Report
September 2026

# Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy - Need for Intervention

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Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority
Our ref: 25067401

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# 1 Introduction

## Overview

This Need for Intervention report presents the current demographic, environmental and socio-economic context within Greater Cambridge. This is presented through a set of 19 challenge statements, split into two categories and developed from a data-led evidence review of Greater Cambridge refined in conjunction with key stakeholders.

The statements identify and articulate key issues facing the area and make the transport case for change supporting the new Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

Establishing a baseline evidential understanding of Greater Cambridge is an early stage in the development of the Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy (GCTS). This report covers the wider outcomes of travel – enabling employment, access to healthcare, education and other key services, supporting economic growth and affecting socio-economic outcomes, etc. – as well as more immediate transport and mobility factors which will enable these, and which policymaking can support.




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# 2 Challenge Statements

## Context

Greater Cambridge is a globally significant city region within the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority area. It is approximately 50 miles north of London and forms the eastern end of the key Oxford-Cambridge growth corridor. The area occupies a strategic point in the national transport network, including the Great Northern route and the West Anglia Main Line, as well as strategic highway routes such as the M11, the A14 and the A10. The area is also expected to benefit from the proposed new East West Rail route.

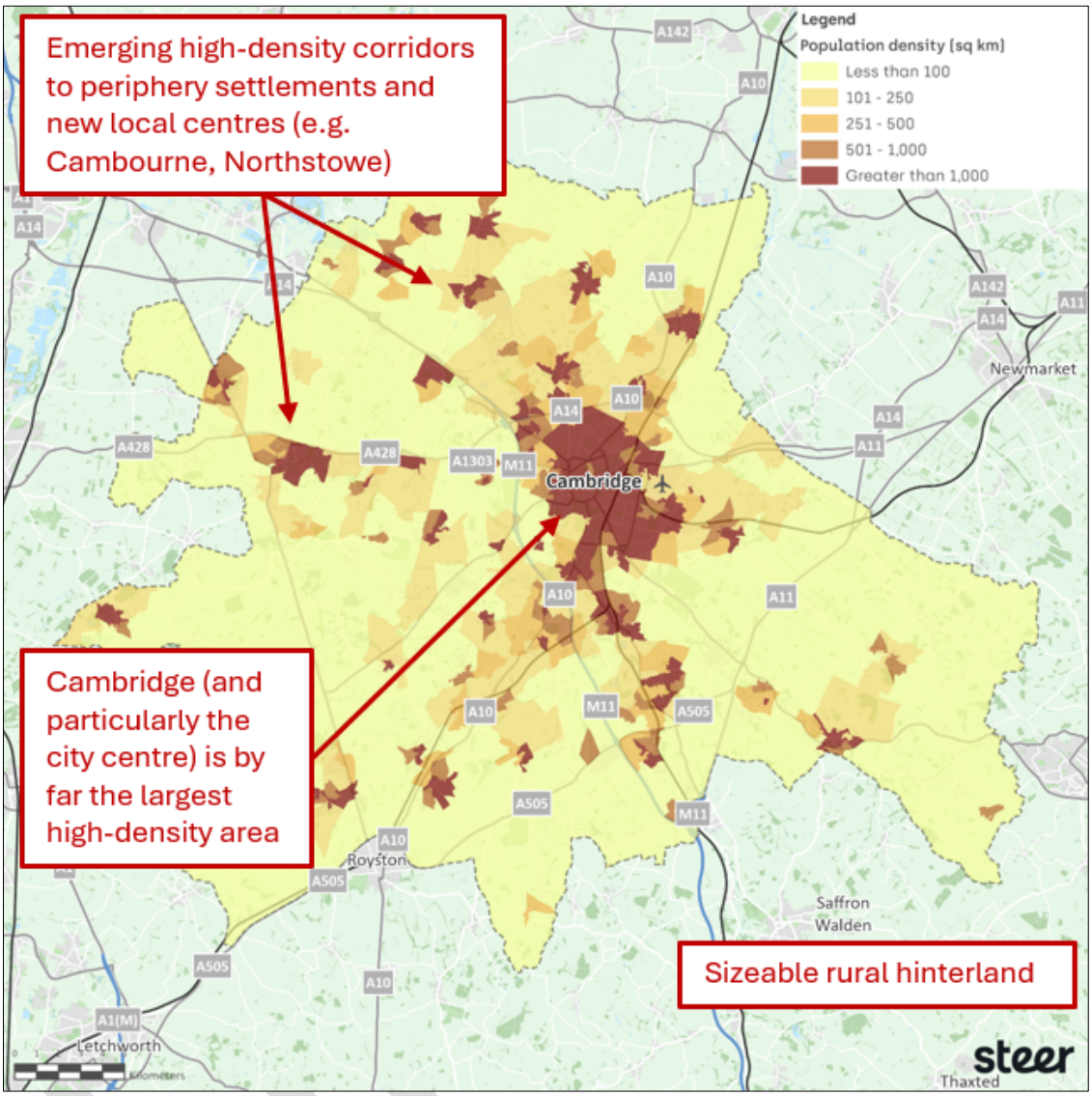
At the time of the 2021 UK Census, the population of Greater Cambridge was 307,793, having grown by 13 percent since the last census in 2011 (double the national growth rate). The area experiences significant in-commuting from neighbouring authorities, such as East Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire and Uttlesford, meaning this resident population understates the scale of economic activity and travel demand within Greater Cambridge. According to mid-year population estimates, there has been an additional 4.6% increase in people to 321,896 in 2024.

Cambridge is world-renowned for its academic excellence and associated heritage; and the city region has evolved into a global centre for research and innovation in high value-added industries. 2024 data from the Office for National Statistics estimates there are 208,000 jobs in Greater Cambridge, with the largest proportions in:

- **'Professional, scientific and technical' activities:** 21% or 43,000 jobs, more than double the national average, led by research and experimental development on natural sciences and engineering (9%) and computer programming and consultancy activities (6%);
- **'Education' activities:** 15%, almost double the national average of 8% (primarily due to higher education establishments);
- **'Health' activities:** 15%, similar to the national average, though this is weighted more towards hospitals than other provision; and
- **'Information and communication' activities:** 9%, almost double the national average of 5%, driven by computer programming and, to a lesser extent, book publishing.

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**Figure 2.1: Population density of Greater Cambridge (GCTS Evidence Base, 2026)**




Greater Cambridge's dense urban core, in contrast with its dispersed villages and more rural settlements across South Cambridgeshire, presents opportunities for the provision of sustainable mobility solutions but also challenges around effectively serving corridors to the rural periphery. The GCTS will identify opportunities to provide for and benefit from the area's attributes, as well as overcoming transport barriers to the success of Local Plan development.

# Category A: Enabling Wider Outcomes

*These challenge statements consider how transport can support wider social, economic, environmental and health outcomes across Greater Cambridge.*

## Challenge Statement 1: Planned development and growth

**Transformational levels of growth are planned, both through the emerging Local Plan and through wider long-term growth scenarios being considered through the CPCA Local Growth Plan and Spatial Development Strategy, and Cambridge Growth Company's work looking at enabling higher levels of long term growth. New towns and large-scale brownfield sites could considerably alter local travel patterns, requiring significant investment to serve growth sustainably while meeting the needs of existing communities.**

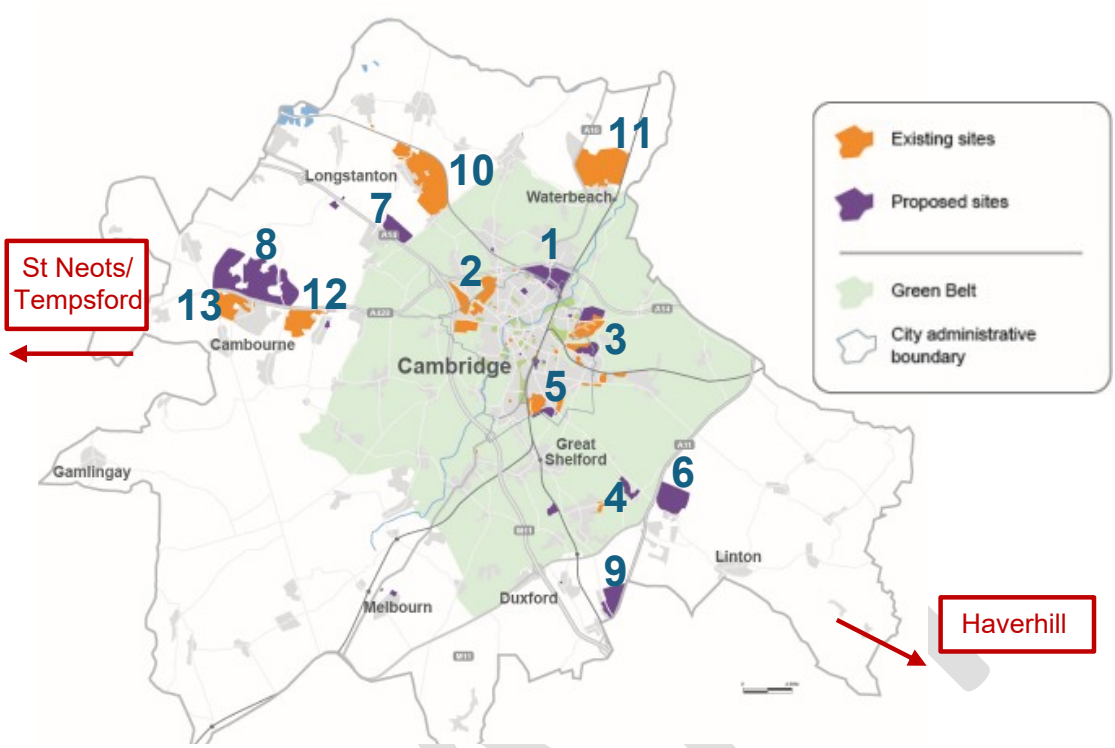
There are three broad development typologies emerging from existing and proposed sites in the Local Plan:

- Mixed-use sites along the outer urban edges of Cambridge, including around Cambridge Science Park, Eddington and the Cambridge City Airport area;
- 'New town'-scale housing in satellite settlements such as Cambourne, Northstowe and Waterbeach; and
- New/intensified high value-added employment sites such as Cambridge Biomedical Campus, Babraham Research Campus and Slate Hall Farm.

Local Plan sites total over 70,000 new homes and 1.7 million m² of new commercial floorspace. Wider long-term growth under consideration through the Cambridge Growth Company and CPCA Local Growth Plan could increase the scale of development significantly, including scenarios of up to 150,000 new homes by 2050. Relevant cross-boundary developments, such as in Haverhill, St Neots and Tempsford, will also have significant implications for Greater Cambridge.

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**Figure 2.2: Emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan Strategic Site Allocations (Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service, 2026)**




| Map Ref. | Site | Proposed development |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | North East Cambridge | 8,350 new homes, 320,000 m² commercial floorspace |
| 2 | North West Cambridge (Eddington) | 5,500 new homes, 200 student bedrooms, 40,000 m² employment floorspace |
| 3 | Cambridge East | 8,000 new homes; significant commercial floorspace |
| 4 | Babraham Research Campus | 120 new homes, 48,000 m² employment floorspace |
| 5 | Cambridge Biomedical Campus | 1,000 new homes, 687,000 m² commercial floorspace |
| 6 | Land adjacent to A11 and A1307 at Grange Farm | 6,000 new homes, 30,000 m² commercial floorspace |
| 7 | Slate Hall Farm, Junction 25, A14 | 220,000 m² commercial floorspace |
| 8 | Cambourne North | 13,000 new homes, 108,000 m² commercial floorspace |
| 9 | Wellcome Genome Campus, Hinxton | 1,500 new homes, 150,000 m² (GEA) commercial floorspace |
| 10 | Northstowe | 10,180 new homes, 47,000 m² employment floorspace |
| 11 | Waterbeach | 11,000 new homes, 39,800 m² employment floorspace |
| 12 | Bourn Airfield | 3,500 new homes, 1,400 m² employment floorspace |
| 13 | West Cambourne | 2,350 new homes, 34,600 m² employment floorspace |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Total (all 13 sites)** | **c. 70,000 new homes, 1.7 million m² commercial floorspace** |

## *Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy implications*

- The GCTS should develop a movement and place framework and package of interventions that serve emerging Local Plan growth sustainably, while remaining capable of supporting higher long-term growth scenarios.
- The GCTS should consider the implications of wider growth being explored through the CPCA Local Growth Plan and Spatial Development Strategy and Cambridge Growth Company , including the potential effects on network capacity, corridor safeguarding and the timing of strategic transport investment.

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## Challenge Statement 2: Global competitiveness and quality of transport

**Greater Cambridge has attracted inward investment across life sciences, digital tech, and other knowledge-intensive sectors, e.g. from AstraZeneca. It competes on a global stage with both emerging and mature knowledge hubs. Without improvement in the quality of the transport network and placemaking, its ability to sustain this growth is at risk.**

Cambridge itself already has the third-highest productivity of the UK's major cities in terms of Gross Value Added (GVA) per hour. Its world-class research base fosters a dense pool of skilled labour that does attract global firms, but quality of transport is rarely cited as a reason to invest.

Global competitors such as Cambridge, Massachusetts and Basel have stronger access to international gateways and integrated networks with larger effective labour markets, meaning companies are structurally incentivised to cluster as talent can move more easily and their ability to scale efficiently is less constrained. Emerging hubs (e.g. Cork) and UK competitors (e.g. Oxford) may also divert investment potential.

### *Transport strengths and weaknesses of global competitors*

#### *Oxford, United Kingdom*

+ Similar compact urban core and cycling culture, but greater radial access and orbital relief via A34/A40/A420 leading to relatively less road congestion.
+ Proximity to a long-haul air hub at London Heathrow, albeit further away than Cambridge is to Stansted.
- 10% longer rail journey times to London and capacity constraints.

**Key transport projects:** East West Rail, Cowley Branch Line reopening, A40 multi-modal improvements, City Centre 'traffic management'.

#### *Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA*

+ Direct access to both Boston Logan International Airport (30-40 minutes) and the wider Boston mass transit system, with frequent fast air connections along the Eastern Seaboard.
+ Greater road space and reach of the strategic road network into the city.
- Less walkable and cycle-friendly than Cambridge, UK.

