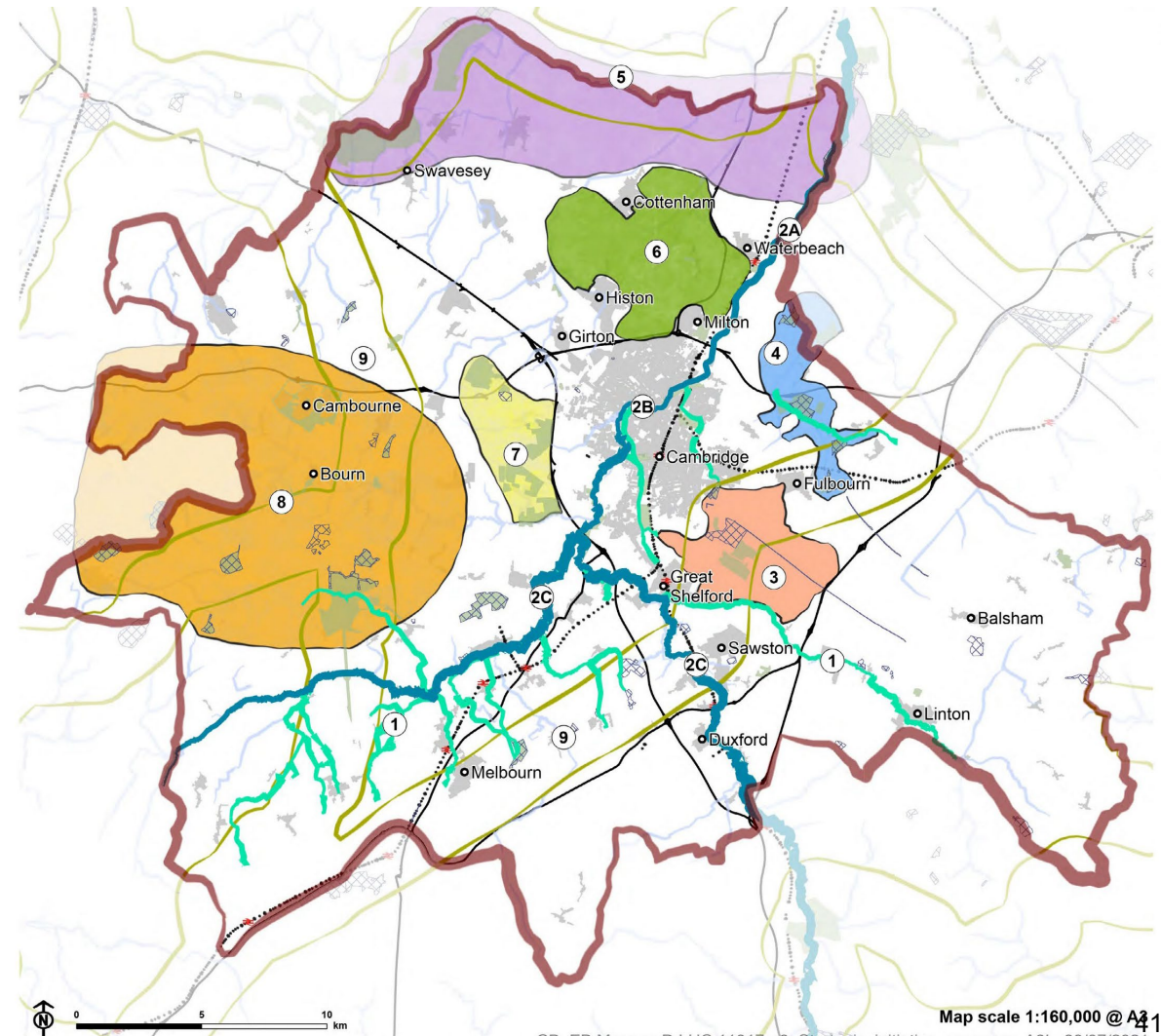
Stage 1 GBI Framework (3)

Integration of Strategic Initiatives within the Greater Cambridge GI Opportunity Mapping

As defined within the *Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping* (2021), the two Strategic Initiatives of relevance to the proposed GBI framework are *Western Gateway Multi-functional GI Corridors* and the *Pollinator Corridor* running north-south to the east of Cambourne.

Refer to Phase 1 – Evidence (GBI and Biodiversity) for further details.

-  Greater Cambridge
-  Large natural greenspace (all access types)
-  SSSI
- Spatially-specific Strategic GI Initiatives
 -  1. Revitalising the chalk stream network
 -  2. River Cam Corridor
 -  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 GI buffer - Coton Corridor
 -  8. Western gateway multifunctional GI corridors
 -  9. Pollinator corridors

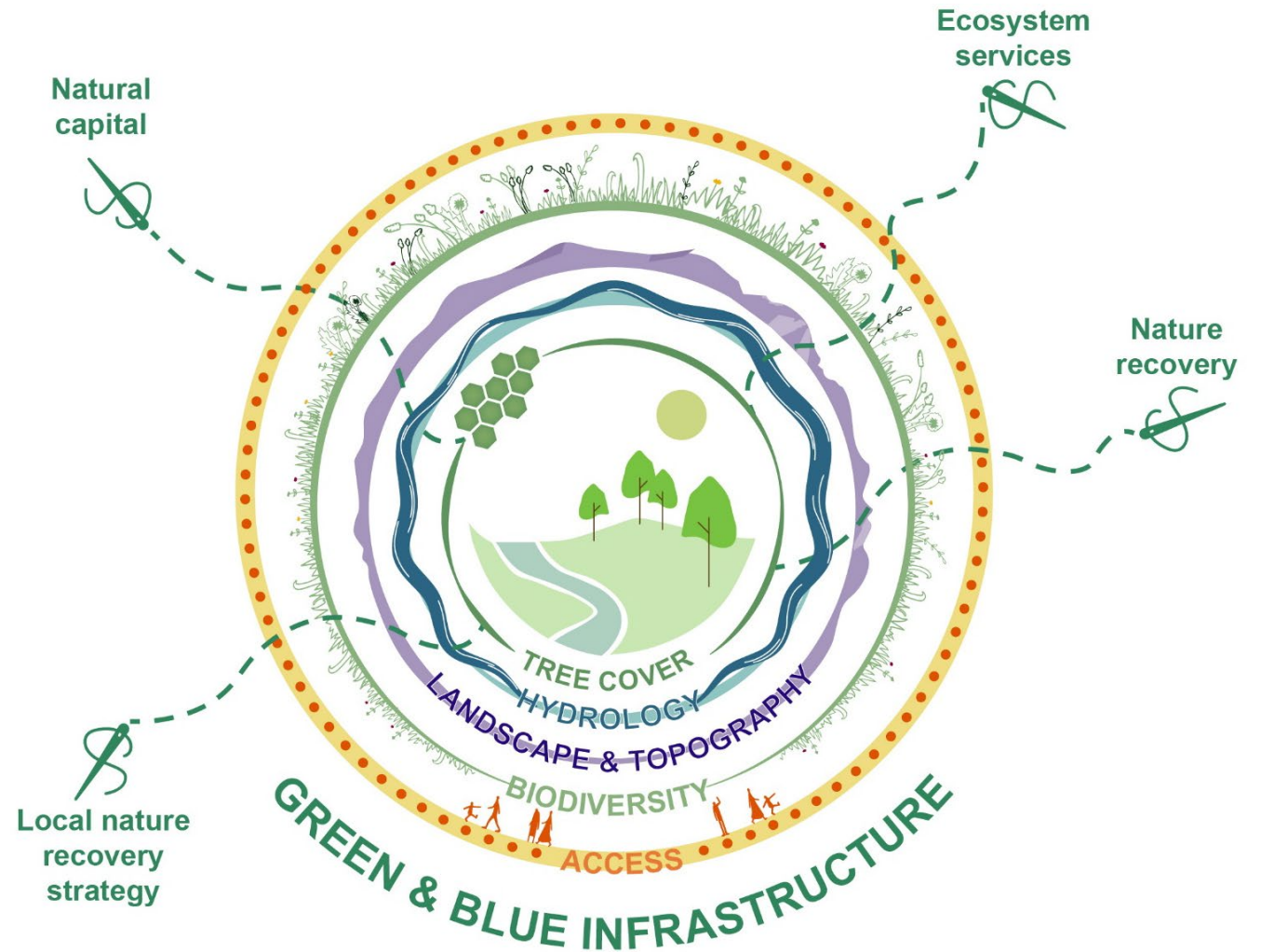


Stage 1 GBI Framework

The vision for the GBI network

A bold vision for GBI provides the opportunity to inform future place-making, defining how development will be integrated within a wider GBI network as part of a 'landscape-led' approach. Key principles for the siting and integration of GBI, including opportunities for the enhancement of blue infrastructure and sustainable transport, should enhance landscape character and local distinctiveness.

The proposed GBI network will build upon the existing landscape and visual framework; comprised of landscape features, landscape character and key views. The key opportunities and priority areas of enhancement identified as part of the *Greater Cambridge GI Opportunity Mapping* completed by LUC in 2020 have been used to inform the approach and siting of the GBI network.

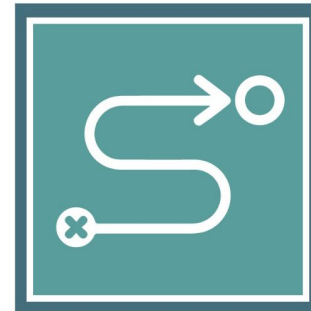


Stage 1 GBI Framework (5)

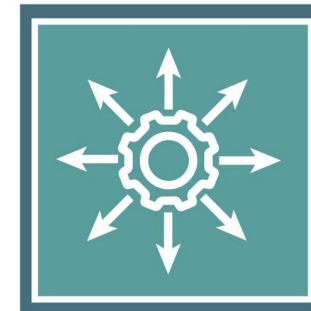
Application of the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework to guide the 'landscape-led' approach

The Natural England GI Framework sets out the key attributes describing what good quality GBI should look like. These characteristics have been used as the guiding principles informing the development of the GBI framework.

- **Connected** – GI / GBI should function and connect as a living network for both people and nature. Noting the necessity for a hierarchy which allows for differing levels of public access, the GBI Framework will include sanctuary areas with limited or no public access.
- **Multi-functional** – GI / GBI should deliver a range of functions and benefits;
- **Accessible** – GI / GBI should promote access to greenspaces which are inclusive, safe, well-managed and accessible for all;
- **Varied** – GI / GBI should comprise a variety of types and sizes of green and blue spaces; and
- **Respects local character** – GI / GBI should contribute to the conservation, enhancement and protection of landscapes.



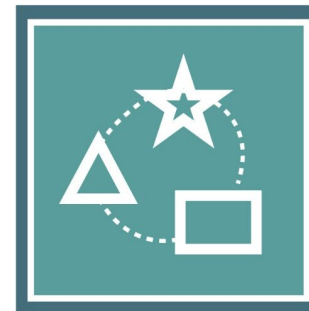
Connected



Multi-functional



Accessible



Varied



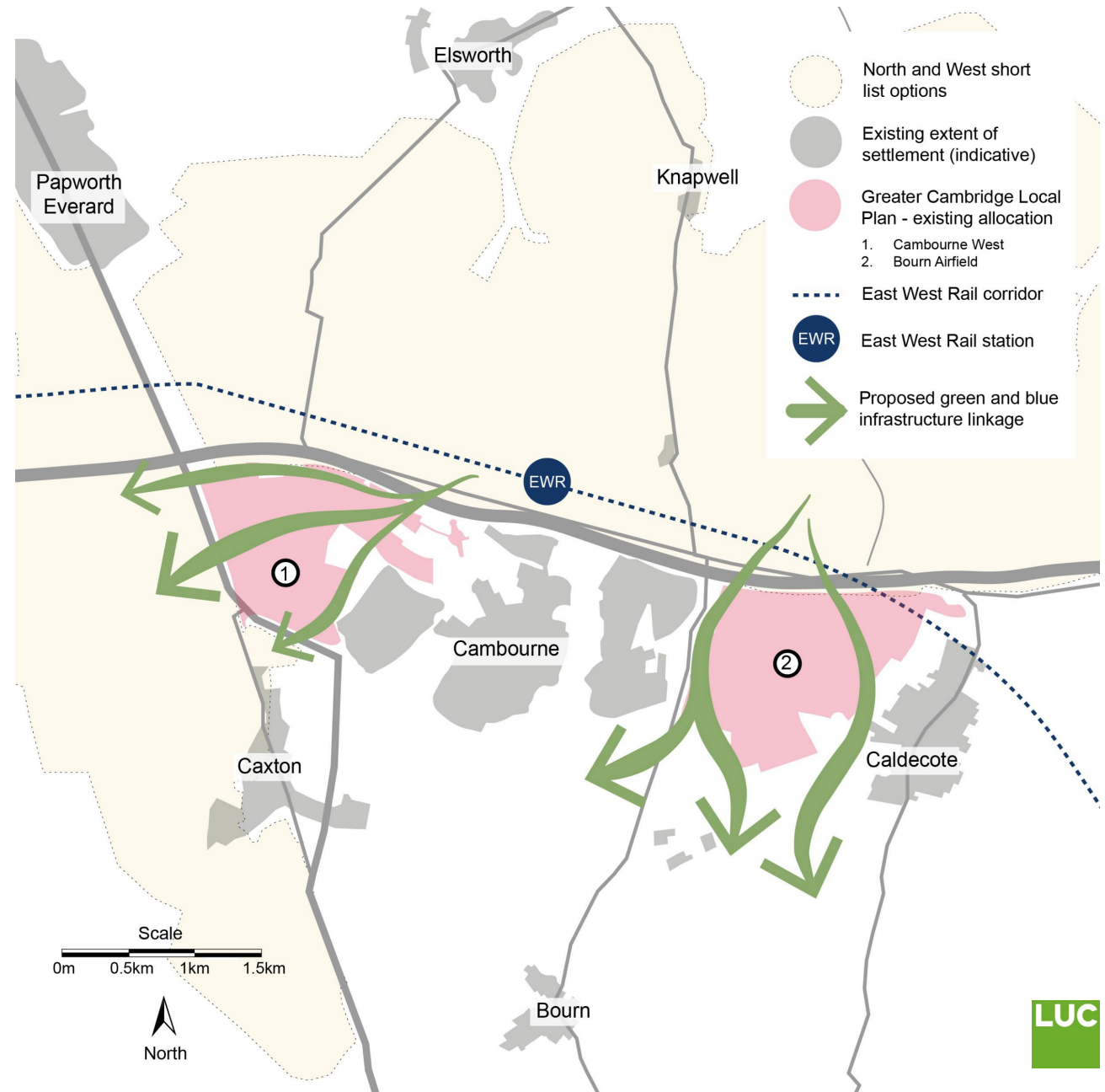
Respects local character

Stage 1 GBI Framework (6)

Integration of GBI proposals at adjacent allocation sites

Development of the GBI framework complements the landscape proposals / frameworks / design codes of planning applications for allocated sites at Bourn Airfield and West Cambourne. Landscape mitigation proposals associated with the National Highways A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet scheme have also been considered. This approach aims to ensure a holistic and resilient approach to the integration of GBI, promoting connected landscape networks which reduce the potential for landscape severance.

Alignment with existing proposals ensures the continuity of networks of GBI and ecological corridors to provide a connected, landscape led framework for people and nature. Site-specific ecological surveys will be necessary to inform assessment, develop design detail and, where appropriate, mitigation. The detailed design of crossing points across the EWR / A428 infrastructure corridor will be required to respond to the GBI Framework. The potential for integrating green infrastructure and supporting habitat connectivity should be investigated.















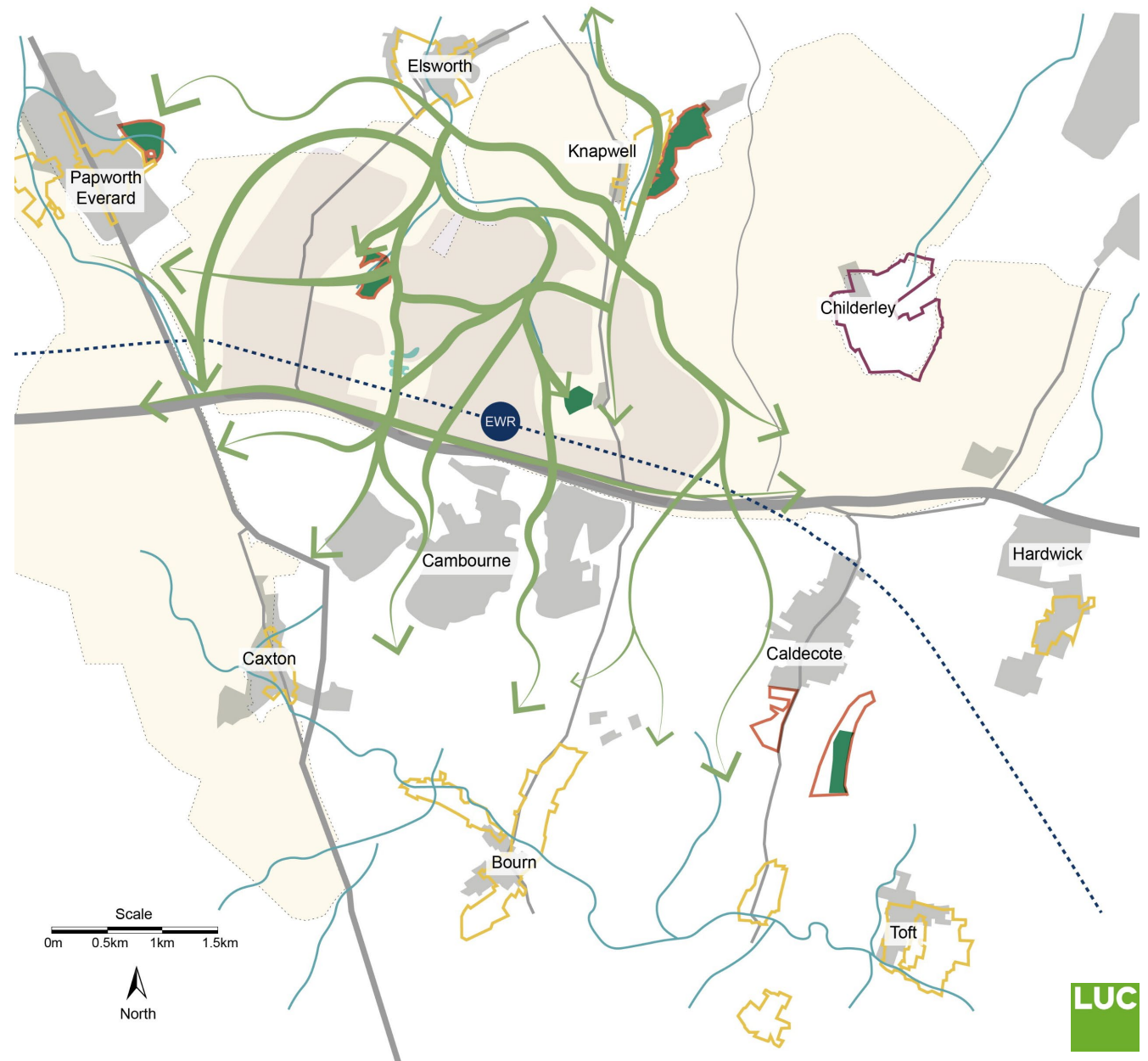
Stage 1 GBI Framework (7)

Integration of landscape linkages

A network of proposed landscape linkages have been defined across the wider landscape. A framework of green corridors and green spaces will provide a multi-functional and interconnected network of GBI (throughout the development and into the rural landscape). This will promote the protection, enhancement and integration of existing habitats of wildlife value, including ancient woodland.

The emphasis on multi-functionality of GBI features, including the delivery of societal, environmental and economic benefits, will play an important role in the delivery of sustainable growth. The GBI network should function and connect as a living network for both people and nature, informed by site-specific ecological survey.

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---------------------------------------|
|  | North and West short list options |  | Site of special scientific interest |
|  | Existing extent of settlement (indicative) |  | Registered park and garden |
|  | Proposed extent of settlement (indicative) |  | Watercourse |
|  | Conservation area |  | East West Rail corridor |
|  | Ancient woodland |  | East West Rail station |
|  | Site of special scientific interest |  | Green and blue infrastructure linkage |



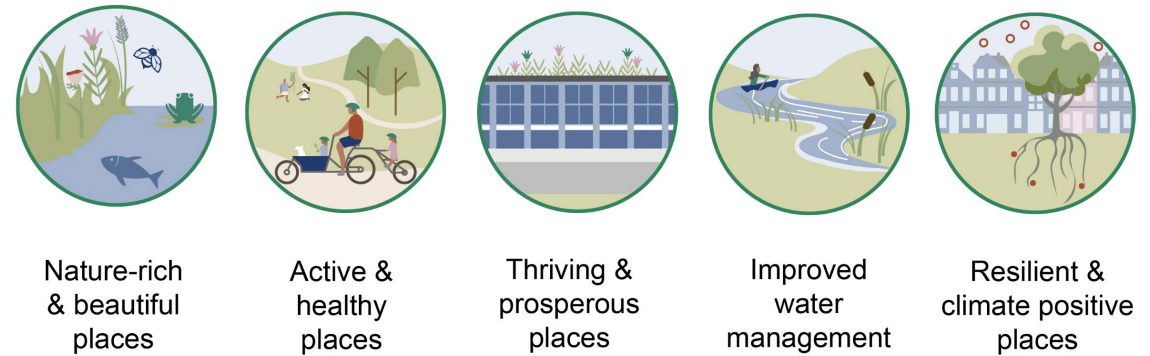
Stage 1 GBI Framework (8)

Application of the Natural England 'Benefit Principles' to the landscape linkages

GBI is defined by its multifunctionality, with a single asset having the ability to provide a number of benefits to people, wildlife and wider environmental functions. The 'Benefit Principles' which underpin the Natural England GI Framework (see opposite) set out the key benefits provided by GBI and can be applied to the framework of landscape linkages.

GBI provides a number of functions, of varying weight and importance. This is particularly relevant where differing purposes conflict with each other. For example, the delivery of biodiversity enhancements (favourable status of statutorily designated sites or species) at select locations should be balanced with the need for active transport or recreation. Some assets, such as ancient semi-natural woodland, will be specifically free from public access to conserve their sensitive ground flora and minimise disturbance. Alternative access provision within the wider GBI Framework will be encouraged.

New tree and woodland planting will promote carbon sequestration across the development. However, the value of enhanced carbon sequestration must be balanced with measures to reduce and prevent carbon emissions at source (including promoting active and sustainable travel) to achieve net zero ambitions.



**Application of Natural England's Benefit Principles to each
landscape linkage to promote GBI multi-functionality**

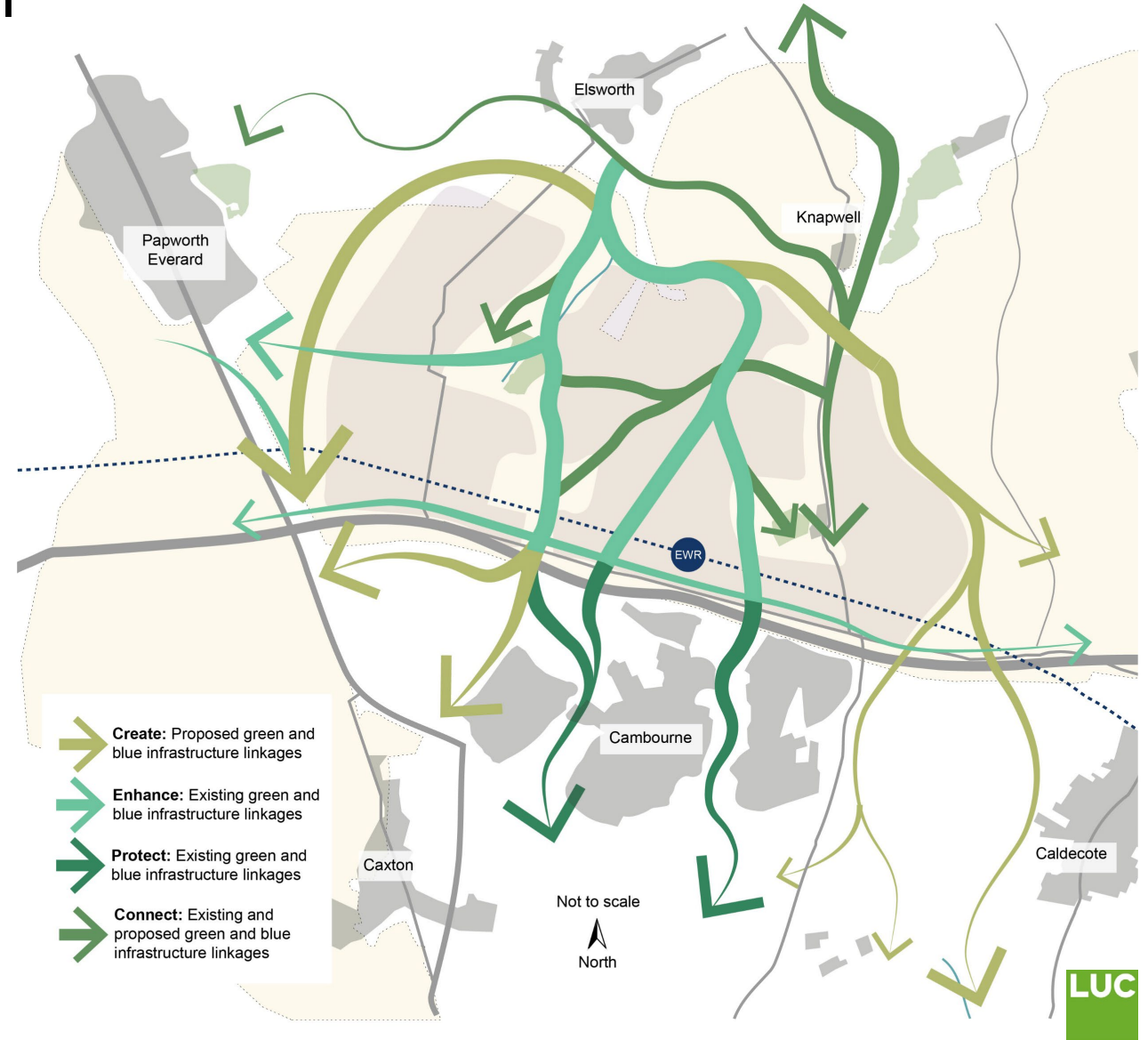
Stage 1 GBI Framework

The spatial layout of the landscape linkages

The siting of landscape linkages was informed initially by the network of existing GBI assets. The type of landscape linkage in terms of GBI approach and primary functionality was also defined, based on the principles set out below:

- **Create** – Deliver new areas of GBI to address deficiencies in the GBI network or respond to local needs;
- **Enhance** – Improve the existing GBI network to ensure existing assets are functioning to their potential;
- **Protect** – Safeguard areas of existing GBI e.g. areas of high conservation value; and
- **Connect** – Address areas of severance within the wider landscape through the GBI network.