**Key transport projects:** metro modernisation, bus priority corridor improvements.

#### *Cork, Ireland*

+ Simpler air logistics than Cambridge, with Cork Airport located less than 10 miles from the city centre (for short-haul flights).
- Emerging lower-cost knowledge hub with EU market access and similar scale of population growth but still lacks Cambridge's place reputation.

**Key transport projects:** the Cork Area Commuter Rail programme and planned Luas Cork mass transit line will significantly increase Cork's viable densities and global competitiveness.

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## *Basel, Switzerland*

+ Sits between Switzerland, France and Germany, attracting daily commuter flows from these three countries and sharing with them an international gateway at EuroAirport Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg (20 minutes from the centre of Basel).
+ Dense tram network acting like a surface metro with seamless ticketing across all public transport
- Limited scope for further expansion of transport from existing base.

**Key transport projects:** **Direct rail connection to EuroAirport** by 2035.

## *Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy implications*

- The GCTS should seek ways to enhance connectivity to its closest international gateways such as London Stansted and London Heathrow as a long-haul hub.
- The GCTS should be cognisant of the importance of robust supply chains and freight movements to global firms.
- The GCTS should reflect that the city region competes with places outside the UK for inward investment and must provide a transport network that reaches beyond current city constraints into the 30 to 60-minute catchment.
- The GCTS should seek to better manage vehicle movements and congestion within the city centre to improve sense of place and attractiveness for investment.
- The GCTS should help leverage Greater Cambridge's world-class life sciences and advanced technology clusters, including Cambridge Biomedical Campus, Cambridge Science Park, Babraham Research Campus, Granta Park, Wellcome Genome Campus and Duxford, by strengthening connectivity between major employment, research and innovation locations without relying on a single corridor solution.

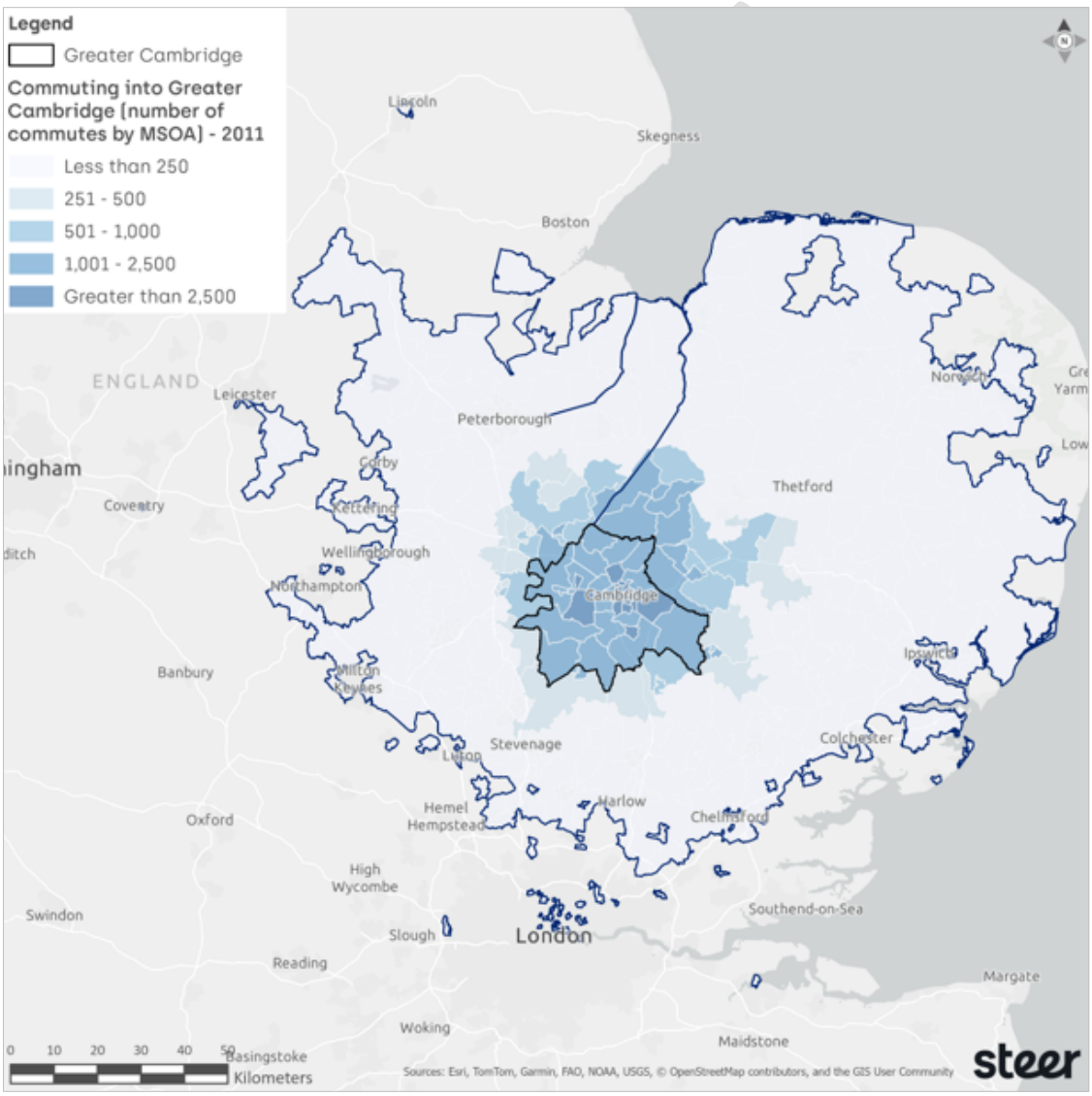
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## Challenge Statement 3: Travel to work area

**Greater Cambridge is a nationally significant employment area attracting commuting flows from a very wide area. Continued growth is making the area more polycentric, meaning its transport challenges can not be solved solely within its administrative boundaries.**

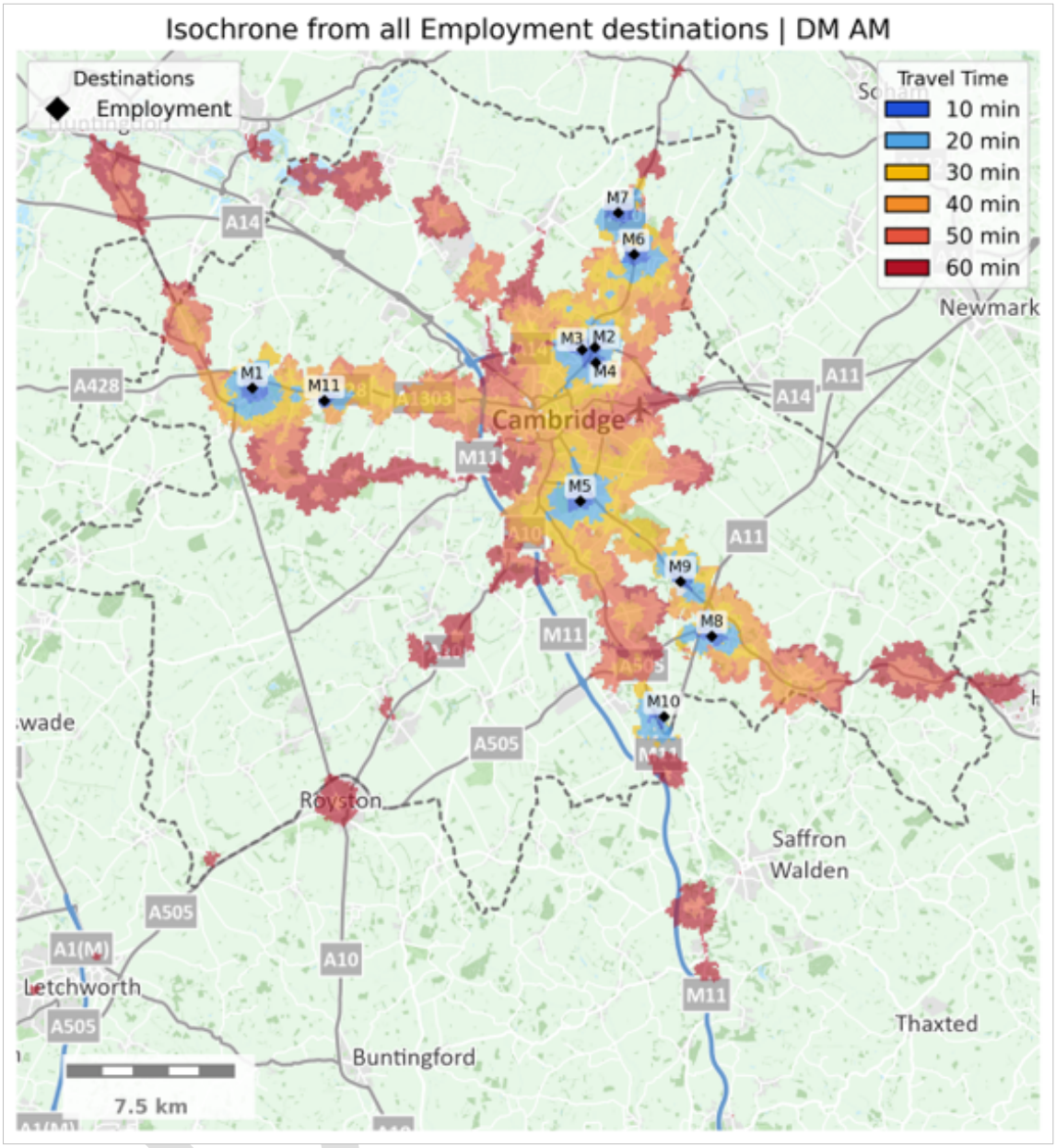
The area attracts large travel to work flows on both north-south (e.g. Huntingdonshire, Ely, Royston) and east-west (e.g. St Neots, Bury St Edmunds) axes, intensifying congestion at key gateways and within the city during peak hours.

**Figure 2.3: Commuting into Greater Cambridge (ONS, 2011*)**




*2011 data used due to the impact of COVID-19.

**Figure 2.4: Employment parks connectivity (GCTS Connectivity Analysis Report, 2026)**




## *Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy implications*

- The GCTS should seek to strengthen cross-boundary public transport connections, such as Cambridge to Haverhill.
- The GCTS should consider the importance of journeys to/from new and growing regional centres e.g. Milton Keynes, Tempsford.
- As per the employment parks connectivity map below, the GCTS should strengthen links between settlements, Cambridge and orbital employment parks across radial corridors such as the A14, A10 and A505, accommodating longer-distance journeys (e.g. expanded park and ride) and short- to medium-distance trips (e.g. provision of mobility hubs).

## Challenge Statement 4: Population and age profile

**Greater Cambridge has both an ageing population and a slightly larger younger population compared to the wider region, emphasising the need for an accessible and inclusive sustainable transport network, particularly local buses, that operates effectively outside peak commuting hours.**

The first chart shows the share of the population between the ages of 65 and 84 increasing from 14 per cent from a 2026 baseline (c. 46,000) to 16 per cent in 2046 (c. 59,000). There is also projected to be growth in the over 85 age group, consistent with national trends. These age groups have a higher propensity to rely on public transport. Key services typically used by older groups, such as healthcare, will experience increased demand.

Greater Cambridge also has a substantially larger population of 15 to-39-year-olds relative to the East of England average. This population is likely to increase further due to Local Plan and additional growth above and beyond the ONS projections which will attract more working age people to the area.

In December 2025, the average house price was £485,000 in Cambridge and £434,000 in South Cambridgeshire compared with £338,000 across the East of England, with median housing affordability ratios both above the England average (9:1 vs. 7.6:1). If younger people cannot afford to live in the city region, commuting distances will increase further, embedding car reliance along strategic routes.

**Figure 2.5: Population projections for Greater Cambridge (ONS, 2022)**

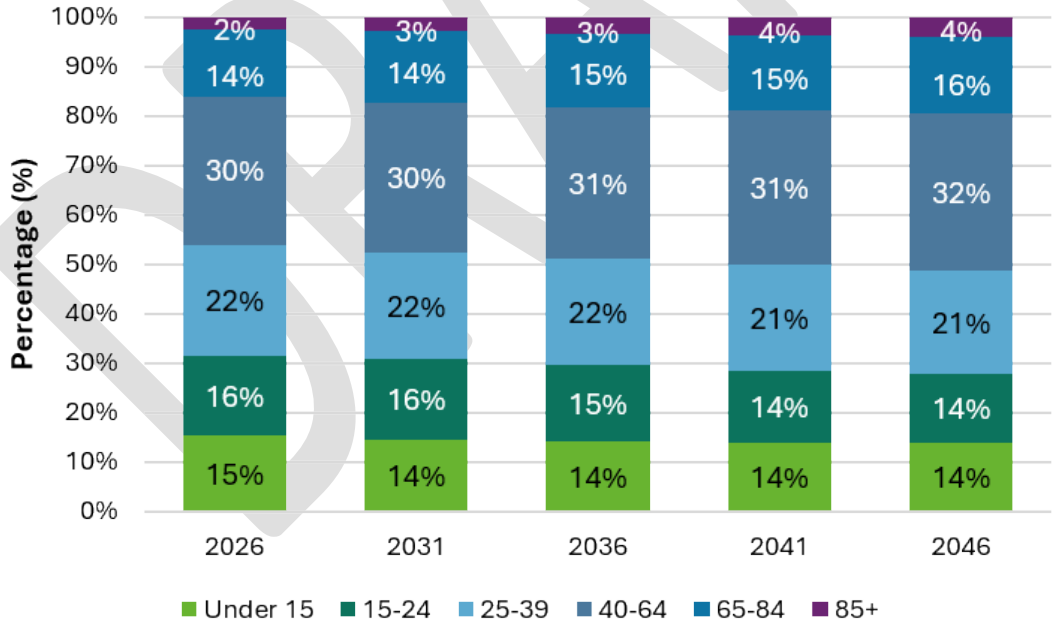
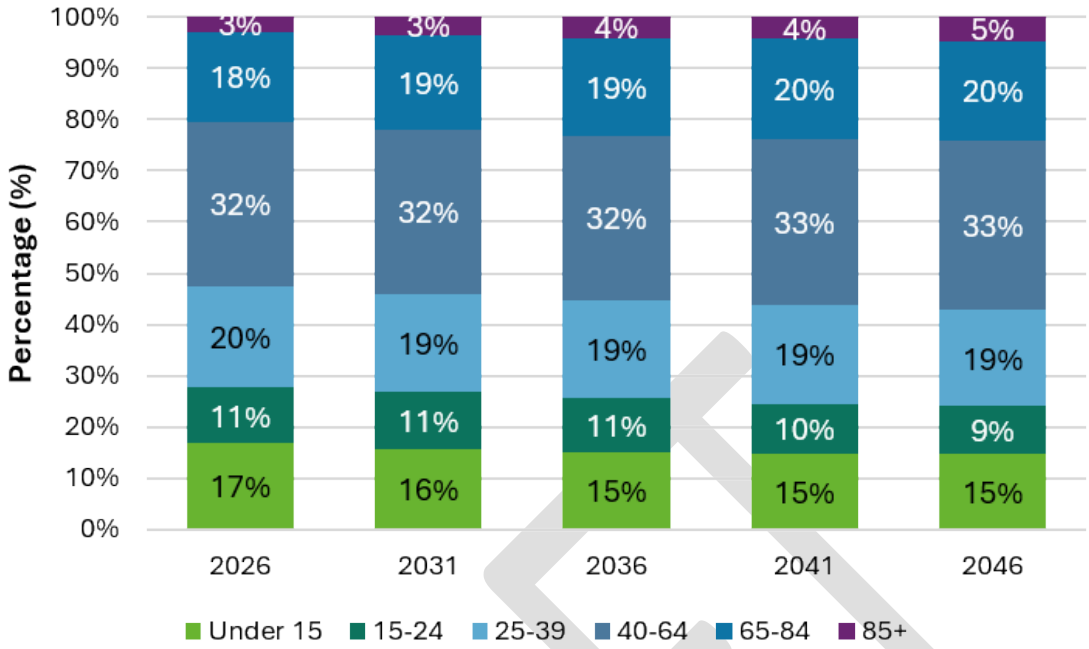