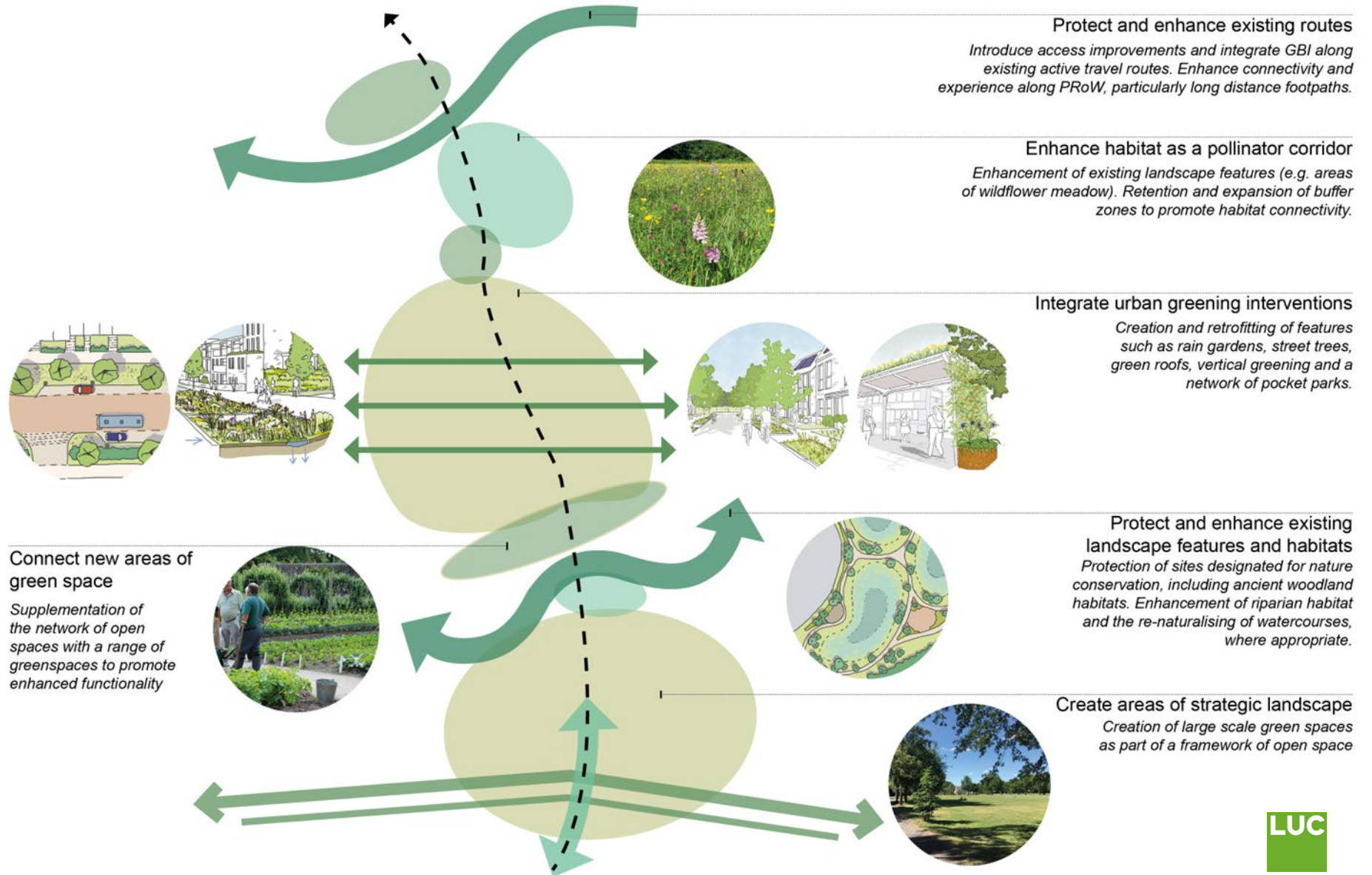
The four approaches to GBI outlined above are cross-cutting, with one or more potentially relevant to each landscape linkage. The spatial layout been classified further into a GBI hierarchy of primary, secondary and tertiary linkages – see slide 18. The detailed design of crossing points across the EWR / A428 infrastructure corridor will be required to respond to the GBI Framework. The potential for integrating GBI and supporting habitat connectivity should be investigated.



Stage 1 GE

The conceptual approach landscape linkages

The landscape linkages vary in size and scale, depending on the GBI interventions included to promote multi-functionality. For instance, the scale of landscape linkages may range from a new large strategic greenspace to a connected network of urban greening interventions through the urban fabric.



Stage 1 GBI Framework (11)

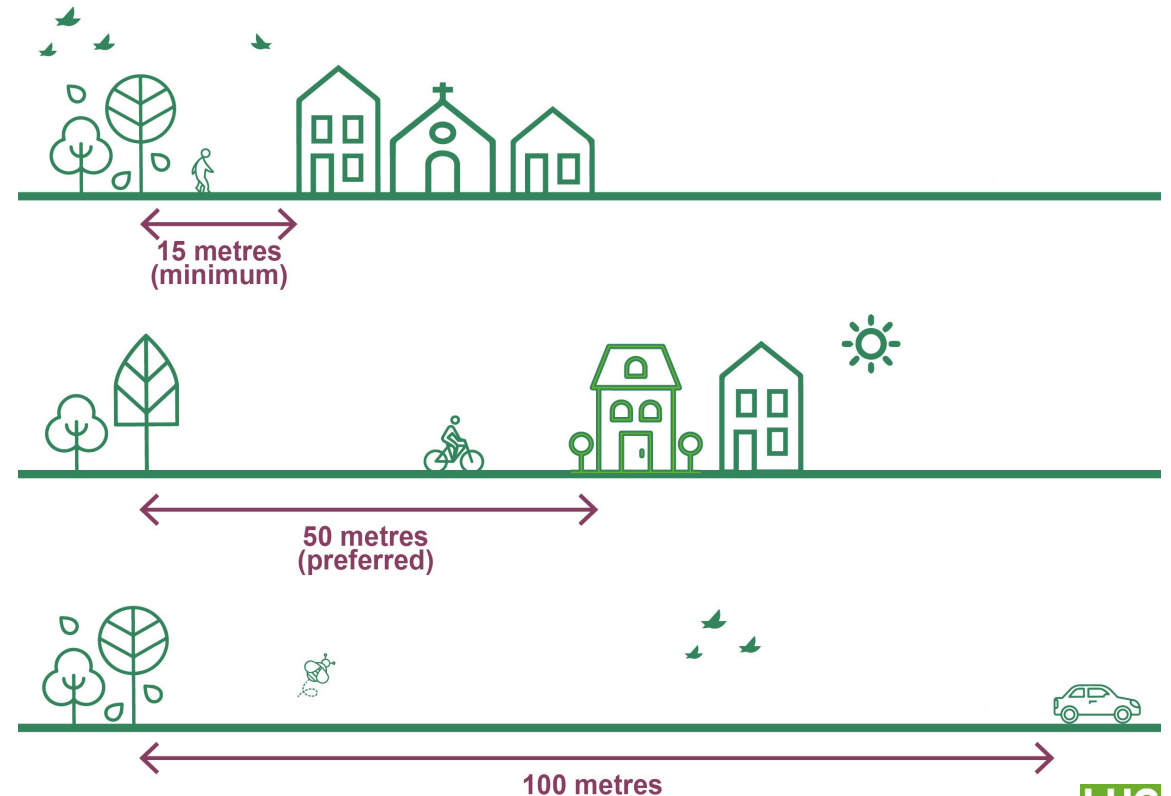
Buffers required around existing ecological constraints within landscape linkages

Woodlands

All woodlands should be retained and provided with buffers of a minimum of 15 metres, though ideally 50 metres (from canopy edge) from housing or associated infrastructure and 100 metres from major roads, where possible. All ancient woodland, including SSSI and CWS, should be protected from public access and alternative areas provided to avoid recreational pressure on these assets. The buffers around such woodlands can, in part, contribute to alternative areas but principally access would be encouraged elsewhere through informal SANG provision.

The buffers around all woodland assets should incorporate at least some dark (unlit and away from ambient artificial light spill) buffer (suggested minimum 20m) to ensure nocturnal and crepuscular species can forage with a minimum of disturbance. The width of these buffers is to be informed by site-specific ecological survey at later design stages.

Buffers should include appropriate positive management. Depending on the needs of a given site, structural and species diversity should be encouraged within buffers. This could include the planting of species that are traditionally managed through coppice, scrub species, natural regeneration (where appropriate), and the sowing of understorey species.



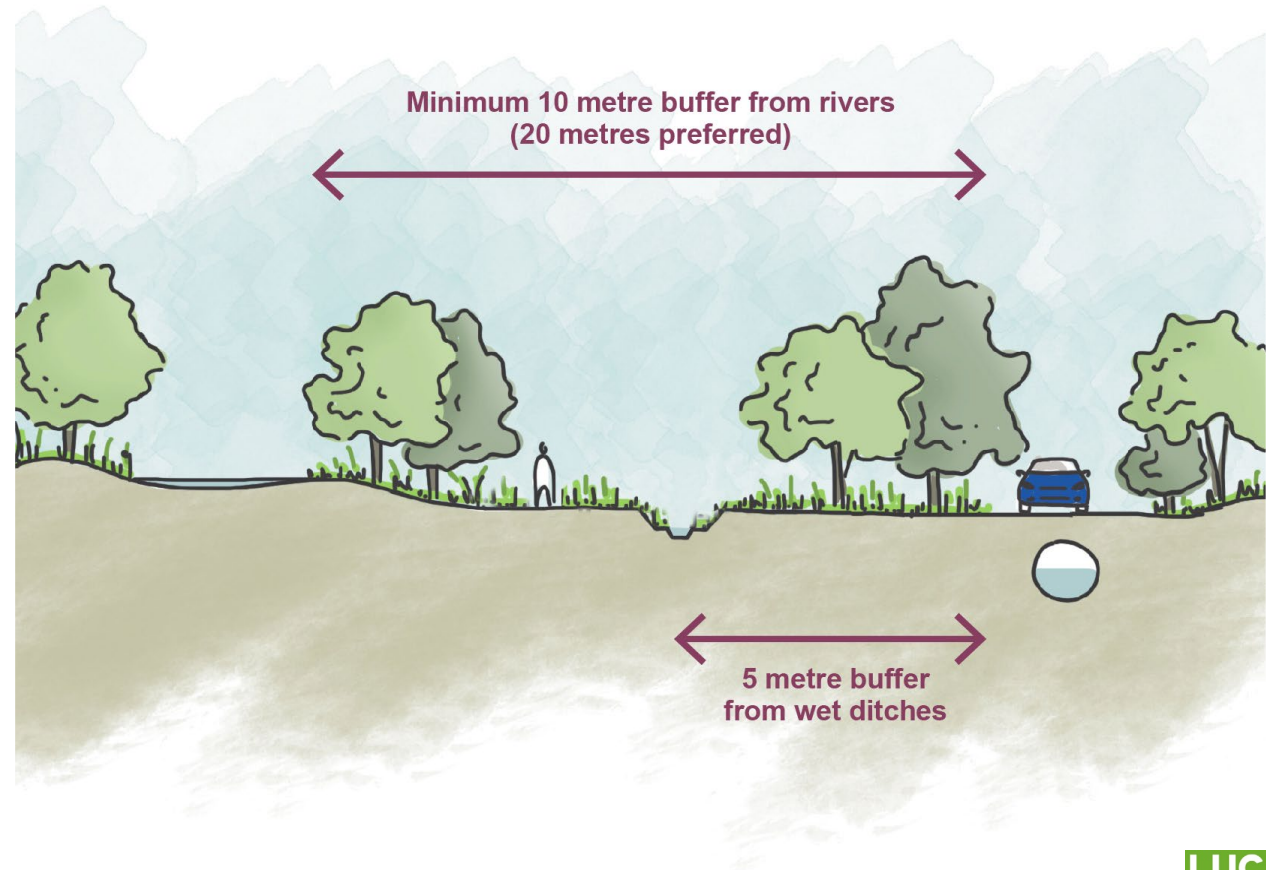
Stage 1 GBI Framework (12)

Buffers required around existing ecological constraints within landscape linkages

Rivers and watercourses

To maintain a healthy riparian zone and enhance water quality, a minimum 10 metre buffer should be provided for all watercourses. However, 20 metres is preferable where possible and appropriate to do so. Wet ditches should be afforded 5 metre buffers. Additionally, some ponds in this area support great crested newt and should therefore be given a 50 metre buffer. All ponds should be connected to the wider semi-natural green infrastructure without any barriers to access for Great Crested Newts.

Positive management of these buffers should include minimal interventions and light-touch management to create a mosaic of habitats where ideally no agri-chemicals are applied and public access is limited. These areas should be maintained free of artificial lighting. Interventions such as directional lighting, screen planting and darkness buffer zones to minimise ambient light-spill. The effectiveness of a dark buffer or corridor is expected to be greater where this is not influenced by ambient light spill from one, rather than two, aspects. The width of buffer zones will be informed through further survey and at later design stages.

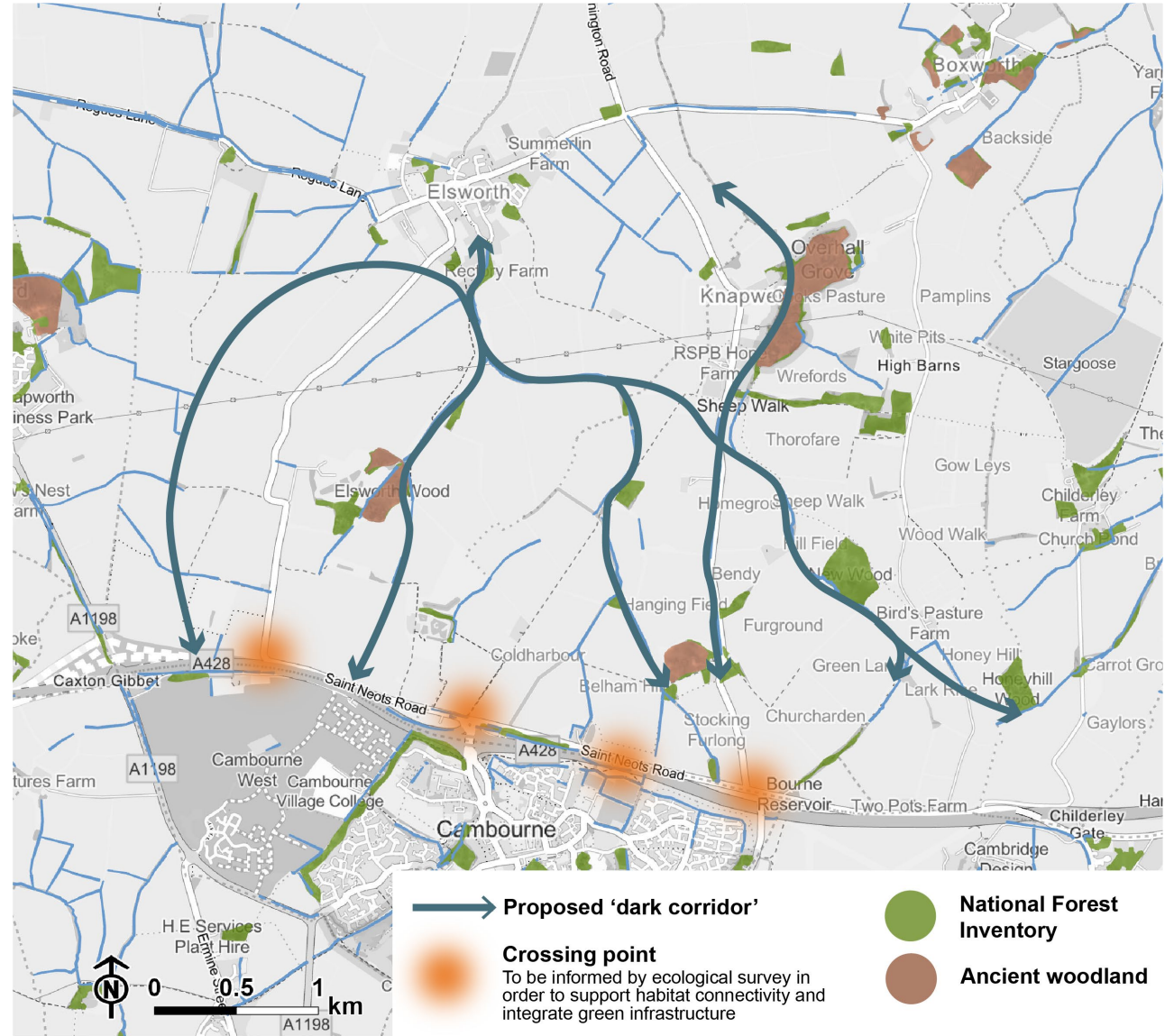


Stage 1 GBI Framework (13)

Definition of the proposed 'dark corridors'

Barbastella barbastellus (for which Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC is designated) forage over a large area of up to 20 km of connected, suitable habitats. Habitats of highest value to *Barbastella barbastellus* include unlit broadleaved woodland, wet meadows and pasture, hedgerows, watercourses and waterbodies for foraging (a variety of moth prey species) and dispersal. Within 6km (the core sustenance zone for the species) these habitat types – and any changes to them – are of particular significance. Potential loss, damage or disturbance to such functionally linked land should be considered through Habitat Regulations Appropriate Assessment.

Site-specific ecological surveys are necessary to inform assessment, develop design detail and, where appropriate, mitigation. This includes the width of dark corridors and the lighting plans for surrounding development.



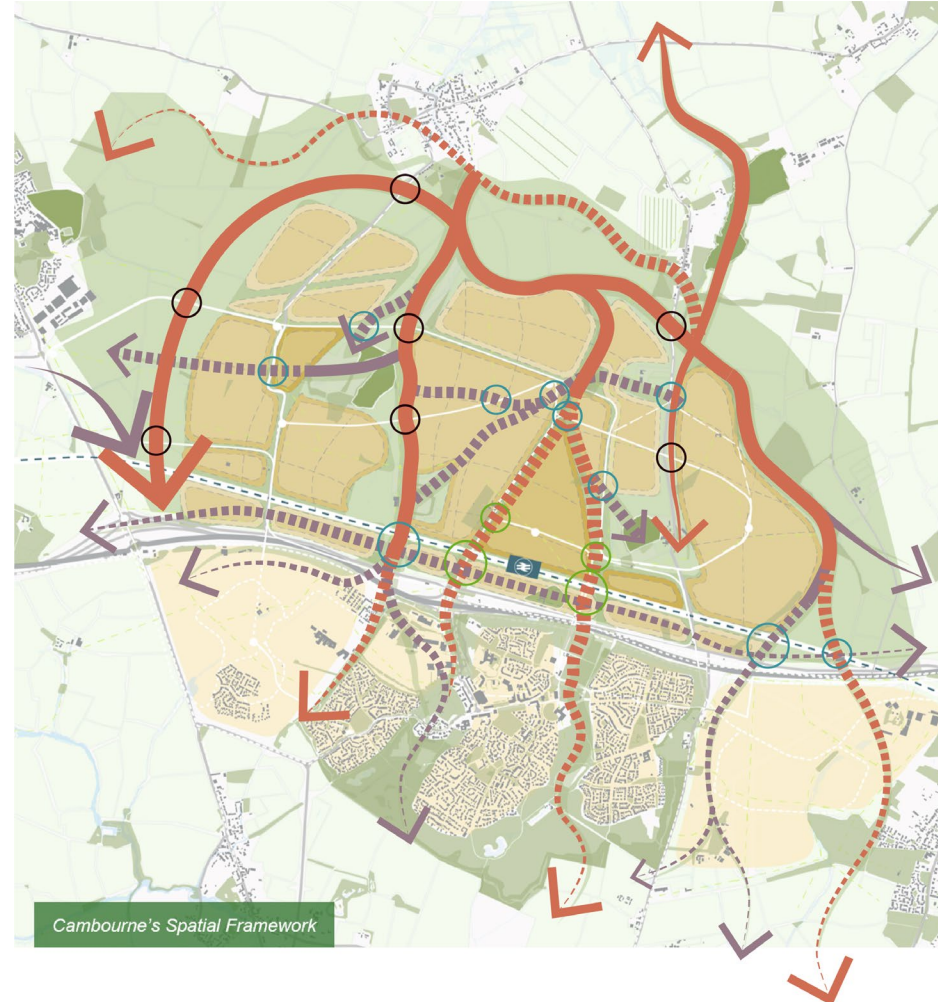
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Stage 1 GBI Framework (14)

Integration of the dark corridors with the transport network

Improving naturalness, connectedness and condition of the favourable habitat network is therefore considered as a priority opportunity and a necessary aspect of anticipated mitigation. A significant area of new unlit and well-connected woodland arc is, for example, proposed around and connecting through the three principal development areas (termed 'unlit primary landscape linkages' – see Slide 16). Where dark corridors cross the transport network and lighting is a priority for health and safety, sensitive design will be required. It is recognised that within the principal development areas, truly dark corridors may be narrowed or unrealistic to achieve due to surrounding ambient lighting. Design of landscape linkages will take a hierarchical approach:

- 1. Unlit and free from ambient lighting e.g. similar to an unlit towpath at night.
- 2. Occasional use of minimal, directional and movement sensitive lighting e.g. similar to the Cambridge Cycleway at night.
- 3. Rationalised lighting where routes require more, or more frequent, lighting; schemes will employ best practice according to current BCT and ILE guidance.



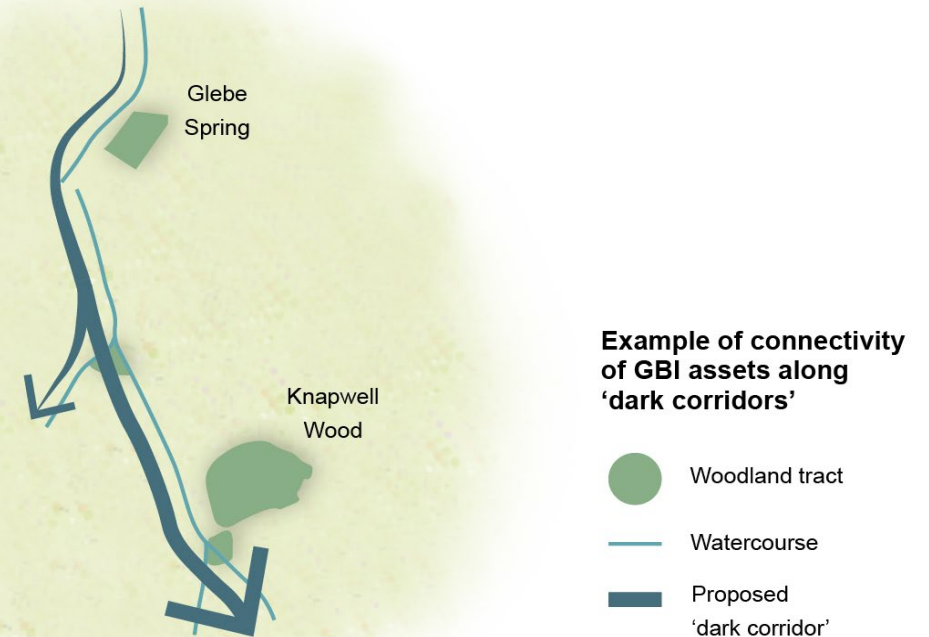
Stage 1 GBI Framework (15)

Identification of proposed 'dark corridors'

Light spillage should be minimised **as a priority** through the use of directional lighting and ensuring dark canopy connectivity in all dark corridor buffer zones, woodlands and wetlands, to enable nocturnal and crepuscular species such as *Barbastella barbastellus* to forage.

'Dark corridors' are recommended along pre-existing natural and semi-natural corridors such as streams and hedgerows, as well as woodland assets with mature growth as these have the potential to support roosting *Barbastella barbastellus*. These corridors will provide connectivity with GBI assets across the landscape and into adjoining off-site habitats.

Networks identified as dark corridors should be retained as unlit, semi-natural corridors with suitable foraging opportunities. Wetlands should have limited public access whilst ancient woodland sites should be entirely free from public access. Otherwise, public access should not be restricted along dark corridors during daylight hours. Where essential, lighting should be set on motion sensors to maintain darkness as far as practicable. A lighting strategy should be prepared to support the future masterplan to ensure the successful integration of dark corridors. The approach should include incorporate good practice lighting design principles which consider public health and safety need.



Stage 1 GBI Framework (16)

Building the granularity of the GBI network

The landscape linkages have been classified to form a GBI hierarchy, as outlined below:

- **Primary landscape linkage** – Strategic landscape scale corridors that form the basis for the GBI framework.
- **Secondary landscape linkage** – GBI networks at a residential area scale, providing connections with the primary network.
- **Tertiary landscape linkage** – GBI linkages which are integrated within the urban fabric of a development, often at the street scale. Tertiary landscape linkages provide connections to the primary and secondary networks.

Consideration of the landscape linkages as part of a wider GBI framework aim to deliver connectivity across the landscape. Primary and secondary landscape linkages may also perform as dark corridors.