**Figure 2.6: Population projections for the East of England (ONS, 2022)**




## *Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy implications*

- Above-baseline population growth is likely to skew towards young professionals, who will require new accessible, affordable, sustainable travel solutions.
- Local bus services and demand responsive services (e.g. 'Tiger on Demand') are increasingly important for older age groups to access retail, leisure opportunities, and health services to support good health and prevent isolation and loneliness.

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## Challenge Statement 5: Physical activity

**Residents of Greater Cambridge walk and cycle further and are generally more active than those in benchmark local authority areas, meaning there is a place-based opportunity to maintain high active travel levels and broaden participation where uptake is lower, supporting public health, in addition to other transport outcomes.**

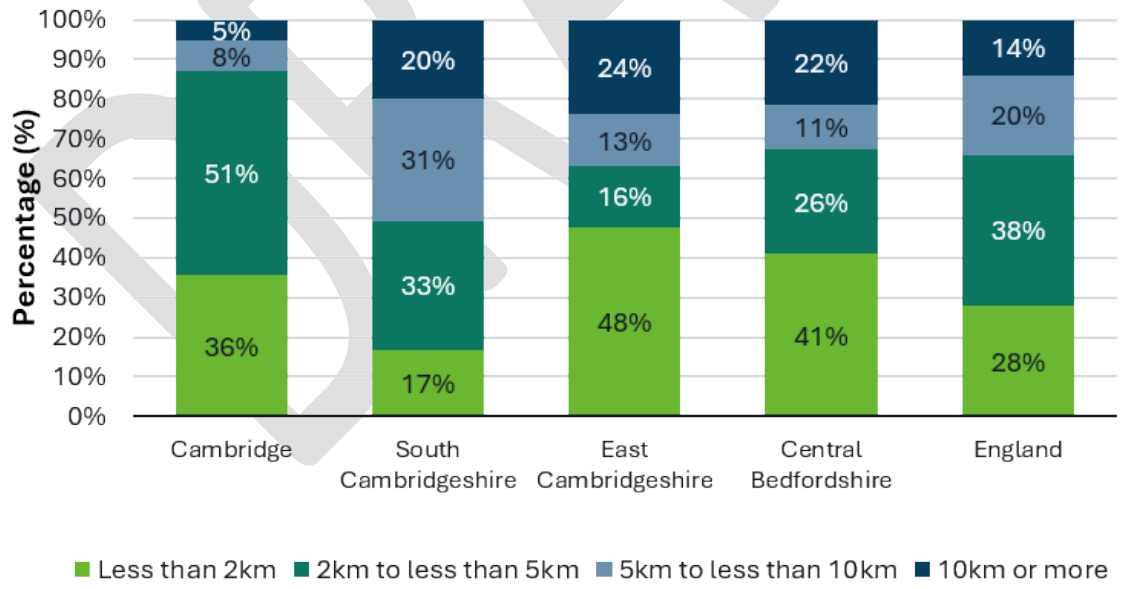
Both Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire have cycle to work trends that are considerably higher than national averages and comparator authorities. In Cambridge, 51% of people cycle between two and five kilometres to work versus 38% nationally, and 15-30% across comparator authorities.

In South Cambridgeshire, far more people cycle two to five kilometres (33%) and five to ten kilometres (31%) than in the comparators. This shows Greater Cambridge has a strong medium distance cyclability that supports opportunities for physical activity, both commuting and leisure, although the scope for further growth will vary by location, journey purpose and demographic group. Similar trends exist for walking: 24% walk two to five kilometres to work in Cambridge versus 4% nationally.

High levels of adult inactivity correlate with worse self-reported health and public health outcomes. South Cambridgeshire and especially Cambridge have much lower rates of adult inactivity than their neighbouring authorities and the national average, with just 14% active less than 30 minutes a week in Cambridge.

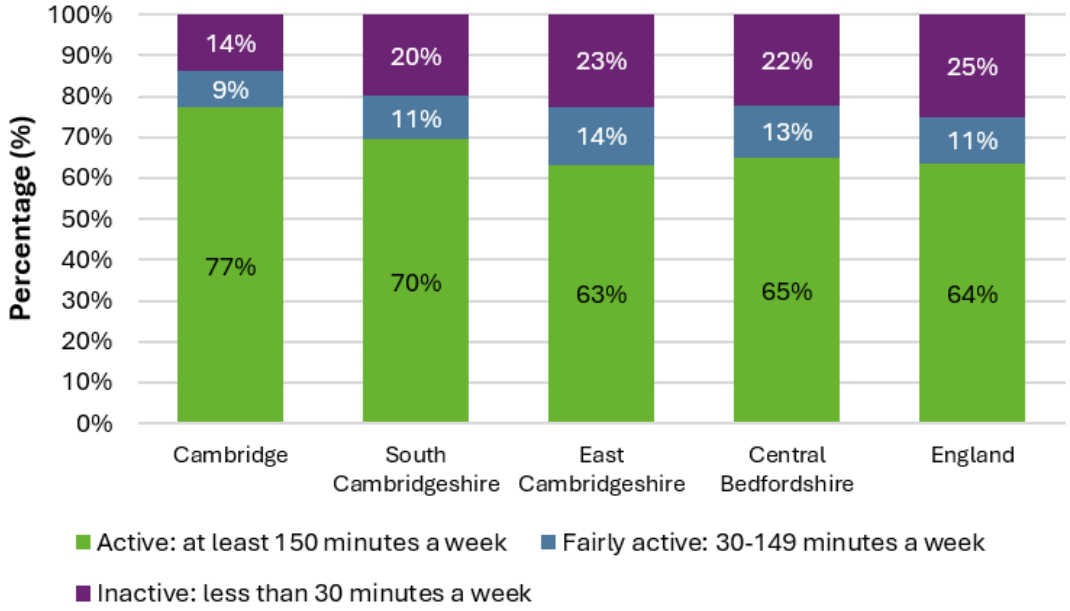
Active travel for physical activity or other journey purposes can help to address poor health outcomes and ultimately reduce pressure on medical services.

**Figure 2.7: Travel to work distances by cycle (Census 2021)***




*These trends are also supported by National Travel Survey data at CPCA level.

**Figure 2.8: Adult activity levels in 2023/24 (Sport England, 2024)**




## *Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy implications*

- The GCTS should recognise the established role of active travel for medium-distance trips in Greater Cambridge, including pedal-driven e-mobility, while targeting locations and groups where there is still potential to increase participation.
- The GCTS should seek to sustain the role of active travel in supporting the city region's relatively strong levels of physical activity and general health, while recognising that infrastructure, demographics, confidence and journey type all affect future uptake.

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## Challenge Statement 6: Road safety

**Greater Cambridge experiences a concentration of collision hotspots both along key strategic routes (e.g. the A14/Newmarket Road corridor, A14 north-west of Cambridge, and the A505) and throughout areas of the city centre (e.g. Market, Petersfield), with a high proportion of casualties affecting active travellers.**

Cambridgeshire County Council monitoring and analysis (2023-2025) identifies 36 key collision hotspots across its area, of which 15 of the top 20 highest-scoring (75%) are in Greater Cambridge –12 in Cambridge and 3 in South Cambridgeshire. The top five clusters are all junctions in and around central Cambridge: East Road /Mill Road, Newmarket Road/Barnwell Road, Trumpington Road/ Fen Causeway /Lensfield Road, Histon Road/Windsor Road/Akeman Street, and Mill Road (Guest Rd to Emery St). South Cambridgeshire hotspots include the M11 Junction 10, A10/Humphries Way Roundabout, and A14 Junction 33 (Milton).

Many collisions involve multiple modes, highlighting issues caused by interactions between different road users in central Cambridge, with 61% of casualties being active travel users. Greater Cambridge also has one of the highest active travel mode shares in the country, meaning a greater proportion of people are exposed to walking and cycling risks than in many comparator areas. In addition, pedestrians and cyclists are inherently more vulnerable to injury in the event of a collision because they are not protected by a vehicle structure. This does not imply that higher active travel levels inevitably lead to poorer safety outcomes; rather, it reinforces the importance of ensuring that future growth in walking, cycling and micromobility is accompanied by targeted investment in safer infrastructure, junction design and the reduction of conflict between modes.

Although Cambridgeshire has made improvements over the last decade in terms of its rate of road casualties (i.e. fatalities or serious injuries), this has been notably less so than areas such as Peterborough and Oxfordshire, and many junctions' safety scores have worsened in the last monitoring period.

### *Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy implications*

- The GCTS should recognise the need for targeted road safety investment at priority locations, e.g. along radial corridors and at complex urban junctions.
- The GCTS should seek to learn from comparator authorities as well as national exemplars in terms of their approach to road safety and successful interventions. To this end, the GCTS should complement ongoing updates to the 'Safe Systems Approach'* and 'Vision Zero' strategy of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Road Safety/Vision Zero Partnership Board.

* A joined-up approach that seeks for every part of the transport system including people, vehicles and infrastructure to work together to reduce the risk of collisions.

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**Figure 2.9: Greater Cambridge collision hotspots (GCTS Evidence Base, 2026)**

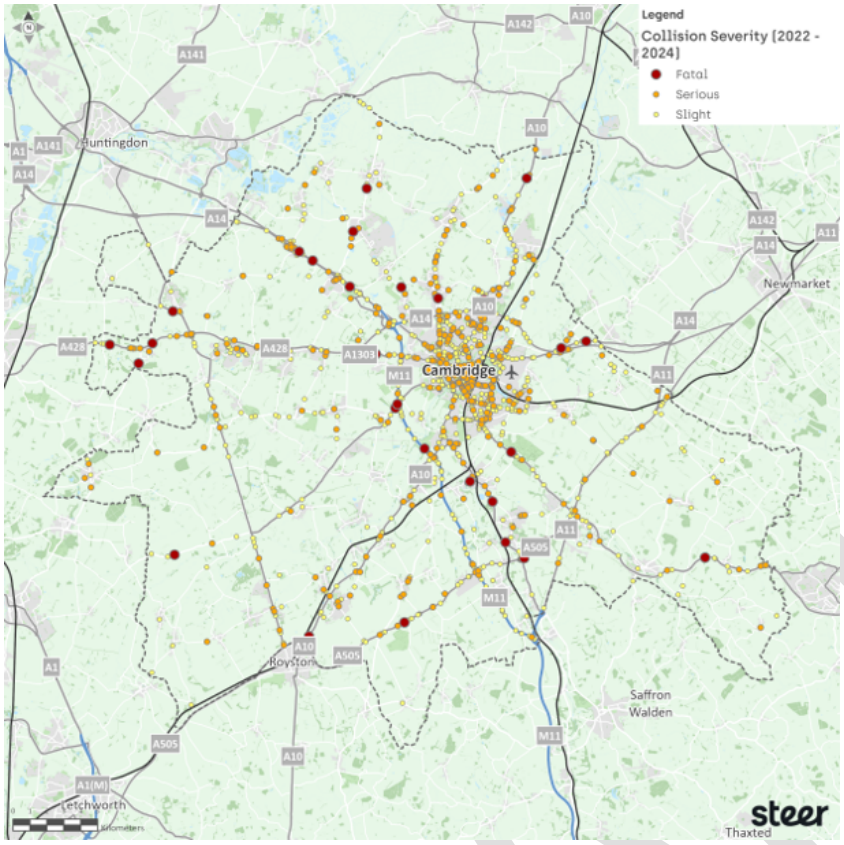
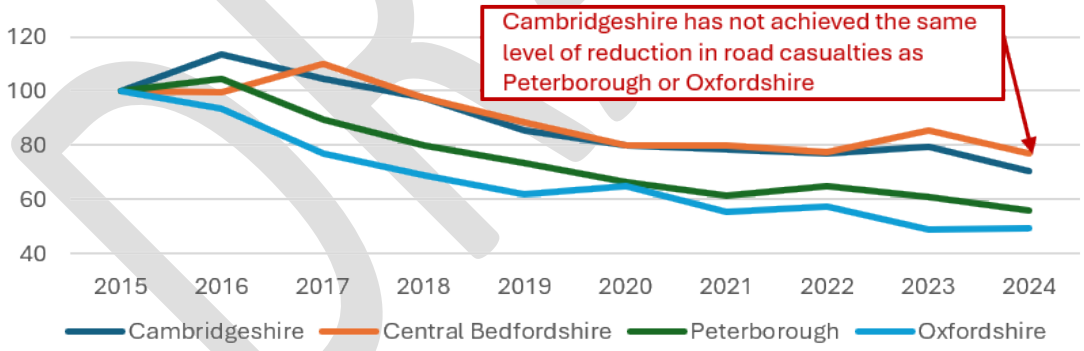



**Figure 2.10: Indexed road causalities per billion vehicle kilometres (DfT, 2023)**



## Challenge Statement 7: Noise and air quality

**Although average levels have been in decline, road transport emissions are still causing spikes in pollution in tightly congested areas of Cambridge and along major roads in South Cambridgeshire. For example, the M11 is responsible for significant noise pollution in North West/West Cambridge, negatively impacting people living on or close to these corridors.**

Noise pollution from surface travel is particularly high along the M11 corridor, but this is also an issue along key A-roads across Greater Cambridge such as the A11 and the A14.