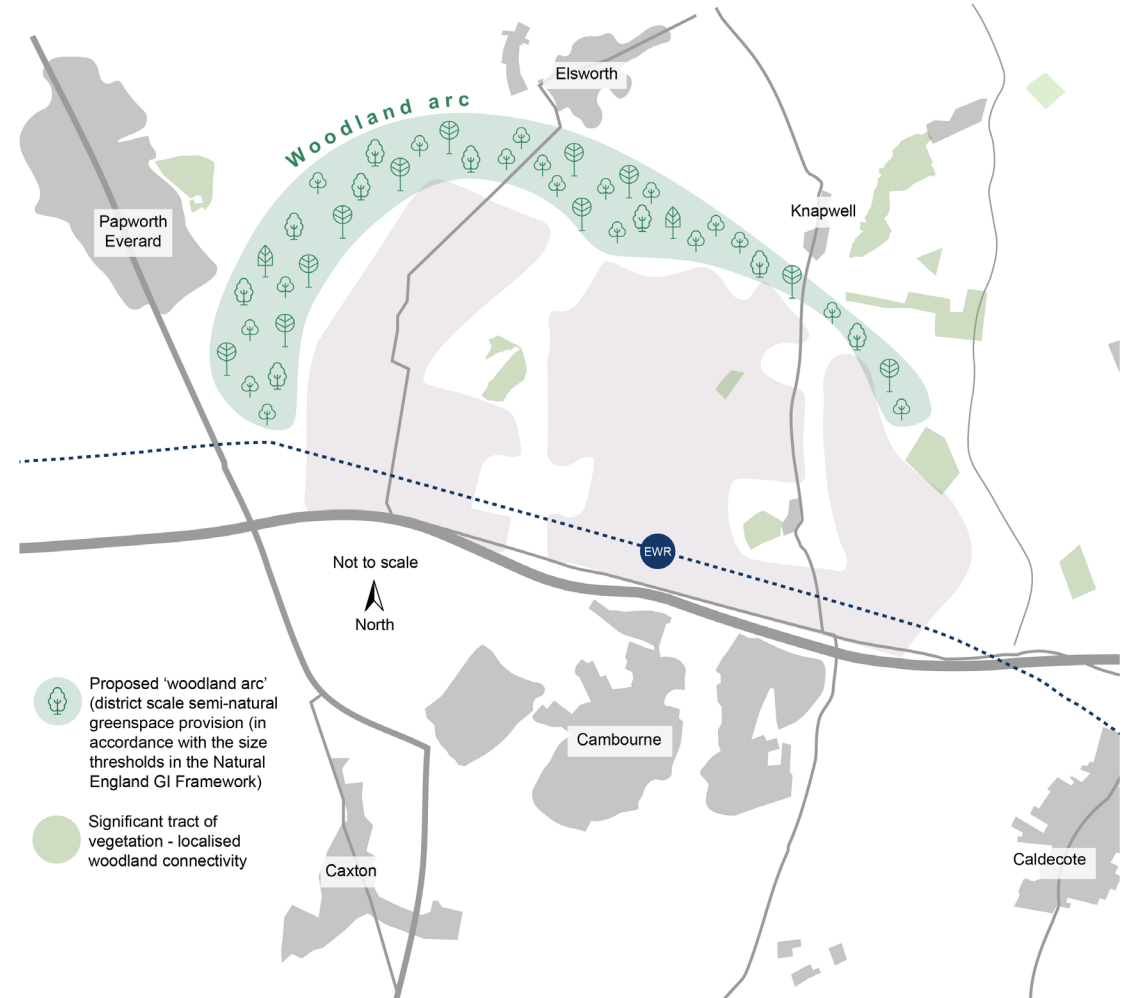


Stage 1 GBI Framework (17)

Definition of the primary landscape linkages – the regional scale woodland arc

The integration of a primary landscape linkage to the west, forming a woodland arc, offers the opportunity to provide the following multi-functional benefits:

- Provide an accessible natural greenspace (the 'woodland arc') to contribute to the open space network and promote access to greenspace close to home. Note: Based on the size thresholds in the Natural England GI Framework, the woodland arc equates to a 'district' scale greenspace.
- Maintain the undeveloped rural landscape between villages to the north, reducing the potential for settlement coalescence.
- Contribute to the expansion of Greater Cambridge's 'urban forest' by protecting and increasing tree canopy cover using climate resilient species. This includes enhanced linkages with the West Cambridge Hundreds – a landscape-scale scheme aimed at improving the connectivity of the ecological network.



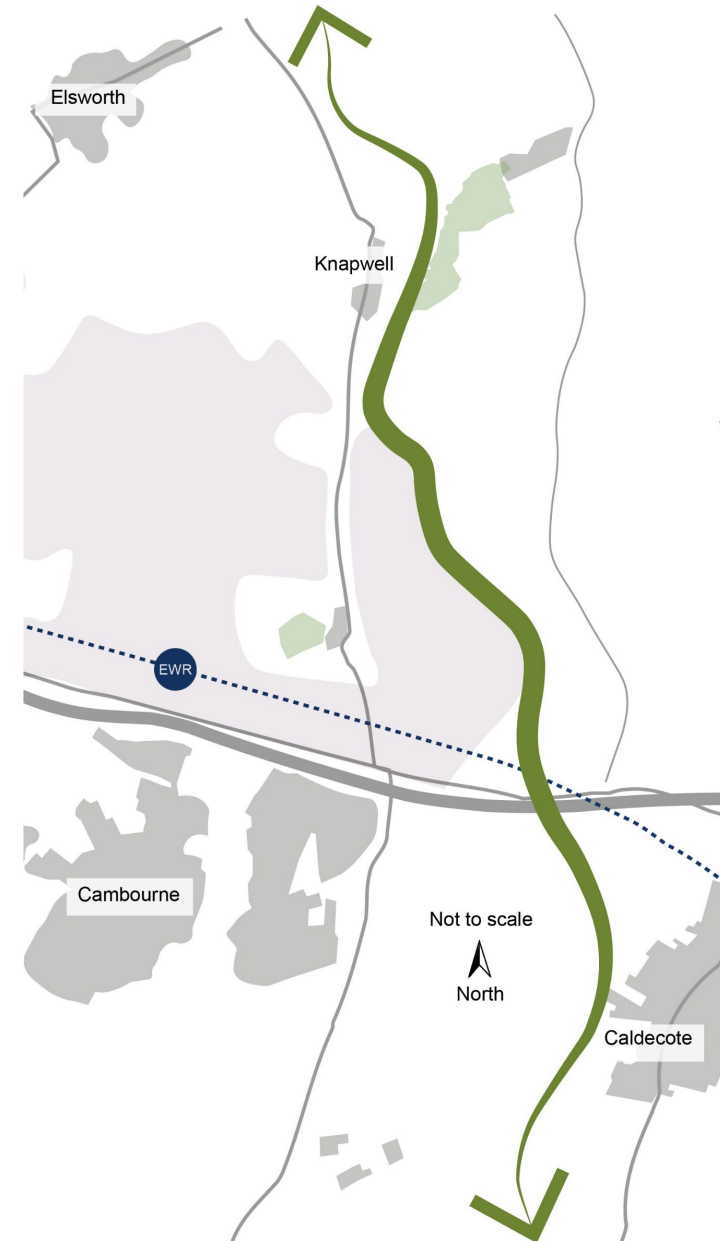
Stage 1 GBI Framework (18)

Definition of the primary landscape linkages – pollinator corridor to the east

The Strategic Initiatives defined within the Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping (2021) identify land stretching north to south to the west of Cambridge as a 'pollinator corridor'. The proposed GBI framework identifies this area as a primary landscape linkage with the aim of enhancing its functionality as a pollinator corridor.

The primary landscape linkage offers the opportunity to enhance the north-south GBI corridor, whilst also ensuring alignment with the landscape proposals at Bourn Airfield allocation site.

The pollinator corridor will promote the establishment of locally-appropriate species-rich wildflower meadows in accordance with the National Pollinator Strategy. This Strategic Initiative will focus on the integration of wildflower meadows on road verges and within green corridors accommodating walking and cycling infrastructure.



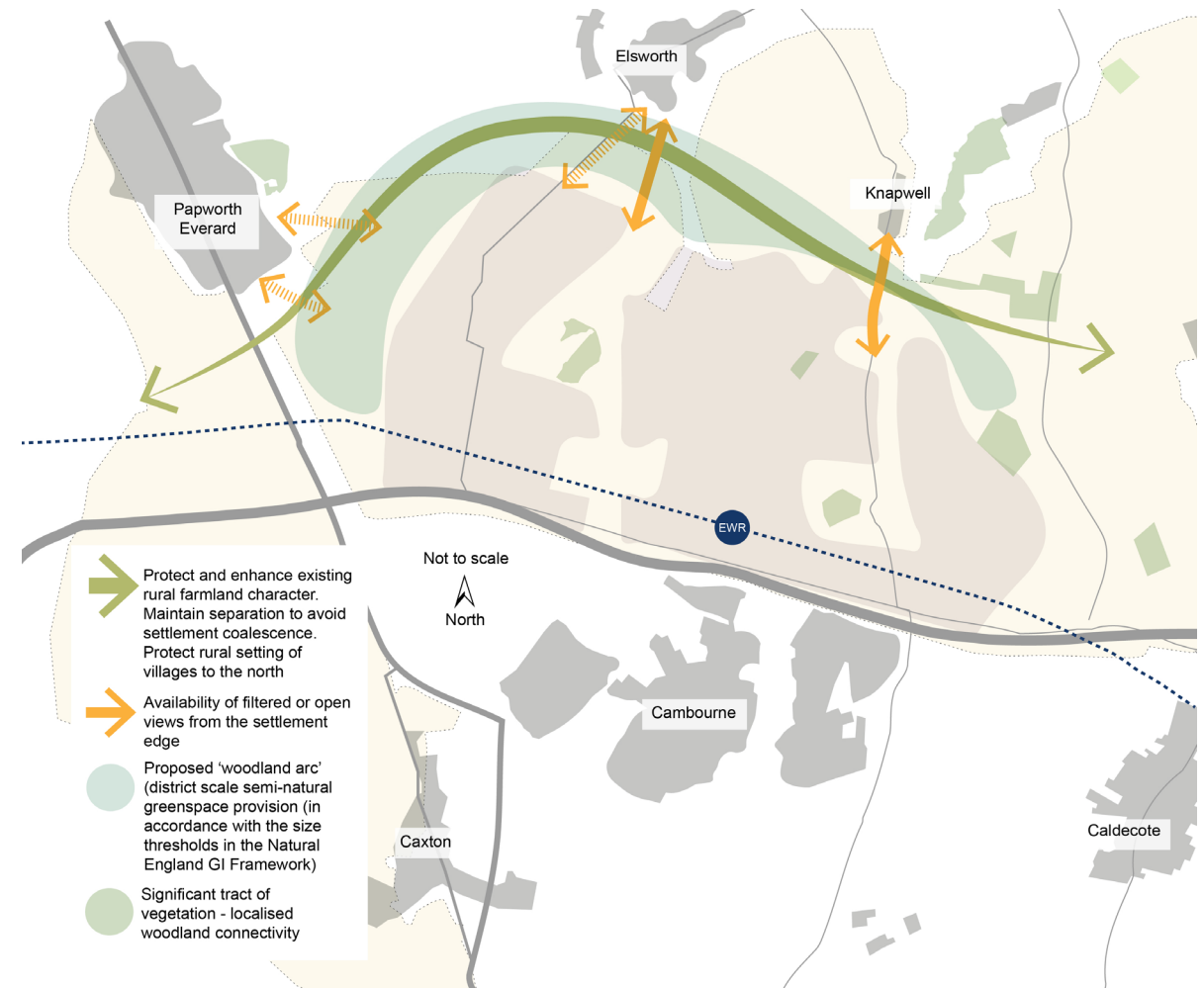
Stage 1 GBI Framework (19)

Landscape integration and protection of the existing rural landscape

Development of the GBI framework has sought to integrate the rural landscape forming the setting of the network of small villages to the north and west. A swathe of existing rural farmland provides separation between settlement edges, contributing to the setting of the villages of Elsworth and Knapwell. Between Papworth Everard and the proposed settlement extent, a new wooded semi-natural greenspace woodland will provide multi-functional benefits, complementing the characteristically well wooded edges of existing villages.

Topography and the existing integration of village edges by mature trees, dense hedgerows, tree belts and woodland tracts restricts views out to new settlement. However, the siting of the landscape linkages ensures the availability of some framed open views from Elsworth and Knapwell across the landscape to the south.

Refer to Phase 1 – Evidence (GBI and Biodiversity) for further details of how the GBI approach has been informed by the 'key characteristics' and summary descriptions within the *Greater Cambridgeshire Landscape Character Assessment (2021)*.