Over a period of three years, there has been a sustained period of compliance with annual mean $NO_2$ air quality objectives. As such the Air Quality Monitoring Area previously covering the area around the inner ring road of Cambridge was revoked effective January 2025.

High levels of noise and air pollution are associated with poorer public health outcomes, particularly within vulnerable groups such as children, those who are pregnant, those with underlying health conditions, and the elderly. The causal pathways are complex: exposure to $NO_2$ and particulate matter. Particulate matter emissions are generated from tyre, brake and road wear, regardless of propulsion mechanism. Exhaust sources produce both $NO_2$ and particulate matter emissions. Emissions may interact with other factors such as other long-term health and lower health outcome related factors, with people living along noisier and more polluted roads often also facing wider socio-economic disadvantage. It is recognised locally that there is no ‘safe level of air pollution’.

**Figure 2.11: Noise Important Areas showing noise levels from roads in Greater Cambridge (GCTS Evidence Base, 2025)**

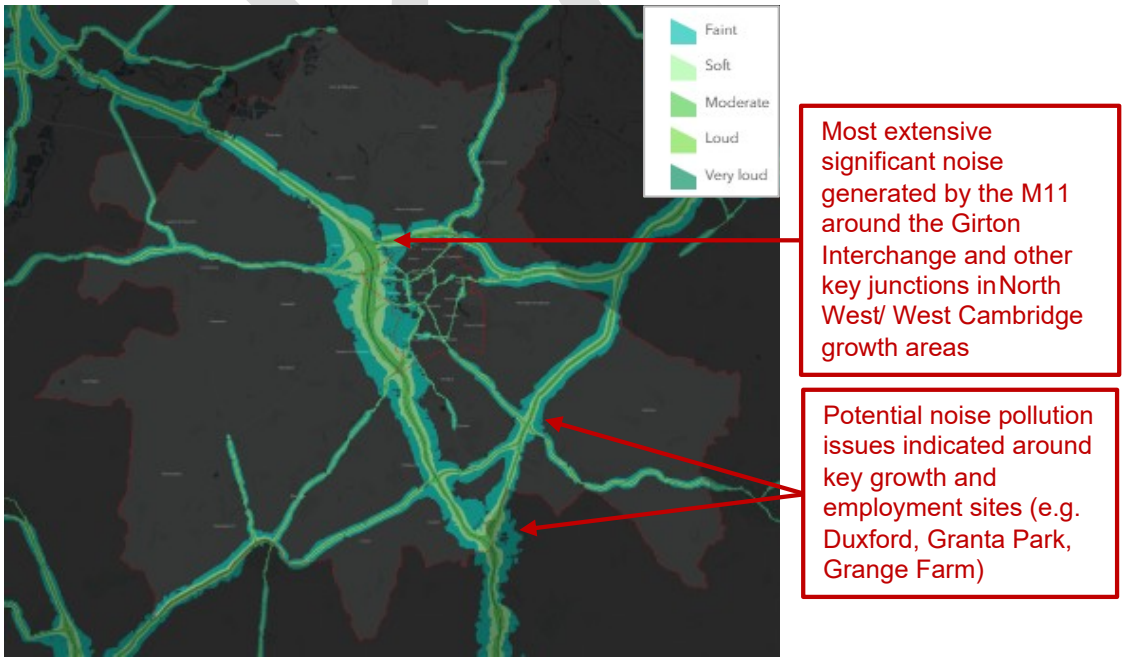
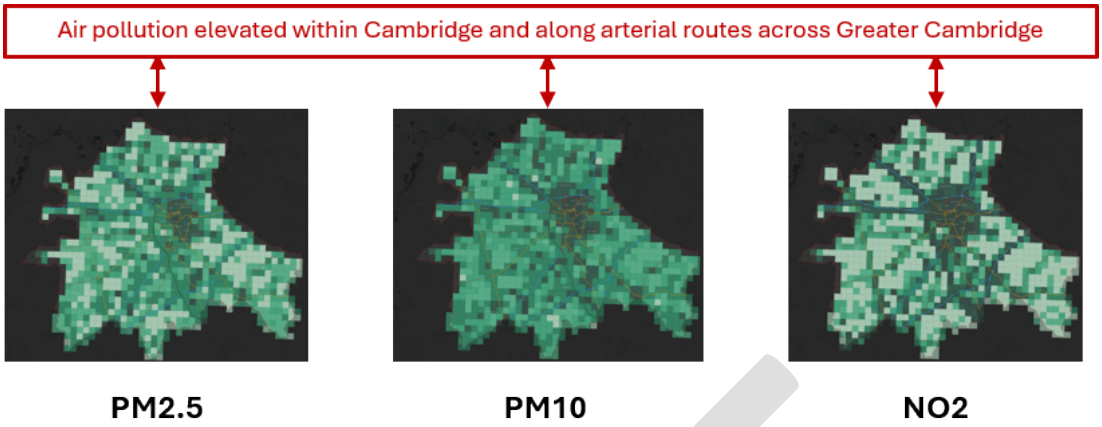


***Figure 2.12: Snapshot of road transport emissions (GCTS Evidence Base, 2025)***




## Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy implications

- The GCTS should align with the recently adopted Greater Cambridge Air Quality Strategy (2024-2029), considering both $NO_2$ and particulate matter and recognising how exposure may be compounded in areas affected by deprivation.
- The GCTS should seek to identify interventions to ease noise pollution levels such as green barriers/buffers, particularly where growth sites intersect with the Strategic or Major Road Network.

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## Challenge Statement 8: Access to healthcare

**Addenbrooke's Hospital is the largest and most comprehensive healthcare facility in Greater Cambridge and provides regionally and nationally significant research and clinical services. Cambridge South station will significantly improve rail access to the Cambridge Biomedical Campus, but public transport journeys to the hospital from the north, east and rural areas of Greater Cambridge may still require interchange and can remain indirect, particularly where local bus or first/last mile connections are limited. For more remote areas, access to GP surgeries is also a key issue.**

Addenbrooke's Hospital is located four kilometres to the south of the city centre on Cambridge Biomedical Campus. It is not within walking distance for most residents, and for areas north of Central Cambridge; public transport travel times exceed 30 minutes as most journeys require interchange. Public transport connectivity to South Cambridgeshire is limited beyond a short south east corridor towards Babraham and Fulbourn.

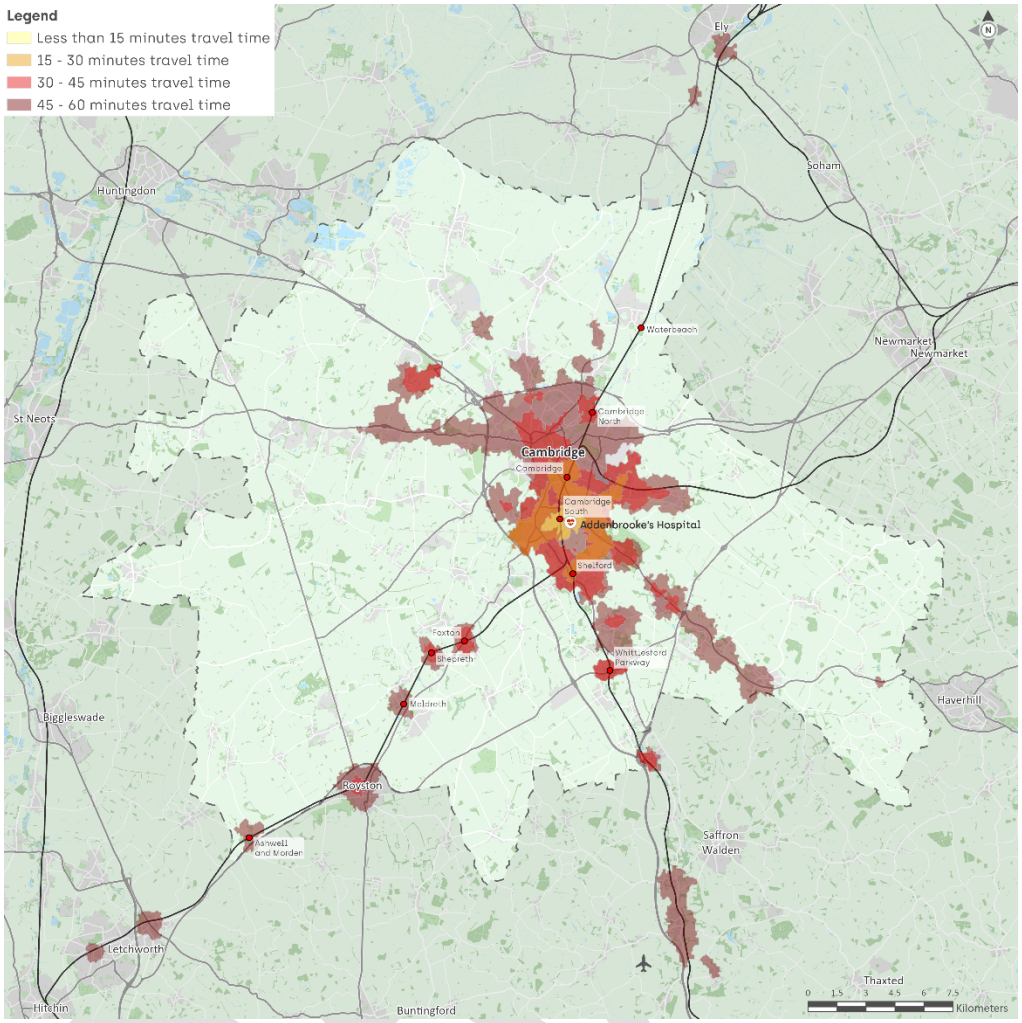
Cambridge South station materially improves the public transport offer for access to and from the Biomedical Campus, Addenbrooke's Hospital and Royal Papworth Hospital, particularly for people able to access the rail network directly. However, this does not fully address connections from the north, east or rural areas, where residents, staff and visitors may still need to interchange in Central Cambridge or rely on local bus, demand responsive, active travel or first/last mile links to reach rail and hospital destinations.

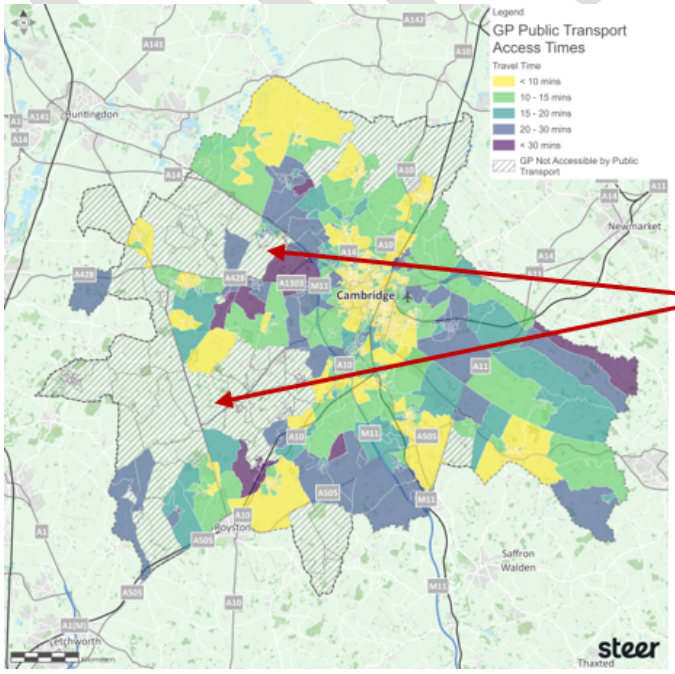
### *Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy implications*

- The GCTS should consider how local bus, demand responsive, active travel and first/last mile connections can improve access to the Biomedical Campus, Addenbrooke's and GP surgeries from places not directly served by Cambridge South station.
- The GCTS should seek to enhance the provision and quality of interchange at Cambridge South, Central Cambridge and mobility hubs, recognising that interchange quality, journey legibility and local onward connections will determine how far rail investment improves healthcare access for different communities.