Stage 1 GBI Framework (20)

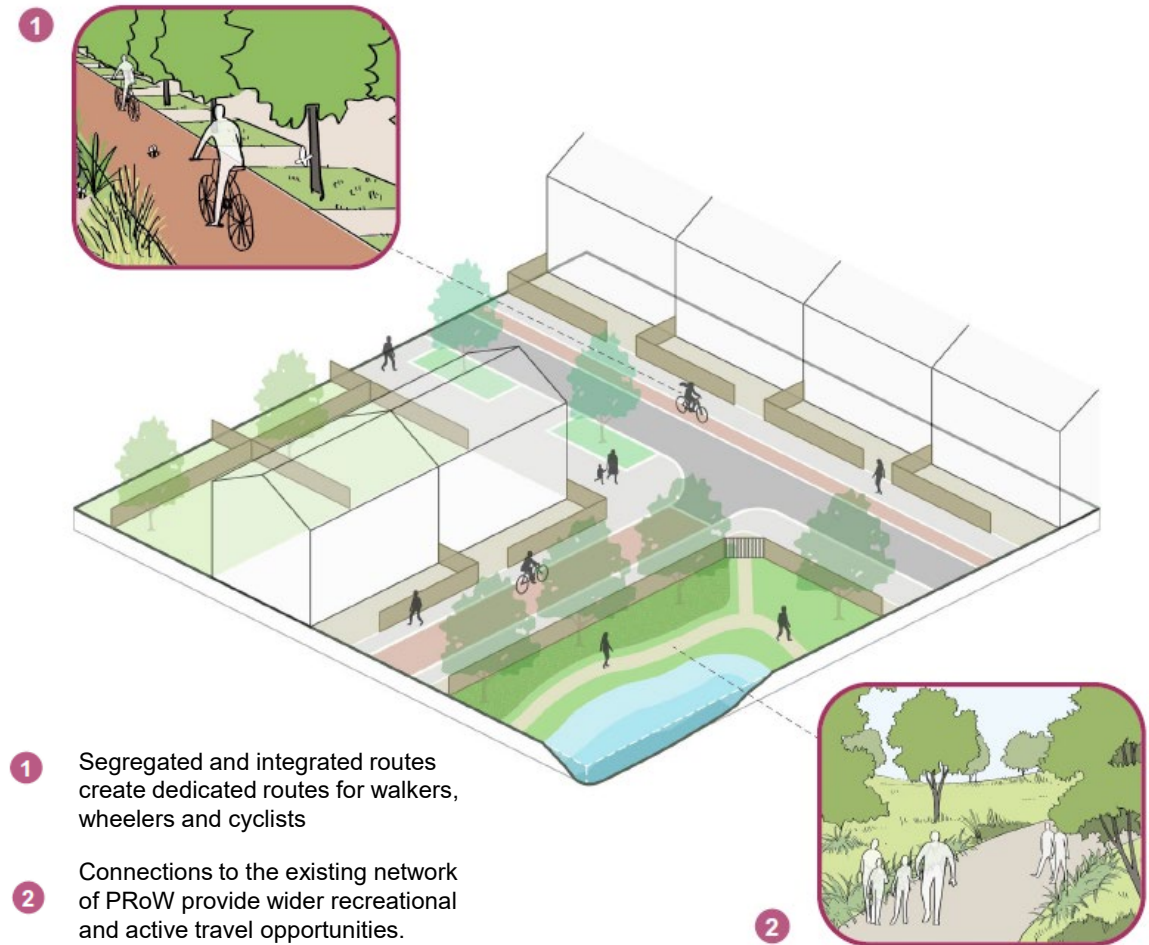
Integration of active travel networks

Active travel networks and low carbon transport networks support physical activity and well-being associated with access to greenspace and nature. The integration of GBI into these networks also offers the opportunity to create an attractive environment and setting for travel.

The inclusion of active travel networks as part of the GBI framework aims to maximise multi-functionality. The provision of segregated active travel routes combined with appropriately sited tree planting / vegetation provides the opportunity to encourage active lifestyles. Connections to existing PRow also offer recreational opportunities for users to access the wider rural landscape.

Careful planting design associated with active travel should ensure sight lines and views are maintained; providing shade and shelter where necessary. Locations to stop, rest or look at a view should be incorporated with opportunities for seating to promote inclusivity of users of all ages and abilities.

See slide 16 of the GBI Framework for details of the hierarchical approach to lighting of the landscape linkages.

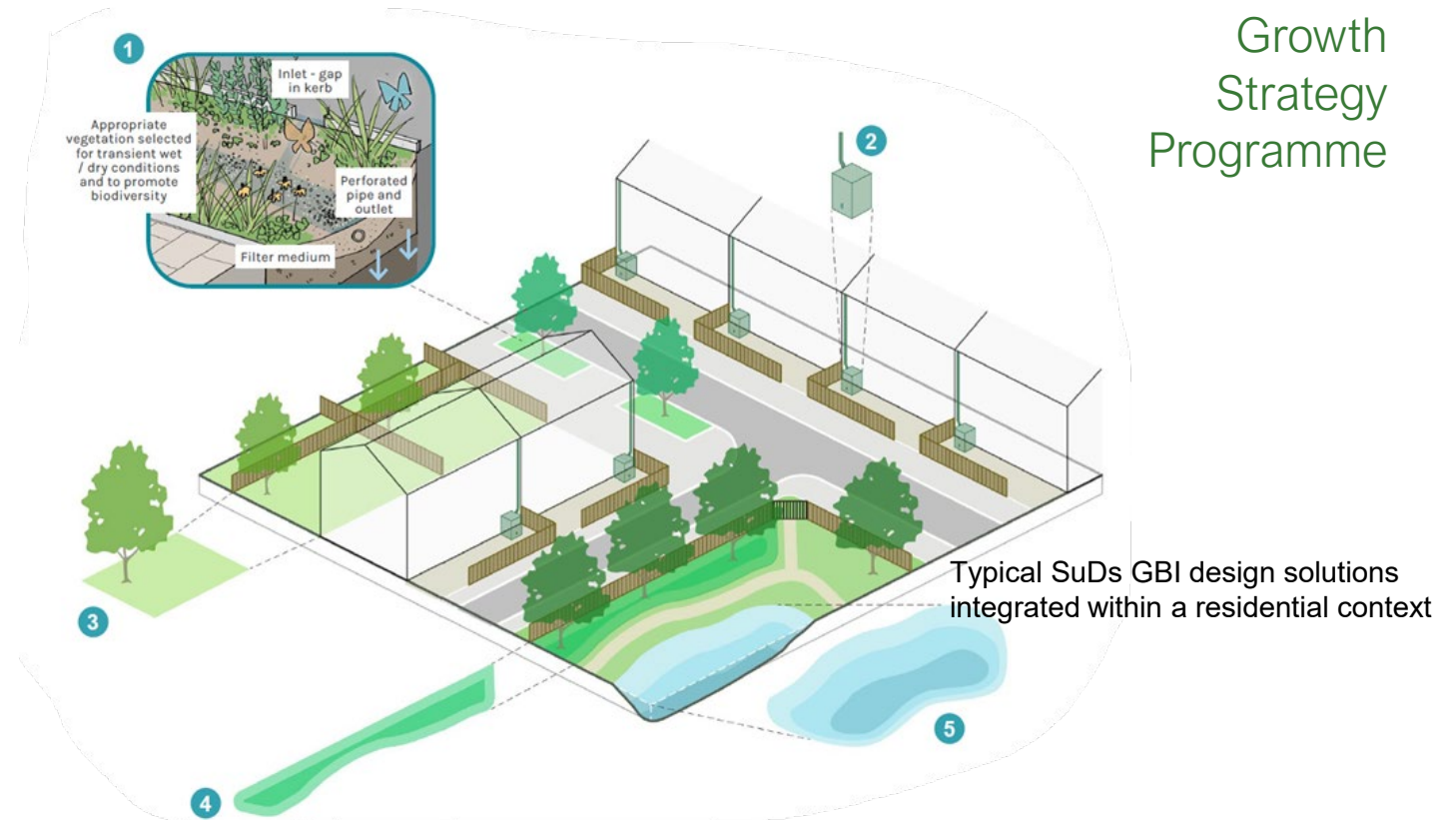


Stage 1 GBI Framework (21)

Integrated water management

Water management mechanisms will be integrated within the GBI Framework to provide multiple benefits, including climate resilience. Examples include:

- New tree and woodland planting as part of a wider catchment management-based approach (across the urban and rural landscape) to intercept rainfall at source, reducing surface water run-off and flood risk.
- Use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to manage surface water run-off, improve water quality, provide flood protection, enhance biodiversity and contribute to an attractive environment. Community scale rainwater harvesting and other mechanisms should be considered to enable storage and re-use of water.
- New water features and integrated drainage as part of new park and green space design to enhance water storage capacity, provide opportunities for recreation and biodiversity as well as contribute to urban cooling.



1. Rain gardens: A shallow landscape depression that allows water to pond temporarily on the surface before filtering through vegetation and underlying soils prior to collection or infiltration.

2. Rainwater harvesting: Rainwater is collected from built form and stored for re-use.

3. Trees and vegetation: Planting should be locally appropriate and climate resilient. Species choice should also consider the recommendations of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy

4. Swales (adjacent highways and footways): A vegetated channel used to convey and treat runoff.

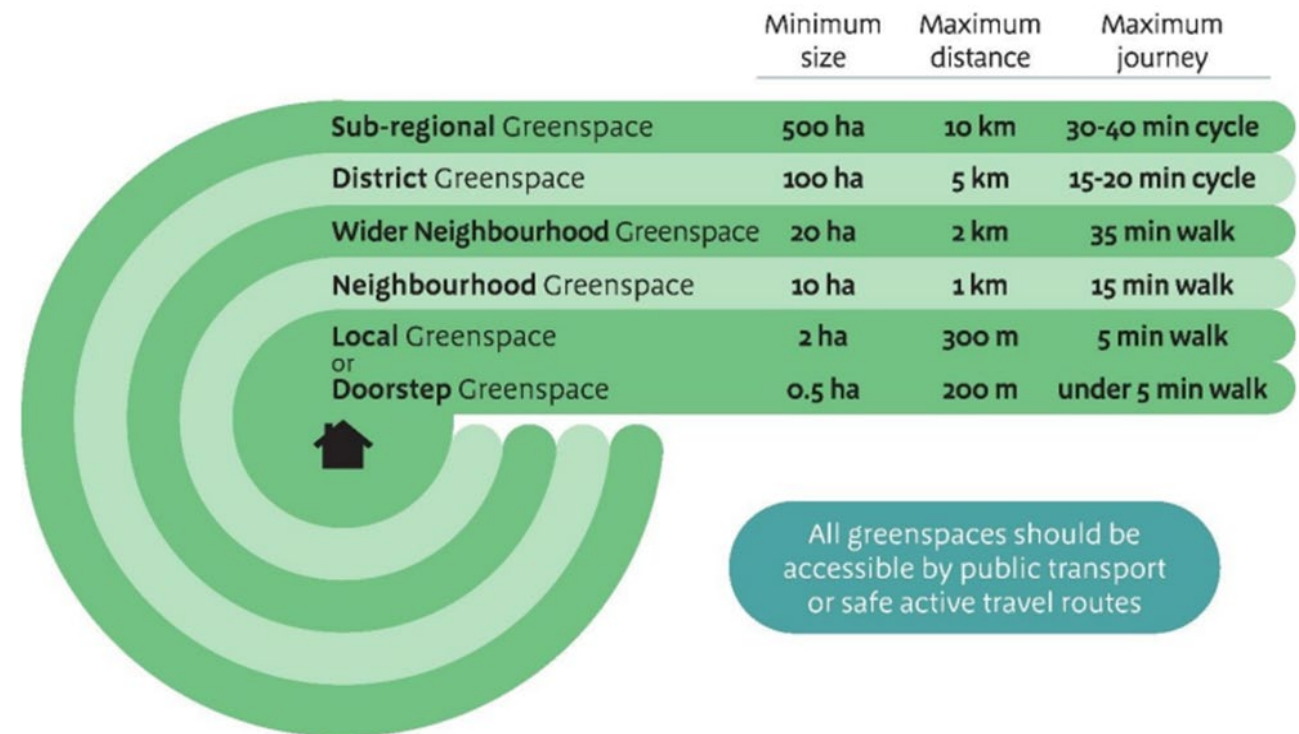
5. Attenuation ponds and wetlands: Surface water runoff drains to a landscape depression which is seasonally wet, often with semi-aquatic margins

Stage 1 GBI Framework (22)

Integration of open space standards

The Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping (2021) identified (non-spatially specific) opportunities to tackle deficiencies in open space provision (including sports provision) and community access to natural greenspace. The report also states that many villages in South Cambridgeshire are deficient in almost all types of open space and accessible natural greenspace. Future development driven by population growth is likely to exacerbate this pattern by adversely affecting how an area performs against the quantity standards. Consequently, there is a need for more open spaces of all typologies to meet current standards.

The GBI Framework has potential to address some of these deficiencies and respond to opportunities by increasing and improving provision based on the analysis of spatially specific data. The spatial framework will incorporate a network of open spaces which meet the Accessible Greenspace Standards size and proximity criteria, with a focus on access to green and blue spaces within 15 minutes' walk from home.



Accessible Greenspace Standards defined by Natural England

Stage 1 GBI Framework (23)

Integration of the open space standards - quantity

The GBI framework should provide the equivalent of at least three hectares of accessible greenspace per 1,000 of the population, in accordance with the standards set out in the Natural England GI Framework. As a guideline, the three hectares of provision should include:

- 0.8 hectares per 1,000 of the population of greenspace with characteristics of parks and gardens, including paths, seating, and planting;
- 1.6 hectares per 1,000 of the population of greenspace comprising of accessible biodiverse, naturalistic habitats such as woodland, wetland and wildflowers meadows; and
- 0.6 hectares per 1,000 of the population of greenspace comprising useable amenity space, offering opportunities for informal games or run-around and dog-walking.
- The Fields in Trust Standards recommends a minimum of 0.25 hectares of children's play space per 1,000 people, coupled with 0.3 hectares of provision for teenagers / young people per 1,000 people. The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners suggest a quantitative standard of 0.23 hectares of allotments per 1,000 people.

Note: These open space standards are proxies in lieu of the agreed policy position.



Stage 1 GBI Framework (24)

Integration of open space standards – quality

Greenspace provision is concerned with quality as well as quantity. Greenspaces will be designed and managed to high standards. To provide welcoming places by being inclusive, accessible and safe for all. This includes actively involving the local community to foster a sense of ownership, providing long term management as well as regular maintenance to ensure quality is upheld.

Green spaces will promote biodiversity and enhance local character / and heritage, providing opportunities for educating people about nature, local history and the environment.

The Green Flag Award is the UK (and internationally recognised) benchmark standard for well-managed parks and green spaces. Parks and greens spaces within the GBI framework will achieve and attain Green Flag Awards for quality.

Up to date guidance on inclusion (e.g. the Make Space for Girls campaign which promotes facilities and public spaces for teenage girls) should be adhered to as best practice.