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**Figure 2.13: Public transport travel times to nearest hospital (top) and GP (bottom) (GCTS Evidence Base, 2026)**




Gaps in access to a GP exist across western areas of Greater Cambridge/South Cambridgeshire

## Challenge Statement 9: Access to further education

**Many parts of Greater Cambridge are more than a 60-minute public transport travel time of a sixth form or further education institution, with many students and staff having to take two or more buses to reach their destination. Travel costs can also act as a barrier to those in low-income households, although existing products such as the Tiger Pass and bus fare support already play an important role in reducing costs for young people. Lack of access to further education can affect expected earnings and broader 'life chances' for young people and some adults.**

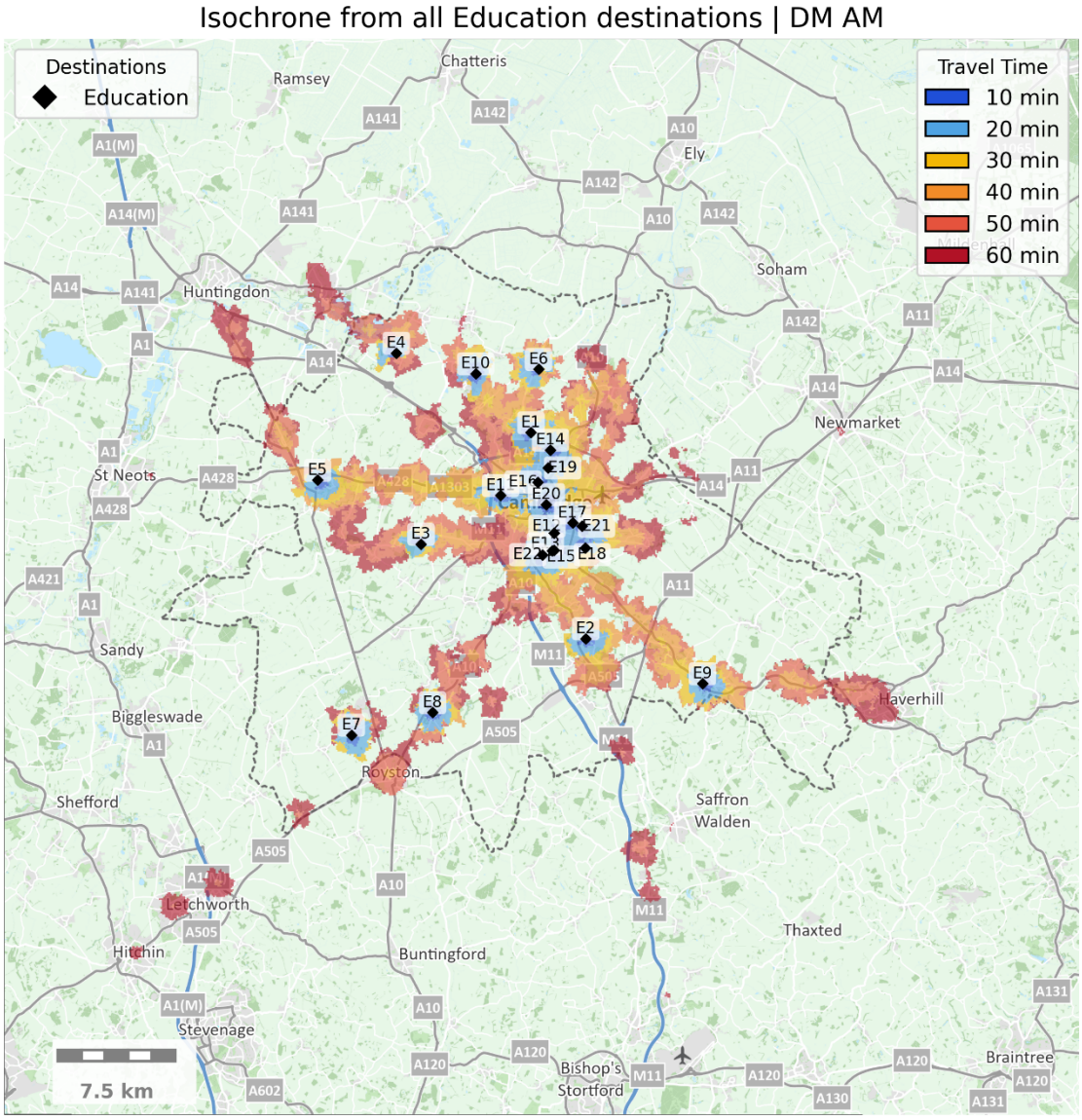
Access to further education institutions is uneven across the city region, with several outside Cambridge not well served by direct and frequent public transport (e.g. E3, Comberton Village College).

Others within Cambridge face their own access challenges, such as existing services often being full and not serving students and staff from all directions e.g. Hills Road Sixth Form (E12), Long Road Sixth Form Colleges (E13), and Cambridge Regional College (E14). There is also a notable lack of institutions in the south east of Greater Cambridge.

Although it is typically assumed that 'acceptable' travel-to-study distances are higher for further education than for primary or secondary schools, the inconvenience to students and parents – and the need to enable as many of them to make a genuine choice of institution – must be recognised. Uneven distribution of further education provision is not necessarily inappropriate, but transport access should reflect the spatial pattern of student need, course specialisms and the locations from which learners and staff are likely to travel.

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**Figure 2.14: Further education and sixth form connectivity (GCTS Connectivity Analysis Report, 2026)**




## *Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy implications*

- The GCTS should recognise the need to serve places with no sixth forms or further education institutions with appropriate public transport services and active travel links, accounting for any new institutions expected alongside growth.
- The GCTS should reflect existing affordability products, including the Tiger Pass and wider bus fare support, and consider whether further targeted measures are needed to improve access to education and encourage bus travel uptake in the context of franchising.
- The GCTS should review whether current post-16 travel assistance arrangements and school/college sustainable travel plan guidance are appropriate.

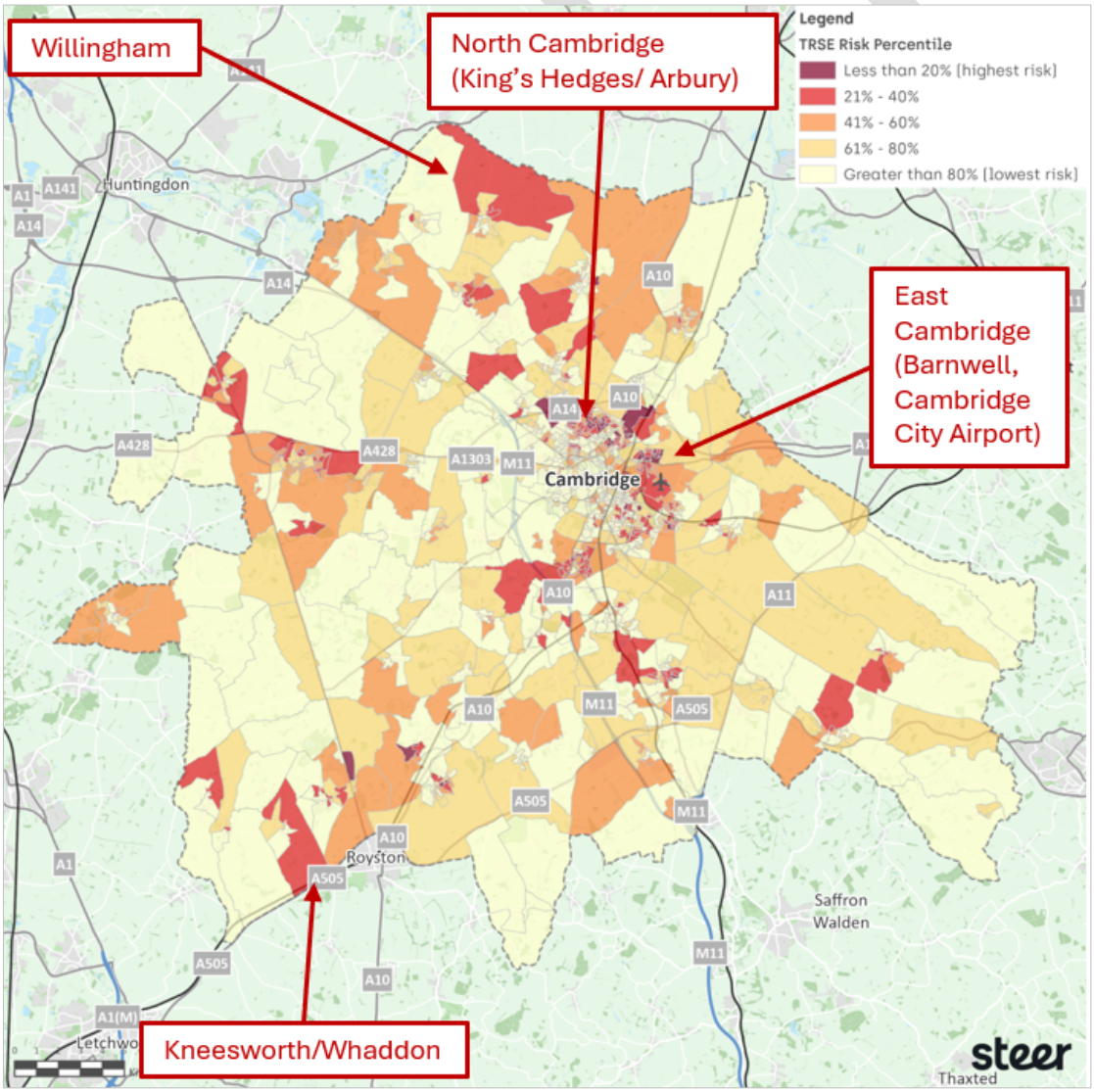
## Challenge Statement 10: Social exclusion

**Different types of places and communities suffer from transport-related social exclusion (TRSE) through a combination of higher levels of multiple deprivation and poor public transport accessibility to key services.**

While Greater Cambridge is an economically vibrant and aspirational city region, it does experience internal inequalities. Several neighbourhoods in East and South Cambridge fall within the top 10 percent most deprived nationally, with additional areas in South Cambridgeshire within the top 20 to 30 percent (ONS, IoD25).

TRSE is multi-causal and depends on place – for example, King's Hedges is physically close to destinations such as Cambridge Regional College and the Science Park (and has segregated radial public transport links), but residents may still experience issues such as severance that constrain their ability to benefit from this. In rural areas, improving proximity to key services and trips into Cambridge may be the best ways to address TRSE. Improving the security and perceptions of safety using the transport network, particularly at night, may reduce TRSE for women and girls.

**Figure 2.15: Transport-related Social Exclusion (GCTS Evidence Base, 2026)**



## *Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy implications*

- The GCTS should identify connectivity outcomes by sustainable modes for existing communities (not just new developments) to respond to their economic constraints.
- The GCTS should seek to target public transport infrastructure and operational investment in deprived areas and ensure that they benefit from existing investment so that everyone in Greater Cambridge can be part of its growth story and not be excluded from accessing key services and opportunities.
- The GCTS should address cost barriers to active travel (e.g. buying a bike) and micromobility (e-bike/scooter rental).

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## Challenge Statement 11: Rate of decarbonisation

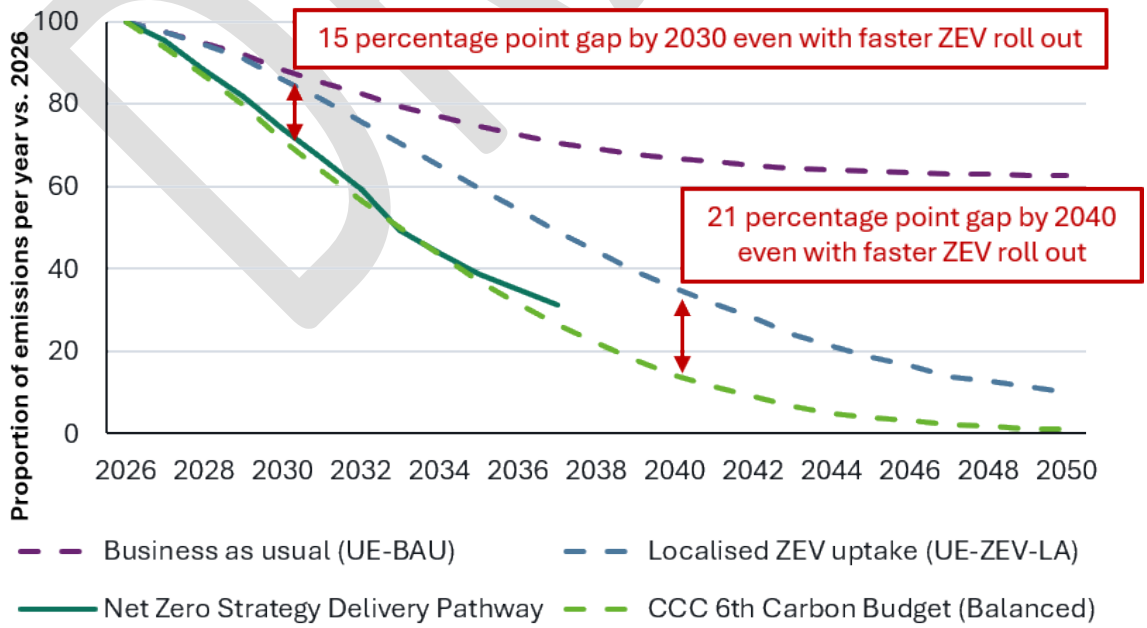
**The significantly high levels of growth being proposed through the Local Plan and considered as part of CPCA's Spatial Development Strategy and the Cambridge Growth Company's work is likely to lead to increased car and freight journeys. This will increase transport emissions and wider exposure to climate-related and environmental risks without continued investment in sustainable travel, cleaner vehicles and a more resilient transport network. Forecasts show that zero emission vehicle uptake alone will not be sufficient to address these pressures, adding greater impetus to the need to improve public transport, active travel, zero carbon transport solutions and climate resilience for people and freight.**

The forecast rate of decarbonisation for Cambridgeshire, even with faster uptake of zero emission vehicles, will not get 'tailpipe' transport emissions to net zero by 2050 in line with national government targets.

Greater Cambridge districts are outperforming comparators in terms of adoption of hybrid and zero emission vehicles, with a doubling of the overall proportion of non-petrol or diesel vehicles from 2015 to 2020 and a tripling from 2020 to 2025.

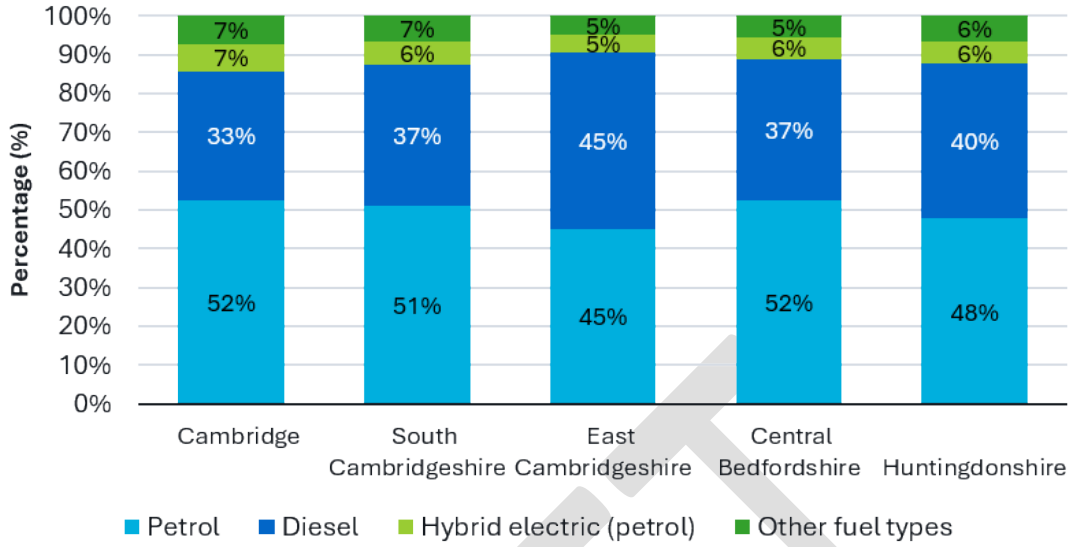
57% of user emissions for Cambridgeshire in 2019 came from trips starting or ending outside the county and through trips, with 43% being internal. A growing proportion of emissions will come from freight movements as related vehicles, particularly heavy goods vehicles (HGVs), will take longer to decarbonise. There will be more freight movements from changing retail habits, increased construction, and a growing population and employment base. These pressures also reinforce the need to consider resilience and adaptation, including how transport infrastructure and services can cope with heat, flooding, disruption and changing travel demand.

**Figure 2.16: Indexed trajectory of Cambridgeshire carbon emissions (Carbon Assessment Playbook, 2026)**




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**Figure 2.17: Fleet composition by fuel type (DfT Vehicle Licensing Stats, 2025 Q3)**




## *Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy implications*

- The GCTS should adopt an 'avoid-shift-improve' and resilience framework to provide greater flexibility around the need to travel, invest in sustainable modes, accelerate ZEV adoption including with widespread, sustainably-powered charging infrastructure, and ensure transport infrastructure is adaptable to climate risks.
- The GCTS should work in partnership with neighbouring authorities, England's Economic Heartland/Transport East, government and the private sector to tackle emissions from longer distance trips and strategic freight movements, while supporting longer-term mass rapid transit ambitions and wider policy objectives for resilience, environmental quality and sustainable growth.

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# Category B: Transport and mobility

*These challenge statements focus on the performance, accessibility and resilience of the transport network itself, including how people and goods move across Greater Cambridge.*

## Challenge Statement 12: Congestion and user experience

**Greater Cambridge saw significant increases in traffic flows over the decade 2010 to 2019, with car and goods vehicle traffic across radial cordons increasing by 10% and 38%, respectively. Since 2020, the area has experienced further major changes with post-COVID travel behaviour redistributing weekday peak demand.**

**Strategic road network flows in early 2026 have broadly recovered to pre-COVID levels, with higher weekend traffic, while local flows remain below February 2020 levels. Conditions continue to create delays, reduce bus reliability, and contribute to poorer conditions for active travel, reinforcing the need to make journeys more comfortable, reliable and pleasant.**

The map shows the problem of peak congestion is widespread, particularly around key city gateways such as Girton Interchange, Histon Interchange and the A10/M11 junction. Average delays in these places consistently exceed three minutes in the morning peak. Continued growth in traffic since this data was recorded in 2015 further underscores the need for intervention.

Congestion affects all road users, reducing traffic speeds by up to 50% in peak hours. Even those using fixed public transport links (e.g. arriving at Cambridge station) face last mile trips along streets with high footfall, limited footway widths, street furniture clutter and difficult-to-navigate junctions, with inconsistent wayfinding leading to poor legibility, especially for first-time or infrequent visitors.

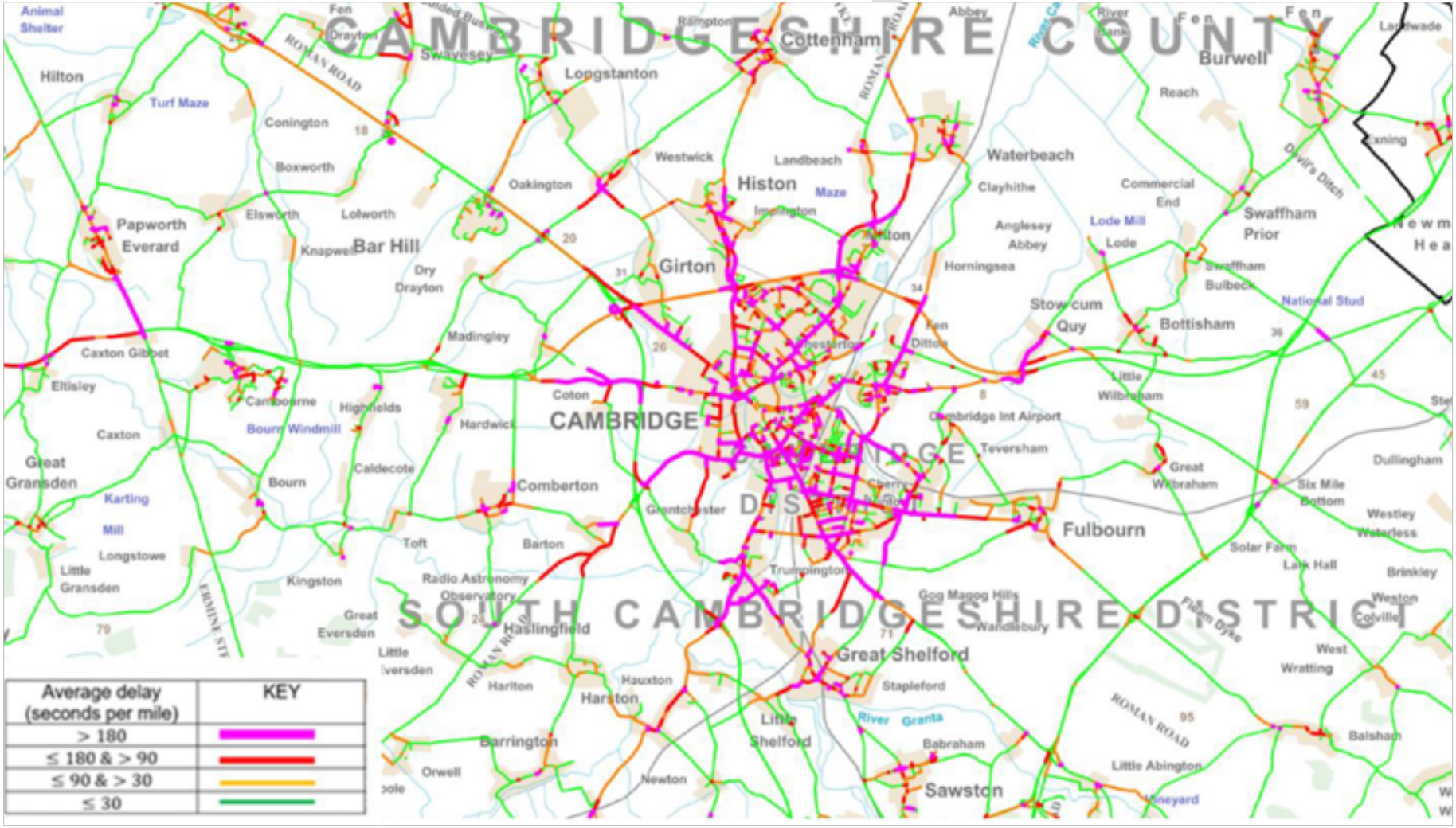
These issues have knock-on impacts on Greater Cambridge's place reputation, structurally constraining long-term outcomes such as inward investment and the vitality of the visitor and evening economies.

### *Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy implications*

- The GCTS should seek to segregate the public transport and active travel networks from the congested road network to make travel times more reliable, where appropriate, and mitigate impacts where this is not possible.
- The GCTS should identify opportunities to improve the user experience, taking a holistic approach to identifying improvements where physical infrastructure and the streetscape is difficult to alter.
- The GCTS should consider the appropriate placement and quality of interchange (e.g. travel options, high quality waiting facility, lighting and security, real-time information, other facilities) to reduce the impacts of congestion.
- The GCTS should consider journey quality and associated metrics (e.g. ticketing, transport legibility and wayfinding) alongside connectivity and capacity as key outcomes for the strategy to ensure it is user-focused and suited to the challenges posed by the current traffic environment.

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**Figure 2.18: AM peak congestion delay (Cambridgeshire Insight, 2015)**



## Challenge Statement 13: Active travel

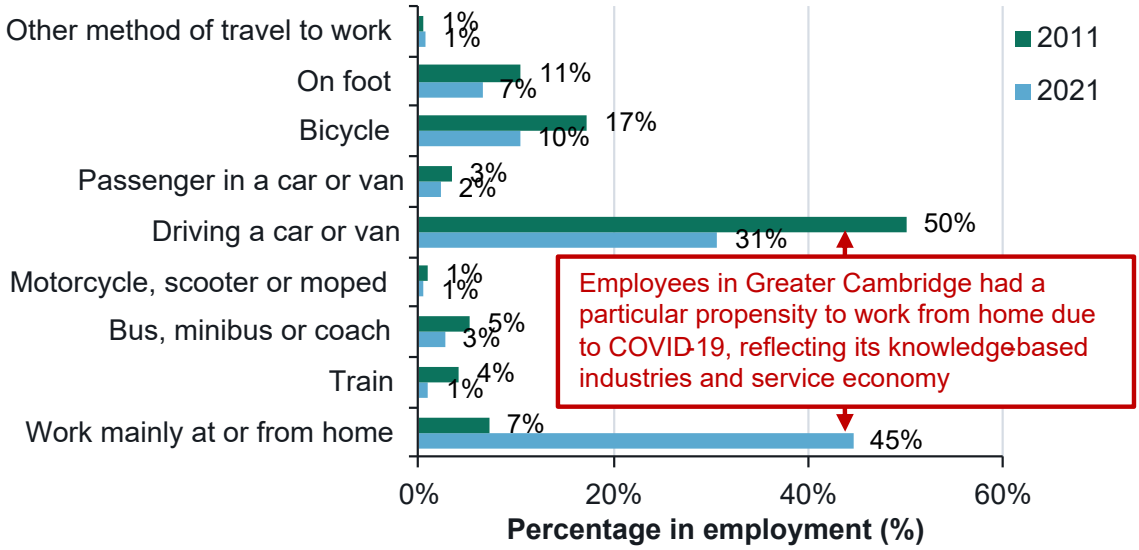
**Greater Cambridge has a strong active travel network within its compact urban core and along some key radial routes, but significant gaps in orbital and inter-settlement connectivity remain. Given existing active travel levels are already well above the national average, the opportunity is to sustain high uptake, broaden participation where it is lower, and address remaining safety, accessibility and network barriers rather than assuming unlimited further growth.**

Several orbital links within Cambridge, such as Perne Road running south to east and Victoria Road/Chesterton Road running west to east, do not currently have dedicated, grade-separated active travel infrastructure despite being among the corridors with the greatest cycle flows as per the map opposite.

Though the Greater Cambridge Greenways programme recognised in the Cambridgeshire LCWIP has created some additional routes, key gaps remain e.g. between Cambridge and Duxford. There is a particular lack of active travel provision between settlements across South Cambridgeshire; routes are largely radial and based around adjacent public transport corridors.

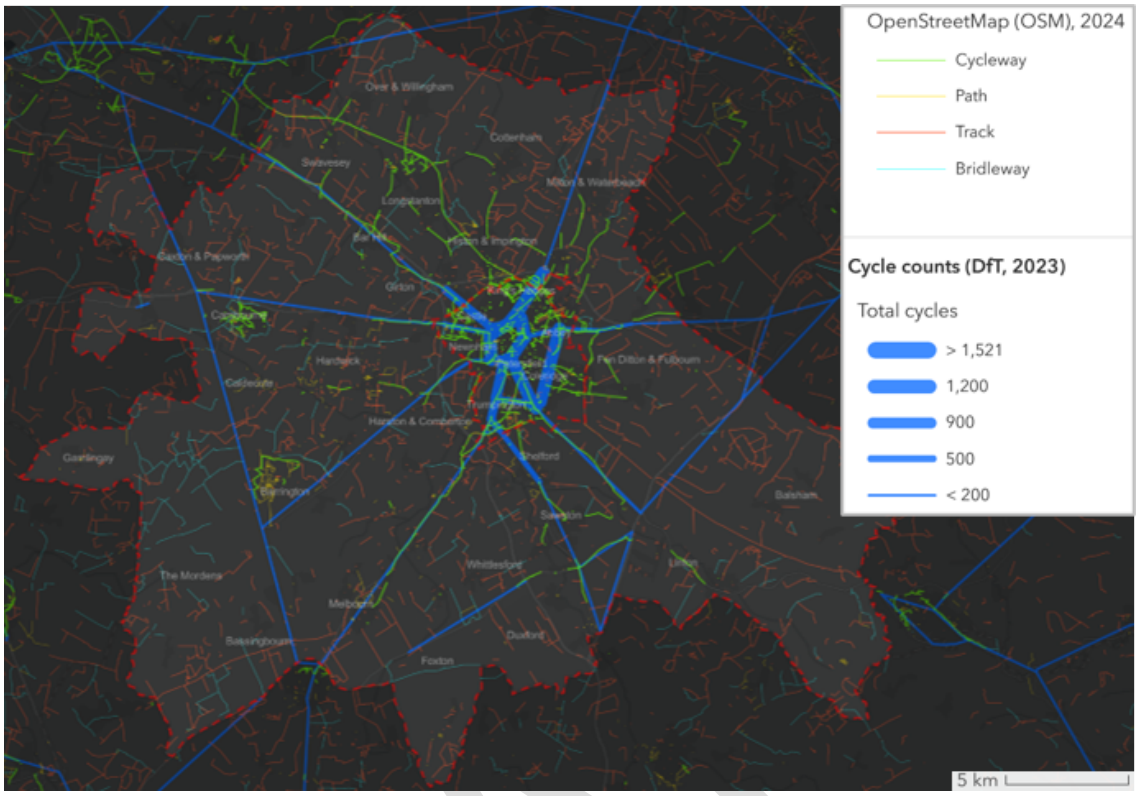
Greater Cambridge experiences a cycle to work mode share over five times the national average; up to ten times just within Cambridge. 48% of residents want to walk or cycle more, but a similar proportion do not feel safe to do so in their local area. This indicates latent demand, but also suggests that future uptake will depend on who is being targeted, the types of trips being considered and whether safety and confidence barriers can be reduced.