Key drivers and local needs

Demographic and socio-economic profile of Cambourne ward

There are **12,400** residents in Cambourne ward and **4,400** households (Census 2021)

77% of the population in Cambourne ward are economically active, with an unemployment rate of **2.9%** (compared to 3.5% in England) (Census 2021)

Most of the neighbourhoods in Cambourne ward (i.e. Lower Super Output Areas) are ranked within the **10-20% least deprived** in the country, with one area of the town centre ranked within the **40% least deprived** (IMD 2019)

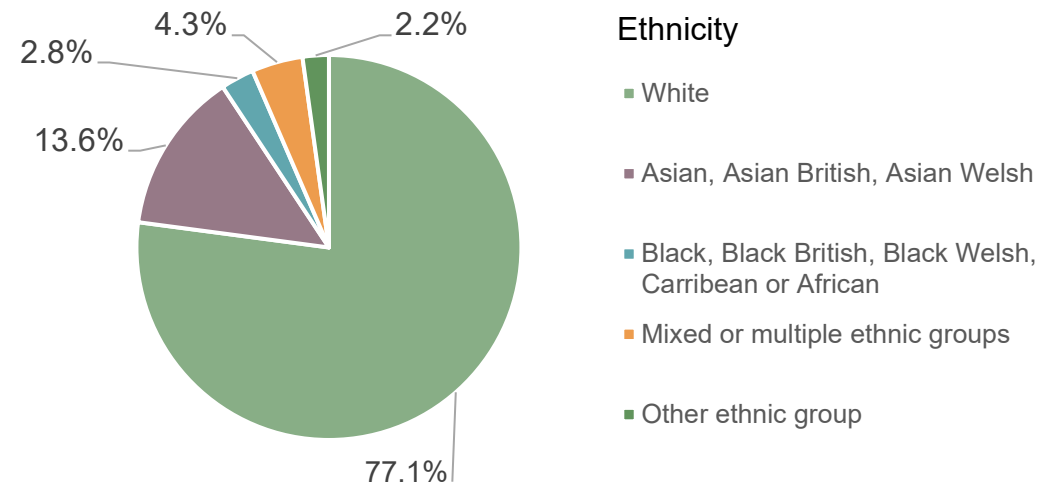
59.4% of the population in Cambourne ward are in “very good health”, compared to 48.5% across England (Census 2021)

Cambourne ward has a young population compared to much of the country, with:

- **29.6%** of the population under 15 years, compared to 19.6% across South Cambridgeshire
- **4.9%** of Cambourne’s population are over 65 years, compared to 19.6% across South Cambridgeshire

(Census 2021)

The median age is **34**, compared to 42 across South Cambridgeshire District.



Development of the GBI Framework

Environmental profile of Cambourne ward

Environmental Justice Index

Overall, Cambourne ward has an Environmental Justice Index score of **70**, performing worse than much of South Cambridgeshire. This score is on par with Cambridgeshire's other urban areas. The score combines the following:

- **Health and Deprivation Indicator score (17.8)** (combining Index of Multiple Deprivation, long-term health or disability data, childhood obesity and Small Area Mental Health Index). Cambourne performs well against wider Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.
- **Environmental Risk Indicator score (28)** (combining air pollution risk, noise pollution risk, urban heat island (local climate) risk, flood risk). Cambourne performs poorly against wider Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, in line with other urban areas.
- **Natural Green Space and Access and Demand Indicator (24)** (Accessible nature demand and Accessible Greenspace Standards (AGS)). Cambourne performs poorly, in line with much of Cambridge City and Cambridgeshire County.

(Natural Capital Solutions (2022) Developing an Environmental Justice Index for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough)

Cambourne ranks poorly in terms of **access to greenspace**. South Cambridgeshire District as a whole, has low access to greenspace compared to the adjoining local authorities to the north (i.e. East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, Huntingdonshire and Peterborough).

Like other urban areas, Cambourne ward is at higher risk of the **urban heat island effect** compared to surrounding rural areas.

Cambourne experiences worse **noise pollution and air pollution** compared to surrounding rural areas, due to its proximity to the A428.

Much of Cambourne ward **fails to meet** Natural England's **Accessible Greenspace Standards (AGS)**, including local, neighbourhood, wider neighbourhood, district and sub-regional standards, with small areas around meeting the doorstep standards. (Natural England GI Mapping, 2025)

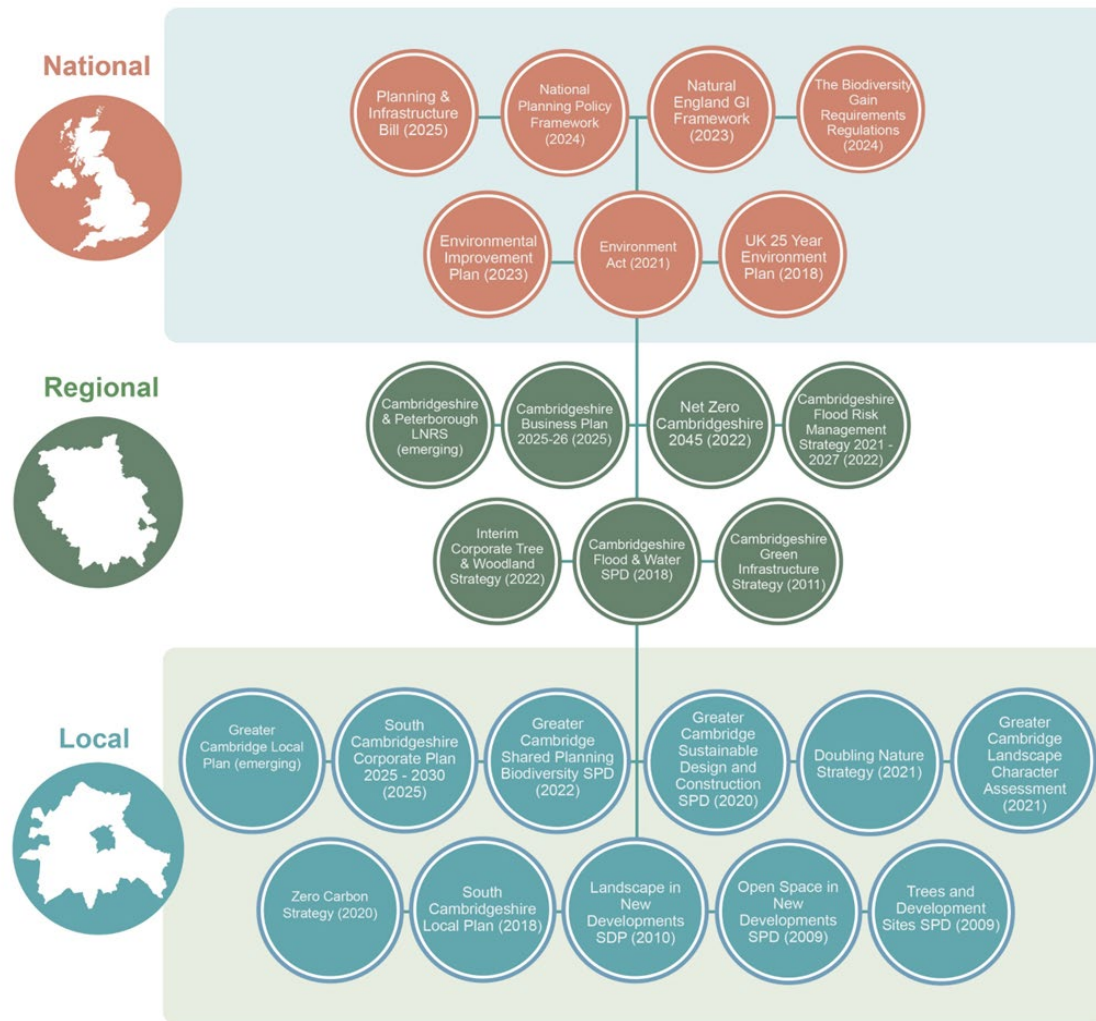
Development of the GBI Framework

Summary of policy context

At national level, the UK 25 Year Environment Plan (25YEP) sets long-term targets for national environmental improvements. The Environment Act (2021) transcribes key components of the 25YEP into law and sets out government actions over the next 25 years for nature recovery and the environment. The NPPF (updated 2024) requires planning authorities to take a landscape-scale approach to the maintenance and enhancement of GI / GBI. Planning authorities and developers are supported in the delivery of GI / GBI at national level, with the introduction of Natural England's GI Framework (2023), which sets out guidance for the principles of good quality GBI and the tools and mechanisms for its delivery.

At county level, key policy documents relevant to the delivery of GI / GBI in Cambourne include the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan, the emerging Cambridgeshire and Peterborough LNRS (both undergoing preparation), as well as other key documents relevant to the county's business and corporate planning, climate change mitigation, flood risk management, and development planning – all of which make reference to the role of GI / GBI. The Cambridgeshire GI Strategy (2011) aims to shape and coordinate GI / GBI across the county.

South Cambridgeshire Council has published its Corporate Plan 2025 - 2030, Doubling Nature Strategy (2021) and Zero Carbon Strategy (2020), each of which set ambitions for enhancing sustainability. The South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2018) includes planning policies for the conservation and enhancement of GI / GBI in the district. The emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan is undergoing preparation.



National policy context

Policy Name

Planning and Infrastructure Bill (2025)

Policy Purpose

Aims to kickstart economic growth, raise living standards and support the delivery of the government's Plan for Change by streamlining the planning process for housing and infrastructure project in England. The Bill is subject to amendment and assent in parliament.

Key relevance to Cambourne GBI Framework

- Seeks to speed up the planning process for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs)
- Introduce a more strategic approach to nature recovery;
 - Introduce a new Nature Restoration Fund (NRF) that will unlock and accelerate development; and
 - Allow Natural England (or other designated delivery body) to bring forward Environmental Delivery Plans (EDPs) to address the impact that development has on a protected site or species. These can be utilised by a developer who would then no longer be required to undertake their own assessments or project-specific interventions for issues addressed by the EDP;
- Improve certainty and decision-making in the planning system;
- Unlock land and secure public value for large-scale investment; and
- Introduce new mechanisms for cross-boundary strategic planning, including;
 - Implementing the production of Spatial Development Strategies to facilitate effect cross-boundary working to development and infrastructure needs.

Policy Name

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

Policy Purpose

Provides guidance to planning authorities on the plan making process and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

Key relevance to Cambourne GBI Framework

- Emphasises that GI is a strategic priority and requires planning authorities to take a landscape-scale approach to planning for the maintenance and enhancement of GI networks, including cross-boundary enhancement of natural capital;
- Requires that all new development should have sufficient provision of new GI;
- Makes reference to safe and accessible GI to facilitate active, healthy lives and reduce health inequalities between the most and least deprived communities;
- Stipulates the requirement for open space needs assessments;
- Emphasises that GI should be used as part of climate change mitigation methods in new development and air quality enhancement;
- Highlights the need for mapping of ecological networks to inform biodiversity and geodiversity protection and enhancement; and
- Outlines mechanisms for the protection of green spaces through designation and conditions through which development on open space could be permitted.

Policy Name

The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024

Policy Purpose

Outlines how BNG applies to irreplaceable habitats

Key relevance to Cambourne GBI Framework

- Defines irreplaceable habitats i.e. some of England's most ecologically valuable habitats (ancient woodland, blanket bog, lowland fens, etc.)
- Sets out that planning permission will only be granted for development that results in loss of irreplaceable habitat in exceptional circumstances.
- Outlines that the 10% BNG requirement does not apply for its loss because it would be impossible to achieve. Instead, a compensation strategy must be agreed with the LPA.

National policy context (continued)

Policy Name

Natural England GI Framework (2023)

Policy Purpose

Assists planning authorities and developers to meet the GI requirements of the NPPF.

Key relevance to Cambourne GBI Framework

- Provides guidance on the principles of 'good quality' GI and sets out standards on the quantity, quality and accessibility of GI which should be provided in an area to meet these principles;
- Includes a mapping tool to support standards and target locations for creation or improvement of GI; and
- GI planning and design guide provides advice on good quality design and GI process journeys provide guidance on the application of all products in the framework.

Policy Name

Environmental Improvement Plan (2023)

Policy Purpose

Builds on the 25YEP vision, setting out how government, landowners, communities and businesses to deliver each goal for improving the environment, matched with interim targets to measure progress.

Key relevance to Cambourne GBI Framework

The delivery of GI will contribute to the delivery of several of the updated targets the EIP sets against the 25YEP's 10 goals. The headline targets within the EIP which GI will contribute to include:

- Habitat restoration and enhancement;
- Improving air quality by tackling NO2 hotspots;
- Reducing nutrient pollution in waterways;
- Contributing to climate mitigation and adaptation;
- Reducing flood risk;
- Meeting greenspace access targets ensuring everyone has access to greenspace within a 15-minute walk of their home; and
- Improving active travel and increasing the number of journeys cycled or walked to 50%.

Policy Name

Environment Act (2021)

Policy Purpose

Sets out government actions over the next 25 years for the environment and nature recovery and transcribes key components of the 25 Year Environment Plan into law.

Key relevance to Cambourne GBI Framework

- Requires local authorities to review all nature conservation policies every five years;
- Makes reference to new Local Nature Recovery Strategies to establish priorities and map proposals for cross boundary actions to drive nature recovery and realise wider environmental benefits based on identified need. They will provide a framework for developing and applying GI policies to promote urban nature conservation, meet local biodiversity priorities and support delivery of BNG; and
- Requires the implementation of BNG to ensure all new development delivers a measurable enhancement of biodiversity of at least 10%.

Policy Name

UK 25 Year Environment Plan (2018)

Policy Purpose

Sets long-term targets for national environmental improvements.

Key relevance to Cambourne GBI Framework

- Specifies requirements for habitat creation, multi-functional SuDS and semi-natural places close to where people live;
- Commits to establishing a nature recover network (delivered through Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS)) and the GI Framework; and
- Embedded the principle of Biodiversity Net Gain for new developments.

Regional (county-wide) policy context

Policy Name

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) (emerging)

Policy Purpose

Will set out priorities for nature recovery in the region. Draft LNRS due to be published for consultation in 2025.

Key relevance to Cambourne GBI Framework

- Will set out that Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is one of the most nature-depleted areas in England and set out, as a minimum:
 - A description of biodiversity for the strategy area;
 - Opportunities for recovering or enhancing biodiversity in the strategy area;
 - Prioritise areas and species for recovering or enhancing biodiversity in the strategy area; and
- Identify priorities for recovery or enhancing biodiversity in the strategy area.

Policy Name

Cambridgeshire Business Plan 2025-26 (2025)

Policy Purpose

Sets out the County Councils' budget allocations, business cases and planned activities for the next five years, with the aim of creating a 'greener, fairer and more caring Cambridgeshire'

Key relevance to Cambourne GBI Framework

- Includes seven ambitions for Cambridgeshire. Of key relevance to GBI, these include:
 - Achieving net zero by 2045 and ensuring communities and the natural environment are supported to adapt and thrive as the climate changes; including maximising the extent and quality of nature areas across the County, improving access to green space;
 - Making travel across the County safer and more environmentally sustainable; including becoming an Active Travel Centre of Excellence; and
 - Reducing health inequalities by creating an environment that gives people the opportunities to be as healthy as they can be.

Policy Name

Net Zero Cambridgeshire 2045: Cambridgeshire County Council's Climate Change and Environment Strategy (2022)

Policy Purpose

Outlines how Cambridgeshire can sustainably manage its waterways to manage flood risk across the County.

Key relevance to Cambourne GBI Framework

- Highlights investing in natural capital as one of the key themes for actions to frame their response, plans and actions to tackle climate change.
- Sets out 11 strategic priorities for the County to be net zero by 2045. Of relevance to GBI, these include:
 - Enabling and encouraging use of low-carbon transport;
 - Strategic impact through collaboration;
 - Manage climate risk and develop climate resilient services, people, places and infrastructure;
 - Working with partners to improve water-security and flood risk;
 - Benefiting nature and biodiversity; and
 - Ensuring sustainable land use and green spaces.

Policy Name

Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Strategy 2021

Policy Purpose

Provides technical guidance for managing flood risk and the water environment.

Key relevance to Cambourne GBI Framework

- Sets out the need for local partnership and contributions in delivering local flood schemes;
- Outlines measures for understanding and managing the likelihood of flooding in Cambridgeshire; and
- Seeks to ensure appropriate development in Cambridgeshire, including incorporation of SuDS in all new developments, while delivering water quality, amenity and biodiversity benefits.

Regional (county-wide) policy context (continued)

Policy Name

Interim Corporate Tree and Woodland Strategy (2022)

Policy Purpose

Seeks to maximise the benefits of Council trees in tackling the nature crisis and supporting biodiversity.

Key relevance to Cambourne GBI Framework

- Aims to improve the condition and resilience of trees, woodlands and hedgerows to maximise benefits to communities;
- Aims to improve the Council's understanding of their tree and hedgerow assets and design planting approached that support access to trees and woodlands;
- Aims to expand and connect trees, woods and hedgerows access the county; and
- Sets out funding approaches to deliver the future full strategy and opportunities for partnership working.

Policy Name

Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD (2018)

Policy Purpose

Provides detailed planning guidance on flooding and drainage issues

Key relevance to Cambourne GBI Framework

- Provides detailed technical guidance for the management of flood risk and the water environment in planning applications, including site selection considerations, pre-application consultation, assessing site suitability and managing and mitigation flood risk;
- Provides guidance on the incorporation of SuDS that is functional, aesthetically pleasing, conserves and enhances biodiversity/the historic environment and provides amenity for residents, into new development. This includes considerations for biodiversity and GBI;
- Sets out the 'Cambridgeshire SuDS Design Principles'; and
- Sets out a pre-application Checklist (Appendix E) and Surface Water Drainage Pro-forma (Appendix F).

Policy Name

Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011)

Policy Purpose

Aims to assist in shaping and coordinating the delivery of GI across the county.

Key relevance to Cambourne GBI Framework

- Establishes a Strategic Network of GI for the county up to 2031 based on themes of biodiversity, climate change, GI gateways, heritage, landscape, publicly accessible open space, rights of way, economic development, health, and water and land management.
- Locates Cambourne a 'Target Area' within the 'Cambridge and Surrounding Areas' Strategic GI Area with key opportunities identified in it including:
 - Biodiversity: continued green spaces management and enhancement;
 - GI Gateways: creation of extensive natural open spaces with Rights of Way links to the wider countryside improved (including Fen Drayton Lake, Coton Countryside Reserve and Wimpole);
 - Heritage: opportunities for conservation, enhancement and interpretation;
 - Landscape: opportunities to preserve and enhance existing landscape elements and extending green connections to the wider countryside;
 - Publicly Accessible Green Space: addressing the ANGSt deficiency in and around the target area'; and
 - Rights of Way: opportunities for further connections within the built areas and wider countryside as Upper Cambourne is developed.

Local policy context

Policy Name

Greater Cambridge Local Plan (emerging)

Policy Purpose

Will supersede the Local Plans for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. The Councils intend to submit a Local Plan by December 2026.

Key relevance to Cambourne GBI Framework

- The first proposals for the Emerging Plan include:
- The urban expansion of Cambourne (taking in committed development, strategic allocations, and future allocated sites yet to be defined);
- Ambitions to increase and improve the network of habitats for wildlife, green spaces and ensuring development leaves the natural environment better than it was before; and
- Aims to transition to net zero by 2050, ensuring development is sustainably sites, and resilient to current and future climate risks.

Policy Name

South Cambridgeshire Corporate Plan 2025 – 2030 (2025)

Policy Purpose

Sets out a vision for the district, priorities and key actions for the council over the next five years.

Key relevance to Cambourne GBI Framework

- Sets out the vision for a 'fairer, kinder and greener South Cambridgeshire, where all residents will be equal partners in their communities. Of relevance to GBI, priorities and associated actions include:
- Healthy and supported communities, including;
 - Collaborate to tackle crime, anti-social behaviour and environmental health issues, promoting a safe and healthy community;
- Sustainable homes and vibrant places, including;
 - Work with partners to support healthy and connected communities, with access to green space.
- Being green to our core, including;
 - Support others (including parish councils, local communities and businesses) to respond to the climate and ecological emergencies, with the ambition of halving emissions by 2030, putting them on a path to net zero by 2050; and
- Helping businesses thrive in South Cambridgeshire, including;
 - Working with partners to promote the vibrancy and health of South Cambridgeshire high streets, markets and commercial areas.

Policy Name

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (2022)

Policy Purpose

Provides practical advice and guidance, supporting existing and future Local Plan policies relating to biodiversity.

Key relevance to Cambourne GBI Framework

- Summarises local biodiversity strategies and projects of relevance to Greater Cambridge.
- Highlights key local resources including designated and non-designated biodiversity sites, protected species and priority habitats across Greater Cambridge.
- Outlines considerations for biodiversity at every stage in the development management process, from pre-application through to post-construction, relating to site selection, surveys, pre-application advice, design stages, BNG, planning application validation requirements, construction and post-construction management, monitoring and enforcement.

Local policy context (continued)

Policy Name

Doubling Nature Strategy (2021)

Policy Purpose

Sets out actions to double nature in South Cambridgeshire by 2050.

Key relevance to Cambourne GBI Framework

- Sets out three aims for supporting the vision to double nature in South Cambridgeshire by 2050:
 - More wildlife-rich habitats;
 - An increase in tree canopy cover; and
 - Better accessibility to greenspace.
- Sets out mechanisms to support the vision relating to management of the Council's own estate, influencing through policy, and using wider influence by working with public, private and voluntary organisations including Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire.

Policy Name

Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment (2021)

Policy Purpose

Provides an up-to-date and consistent record of the landscape across Greater Cambridge.

Key relevance to Cambourne GBI Framework

- Forms part of the evidence base informing the development of the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan, identifying and recording the patterns, features and elements of the landscape types and distinctive areas of Greater Cambridge. Provides an evidence base to inform the preparation of GI strategies, biodiversity and trees/woodland strategies.
- Records features of the landscape around Cambourne including geology, topography and hydrology, woodland and trees, priority habitats, designations, land uses and field patterns, recreational access and human influences.

Policy Name

Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2020)

Policy Purpose

Provides additional technical guidance on the implementation of relevant adopted Local Plan policies

Key relevance to Cambourne GBI Framework

- Outlines the role of GI in climate change adaptation (including tree planting, green/brown roofs, urban cooling, etc.);
- Provides detailed guidance on delivering biodiversity protection and enhancement and securing BNG;
- Supplements the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD to provide wider guidance on flooding, drainage and SuDS;
- Highlights approaches to food growing and health and wellbeing, including well-design public spaces, as part of new development; and
- Sets out a Sustainability Checklist for applications in South Cambridgeshire including considerations relating to transport, energy and carbon reduction, water efficiency, climate change adaptation (including the role of GI), biodiversity and geodiversity, pollution, SuDS, heritage assets, recycling and waste and other sustainability considerations.

Local (district-wide) policy context

Policy Name

Zero Carbon Strategy (2020)

Policy Purpose

Outlines commitments to reduce emissions and protect the environment.

Key relevance to Cambourne GBI Framework

- Promotes the adoption of active travel and decarbonising transport;
- Outlines the Council's tree-planting project; and
- Sets out support for the creation of new woodland, trees and hedgerows across the district to help achieve Net Zero ambitions.

Policy Name

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2018)

Policy Purpose

Sets out the spatial strategy for the district and key policies for informing planning decision-making.

Key relevance to Cambourne GBI Framework

- Allocates land at Bourn Airfield (south of the A428 and east of Cambourne) for 3,500 dwellings and a new village which will incorporate a significant network of GI (Policy SS/7);
- Allocates land at Cambourne West allocates land for 1,200 dwellings by 2031 with high levels of GI (Policy SS/8);
- Promotes mitigation and adaptation to climate change (Policy CC/1);
- Seeks to protect and enhance water quality (Policy CC/7), manage and mitigate flood risk (Policy CC/9), and requires SuDS to be incorporated into all development proposals, demonstrating they have taken opportunities to create amenity, enhance biodiversity, and contribute to a GBI network (Policy CC/8).
- Requires the incorporation of high-quality design, including landscaping and public spaces into new development, supporting healthy lives, biodiversity, SuDS and climate change mitigation (Policy HQ/1);
- Aims to protect and enhance landscape character and distinctiveness (Policy NH/2);
- Sets out requirements for protection and enhancement of biodiversity (Policy NH/4), sites of biodiversity or geological importance (Policy NH/5), and ancient woodland and veteran trees (Policy NH/7).
- Incorporates a standalone GI policy (Policy NH/6), which seeks to conserve and enhance GI within the district, encouraging proposals to reinforce, link, buffer and create new GI and promote, manage and interpret GI, enhancing public enjoyment of it. It requires all new developments to contribute to the enhancement of GI in the district;
- Seeks to protect village character, including amenity areas (Policy NH/11), Local Green Spaces (Policy NH/12), and countryside frontages (Policy NH/13);
- Sets out requirements for outdoor play space and informal open space in new developments (Policy SC/7), and for the protection of existing recreation assets, allotments and community orchards (Policy SC/8); and
- Sets out requirements for planning for sustainable travel, including encouraging new cycle and walking routes and strengthening connectivity (Policy TI/2).

Local (district-wide) policy context (continued)

Policy Name

Landscape in New Developments SDP (2010)

Policy Purpose

Provides further technical guidance for landscape impacts, mitigation and enhancement in new development.

Key relevance to Cambourne GBI Framework

- Seeks to protect and enhance the character and appearance of landscapes and natural heritage and protect and enhance biodiversity.
- Encourages the delivery of high-quality landscape in the district by:
 - Promoting landscape character, promoting a sense of place,
 - reducing visual impacts of development via landscaping and visual screening,
 - adding maturity to developments utilising existing trees and hedgerows,
 - improving the physical environment with shelter and shade as well as noise buffers and pollution mitigation,
 - enhancing biodiversity,
 - improving sustainability within development via SuDS and planting,
 - providing opportunities for recreation, and
 - providing a 'feel good factor' to enhance desirability of development.
- Sets out development management processes for landscape considerations including requirements for a detailed landscape scheme for certain types of development.

Policy Name

Green Space in New Developments SPD (2009)

Policy Purpose

Informs standards for children's play, outdoor sports and informal open space for new developments.

Key relevance to

Cambourne GBI Framework

- Seeks to ensure the proper provision and maintenance of open space and sports facilities consistent with levels of planned residential development and identified open space standards; and
- Provides more detailed guidance to support the delivery of local plan policy, including open space standards and development management processes.

Policy Name

Trees and Development Sites SPD (2009)

Policy Purpose

Provides further guidance for development affecting trees.

Key relevance to

Cambourne GBI Framework

- Seeks to protect and enhance the character and appearance of landscapes and natural heritage and protect and enhance biodiversity; and
- Outlines survey requirements and development management processes for development affecting trees.