**Figure 2.19: Travel to work mode shares in 2011 and 2021 (ONS, 2011 and 2021)***




*Census data for 2021 was subject to rapid changes in travel patterns due to COVID-19.

**Figure 2.20: Active travel network, cycle counts (GCTS Evidence Base, 2025)**




## *Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy implications*

- The GCTS should support existing network plans for active travel while targeting gaps in connectivity, providing secure cycle parking at key destinations, and improving user safety and accessibility, particularly for those with disabilities, while recognising that infrastructure is only one factor influencing future uptake.
- The GCTS should focus on groups who tend to participate less in active travel, and improve connections from villages and mid-size settlements to radial active travel routes, recognising that demographics, confidence, journey purpose and trip length will all affect the practical ceiling for further uptake.
- The GCTS should ensure that network plans are not prohibitive to equestrians, particularly in rural areas.

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## Challenge Statement 14: First/last mile connectivity

**Continued roll-out and adoption of micromobility and other emerging transport solutions will be required to support first/last mile connectivity and medium distance trips while enabling a more sustainable and resilient transport network.**

The Voi e-scooter trial shows how micromobility is scaling rapidly in Greater Cambridge, with the potential to replace shorter car trips (less than two kilometres) but also well-suited to medium distance trips (two to five kilometres) where there is continuous and dedicated infrastructure.

While micromobility is becoming increasingly established, current provision is largely concentrated within Cambridge and is not yet fully integrated with the wider transport network. Trials of eCargo bikes and autonomous vehicles point to the potential of systemised emerging mobility solutions serving different possible functions (first/last mile connectivity, freight, highly demand responsive transport services in rural areas), but are at earlier stages of maturity than micromobility.

There is therefore a gap between the strategic ambition for emerging mobility and its current role in the Greater Cambridge transport network. A coordinated approach to defining, scaling and integrating these modes will be an important step towards a comprehensive plan for supporting sustainable growth that anticipates technological change.

### *Micromobility: Voi e-scooter trial*

- Over 1.5 million rides in 2025, with 35% year-on-year growth.
- Approximately 1.9 million short car trips have been replaced by e-bike/e-scooter due to the trial to date.
- Safety incidents related to Voi usage have been on a steady decline and are now at their lowest point since the trial began.
- Expansion of the operating area has been underway since 2024.
- The fleet comprises 870 e-scooters and 419 e-bikes



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### *Cargo bikes and eCargo bikes*

- Cambridgeshire County Council have run a small 'try before you buy' eCargo bike scheme since 2021, with eight bikes based in north Cambridge.
- There have been varying levels of support to businesses who want to obtain or trial eCargo bikes, often backed by DfT-led funding initiatives.
- Evidence suggests eCargo bikes are best suited to short-distance urban trips and first/last mile deliveries.

### *Autonomous vehicle bus trials*

- Free 'Connector' driverless bus services have been running between Madingley Road P&R, Cambridge West Innovation District and Eddington, and between Cambridge Biomedical Campus and Babraham Road P&R, since 2025.

### ***Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy implications***

- The GCTS should aim to expand, improve and accelerate the adoption of micromobility solutions such as e-scooters, aligned with the Greater Cambridge Micromobility Strategy.
- The GCTS will recognise emergent transport solutions such as eCargo bikes and autonomous vehicles, consider their strategic roles and how best to support their deployment.

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## Challenge Statement 15: Bus services, journeys and reform

**Significant local growth will increase the need for a highly connected, well-integrated, reliable bus network for Greater Cambridge. Franchising services will create opportunities to address pressing issues in the sector, including gaps in connectivity, service reliability, and commercial challenges.**

High frequency radial bus corridors exist between Cambridge and Huntingdon and Cambourne, respectively (5-15 / 15-30 buses per hour in the weekday morning peak). Frequencies are significantly lower along other routes, such as Cambridge to Haverhill. Even on the higher frequency routes, through-connectivity to key destinations (e.g. Cambridge Science Park) and travel hubs is limited and passengers must interchange in Cambridge City Centre. Several institutions run their own bus and coach services privately, such as Cambridge Regional College, Wellcome Genome Campus and Granta Park.

Bus patronage across Cambridgeshire has almost (but not fully) recovered to pre-pandemic levels; however, the sector is facing a longer-term decline in patronage and increased costs of operation per mile. Franchising of bus services in CPCA is expected to launch no later than financial year 2027/28, which will give the Combined Authority powers to set routes and frequencies, cross-subsidise important but less commercially attractive services, and control fares and ticketing.

**Figure 2.21: Cumulative bus frequencies (GCTS Evidence Base, 2025)**

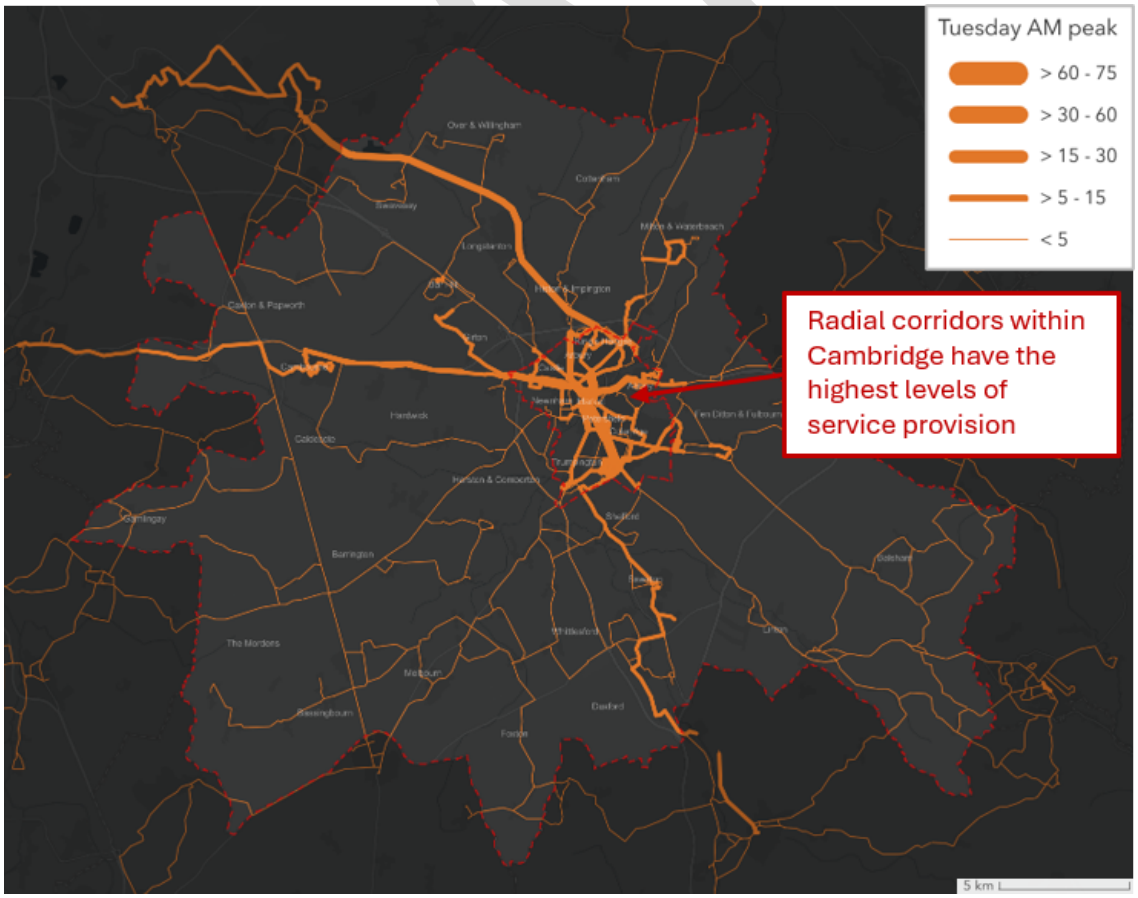
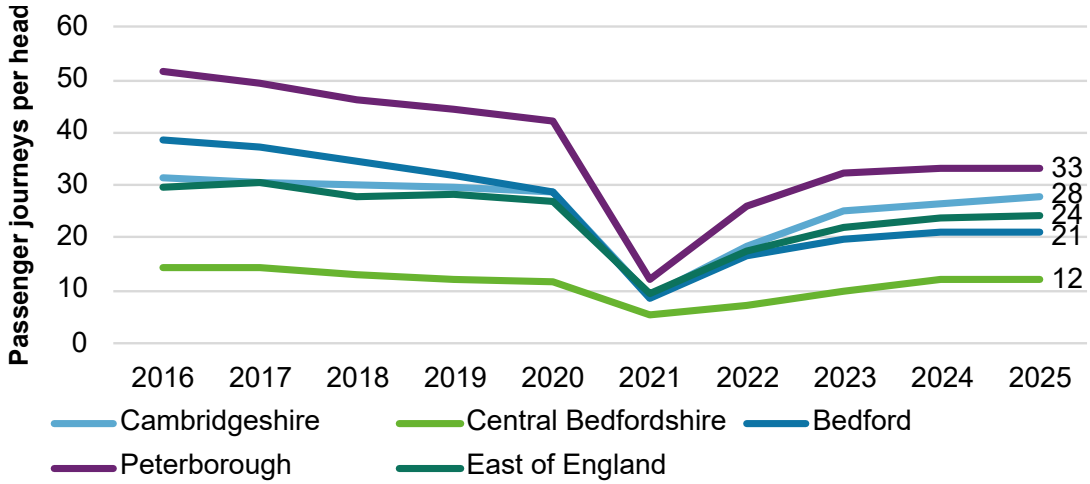


**Figure 2.22: Passenger journeys per head of population per annum (DfT, 2025)**




## *Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy implications*

- The GCTS should align with the Bus Service Improvement Plan and set the framework for longer term growth in patronage and improved bus punctuality under a future franchising model.
- The GCTS should consider how bus investment can be targeted to cater to the Greater Cambridge context, e.g. bike-to-bus journeys.
- The GCTS should also acknowledge increasing commercial challenges in the bus sector, including the growing costs of running Special Educational and Disability, Adult and Children's Services, and Home-to-School buses to education, care and healthcare destinations across Greater Cambridge.

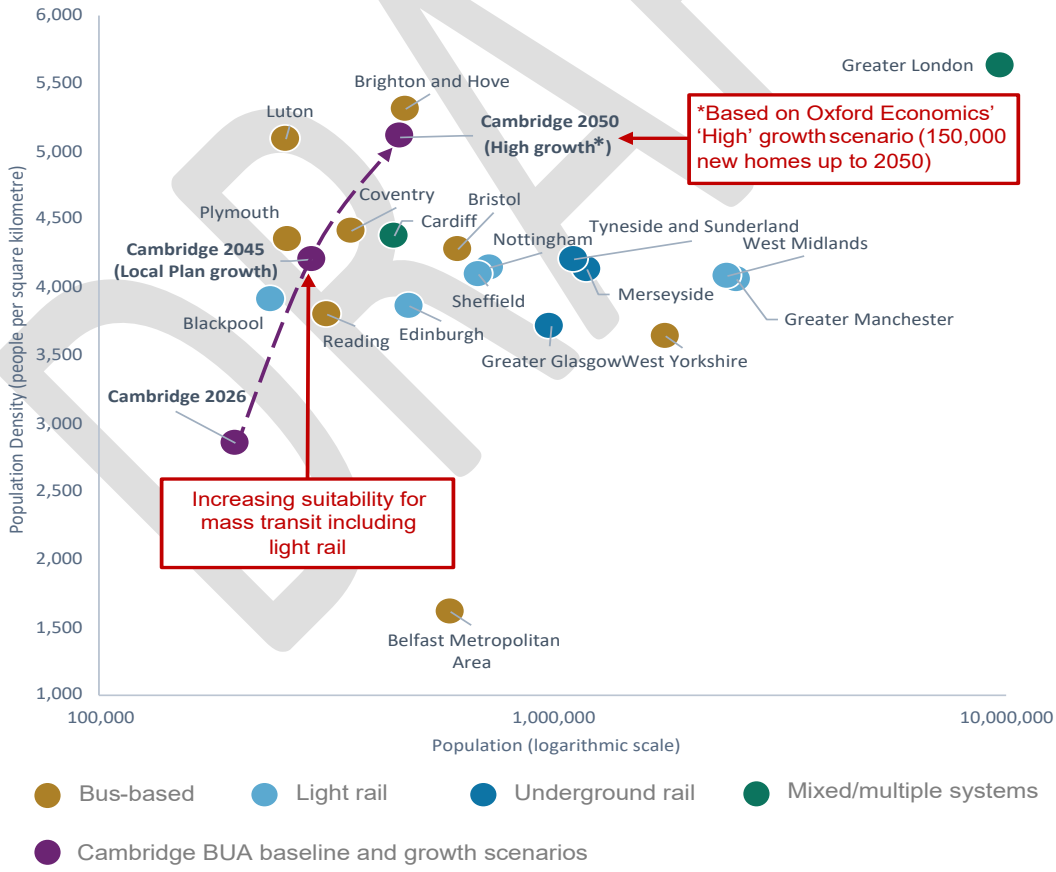
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## Challenge Statement 16: Opportunity for mass transit

**Growth, existing congestion and the increasingly polycentric pattern of major employment and housing locations create a strong case for more ambitious higher-capacity public transport in Greater Cambridge. Mass rapid transit could provide the step-change in capacity, reliability and journey quality needed to support transformational growth, subject to the Cambridge Growth Company study and preparation of an appropriate business case.**

An inherent need and viability for higher capacity mass transit solutions may emerge as effective densities increase on corridors with high levels of existing or planned growth, even where public transport provision already exists e.g. Cambridge to Huntingdon/St Ives. Other conurbations within the UK are currently considering and actively developing new corridor-based mass transit, including Edinburgh and the West Midlands. The CPCA Local Growth Plan and other higher growth scenarios will bring Greater Cambridge alongside places with more extensive and higher order mass transit, such as Edinburgh, Sheffield and Nottingham, in terms of effective densities. Any future mode choice, including the potential role of light rail or other MRT technologies, will need to be tested through the ongoing Cambridge Growth Company study and subsequent business case work.

**Figure 2.23: Level of mass transit provision in built-up urban areas across the UK**[1]




[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/greater-cambridge-growth-scenarios/greater-cambridge-growth-scenarios

## *Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy implications*

- The GCTS should more clearly establish the strategic case for mass rapid transit as part of the long-term response to growth, congestion and cross-city/orbital connectivity, while recognising that technology choices remain subject to the Cambridge Growth Company study and business case development.
- The GCTS should identify how high-quality public transport corridors can be planned and delivered with a view to full integration into a future MRT network, including how they would connect major employment sites, growth locations, rail stations and travel hubs.

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## Challenge Statement 17: Maximising rail opportunities

**Heavy rail has the potential to form a strategic spine for Greater Cambridge's transport network, with East West Rail, Cambridge South, a potential Cambridge East station and wider capacity improvements transforming east-west and regional connectivity. This opportunity will only be maximised if stations are effectively integrated with the wider public transport, active travel and travel hub network, and if key network constraints such as Ely and Haughley Junctions are addressed.**

East-West Rail (EWR) will transform connectivity for Greater Cambridge, enable agglomeration between Cambridge, Bedford, Milton Keynes and Oxford and enhance labour market access along the corridor, particularly in proximity to stations.

These new stations will serve distinct roles: Cambourne and Tempsford will intercept trips west of Cambridge (i.e. that would have used the M11 or the A428), unlocking thousands of new homes in and around Cambourne/ Bourn, while Cambridge South will be a key regional destination for those accessing employment and healthcare.

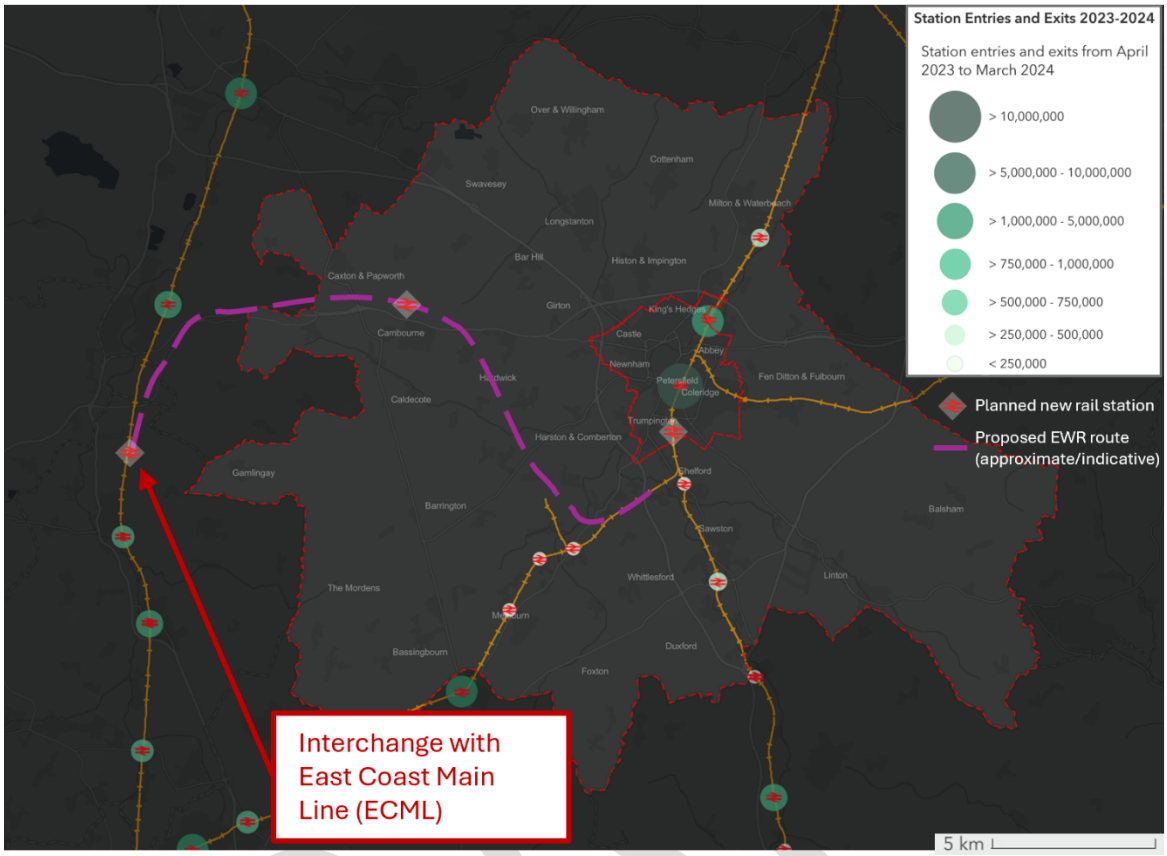
There is also the potential to extend EWR services eastwards toward Norwich and Ipswich, including direct services to London Stansted – further improving connectivity to international gateways. Wider rail improvements, including Ely Area Capacity Enhancement, Haughley Junction, increased services towards Peterborough, Fenland and King's Lynn, and capacity or resilience enhancements towards Newmarket and Soham, would strengthen Greater Cambridge's regional connectivity and support both passenger and freight movements.

Other opportunities include:

- Potential for a new station in the east of Cambridge supporting development and improving connectivity.
- Addressing constraints at Ely and Haughley rail junctions, increasing freight capacity and unlocking potential to increase service frequency to/from Peterborough, Fenland, King's Lynn and intermediate stations.
- Increasing the capacity of Cambridge station and passenger service frequencies to/from London, the Transport East region and beyond.
- Considering the role of Whittlesford Parkway as a short-term interchange and parkway opportunity for the southern corridor, including how additional parking, station access and onward connections could provide relief for car-based movements towards Cambridge and the Cambridge Biomedical Campus.

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**Figure 2.24: Graphic of current heavy rail network with East-West Rail overlay**




## *Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy implications*

- The GCTS should seek to ensure appropriate multi-modal integration, including new or enhanced travel hubs, at heavy rail stations so that rail acts as a practical spine for longer-distance and regional journeys into and across Greater Cambridge.
- The GCTS should recognise any gaps in plans to deal with severance and adverse effects on existing residents so everyone can benefit from EWR.
- The GCTS should consider scenarios both with and without EWR to mitigate against risk and inter-dependency, while identifying how EWR and wider rail upgrades can support access to international gateways, regional centres, Fenland and Peterborough without requiring travel via London.

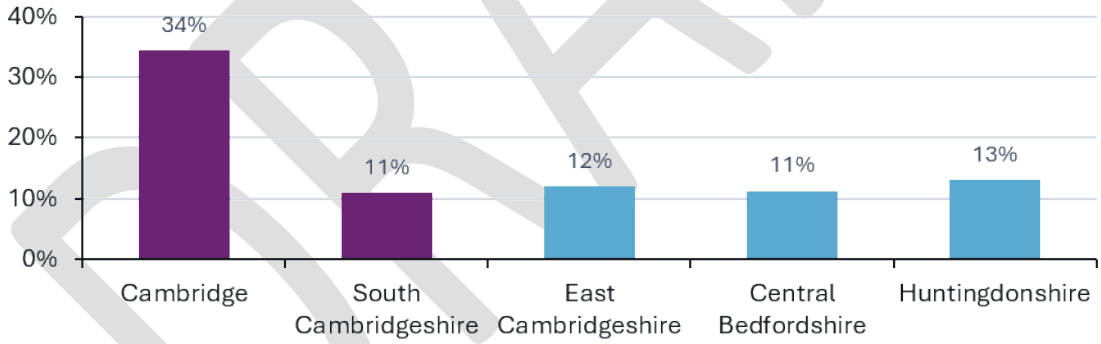
## Challenge Statement 18: Access to private vehicles

**While recognising that many people in rural areas of Greater Cambridge rely on access to a car to connect to work, everyday services and other opportunities and amenities, there is a need to provide alternatives in areas where access is lower, as well as considering not all household members may be able or willing to drive. Shared mobility, demand responsive transport and emerging connected and autonomous vehicle technologies may all have a future role in widening access where conventional fixed-route services are less viable.**

Car ownership rates in Greater Cambridge have remained relatively stable in recent years. 21% of households do not own a car, mostly in Cambridge (34%) due to its greater range of public transport options, walkability and demographic makeup in terms of students and young professional age groups.

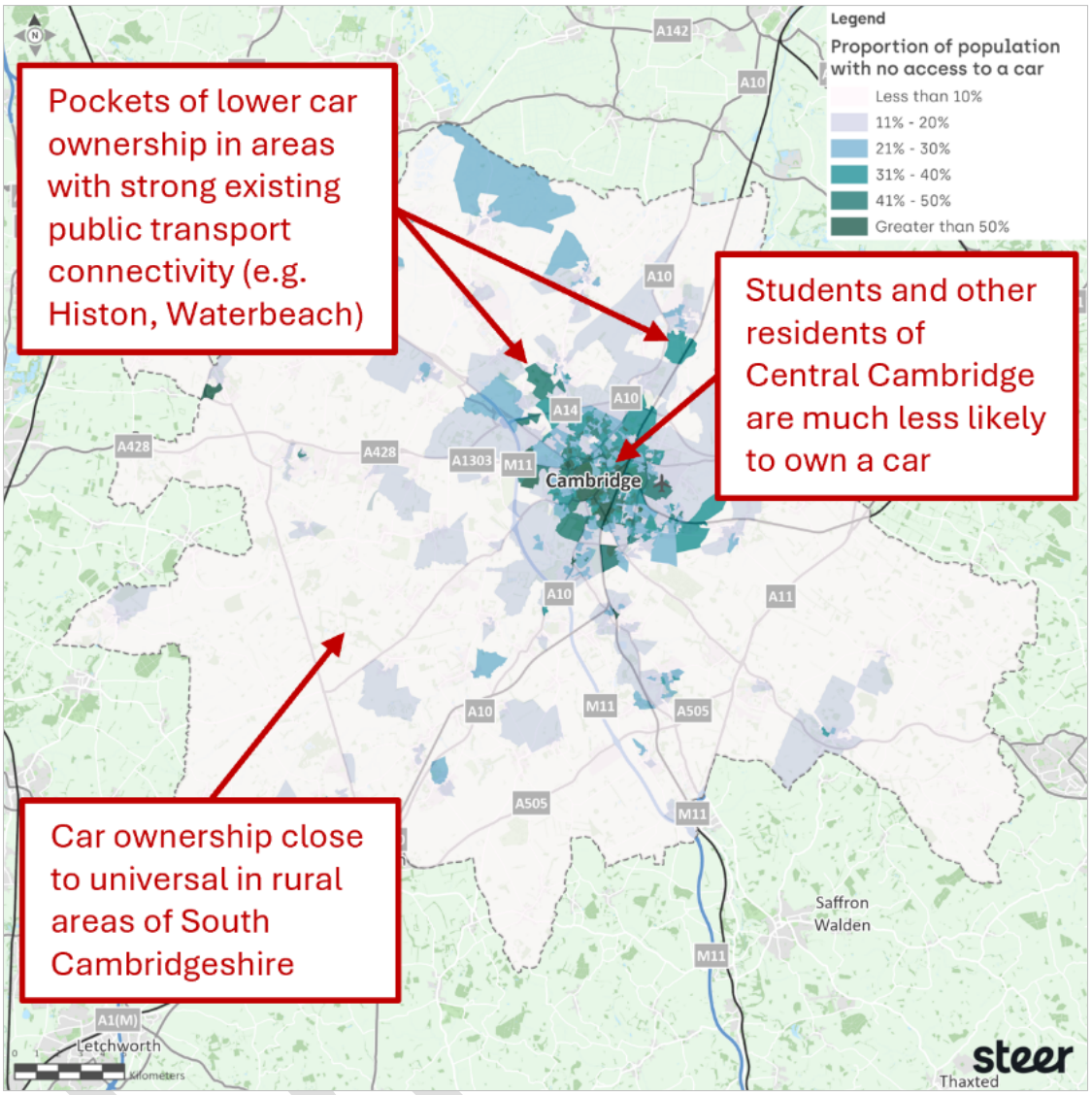
Across South Cambridgeshire, there are generally much higher rates of car ownership with some variation depending on settlement size and direct public transport connectivity. Where settlements have or are close to a potential alternative to car travel, such as a railway station, this does not always correspond to substantially lower rates of car ownership. This suggests that some existing alternatives have a limited reach and/or are not matching people's needs for everyday trips. Over time, connected and autonomous vehicles could help broaden flexible access options, but their deployment would need to be managed so that they reduce rather than add to congestion and support wider place, safety and environmental objectives.

**Figure 2.25: Percent of households with no cars or vans in 2021 (ONS, 2021)**




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**Figure 2.26: Percent of Greater Cambridge households with no car access (GCTS Evidence Base, 2026)**




## *Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy implications*

- The GCTS should consider targeted interventions to address gaps in first/last mile connectivity to public transport and other alternatives to car, both where there are higher-than-expected levels of car use and in growing communities where new residents may seek alternatives to direct car ownership.
- The GCTS should consider interventions to support residents without a car where alternative travel options may be absent or lacking, such as car clubs, rural mobility hubs, demand responsive transport and, where appropriate in future, connected and autonomous vehicle services.

## Challenge Statement 19: Freight, servicing and logistics

**Greater Cambridge's freight network is dominated by the M11/A14/A428 strategic road corridors and the Felixstowe-Nuneaton rail line, with significant through movements of heavy goods vehicles and rail freight. There is also a need to increase the resilience of local constructions, logistics, deliveries and servicing (including first/last mile) in the context of sustained growth.**

The A14 and Felixstowe-Nuneaton rail line are key distributors for associated freight movements between the Midlands/North and international gateways. The Port of Felixstowe handles around 40% of UK containerised imports and is one of Europe's busiest ports. In addition, the M11 brings in goods from the air freight terminal at London Stansted and further afield movements from South Coast ports. Logistics-related road traffic adds to congestion for local trips on the orbital road network.

A larger Greater Cambridge and growing national economy will see freight traffic impacts increase along these key routes and within local road networks without mitigation. The construction impacts of growth will add to this challenge, both in terms of freight traffic requirements and highway disruption for site access, transport infrastructure and utilities.

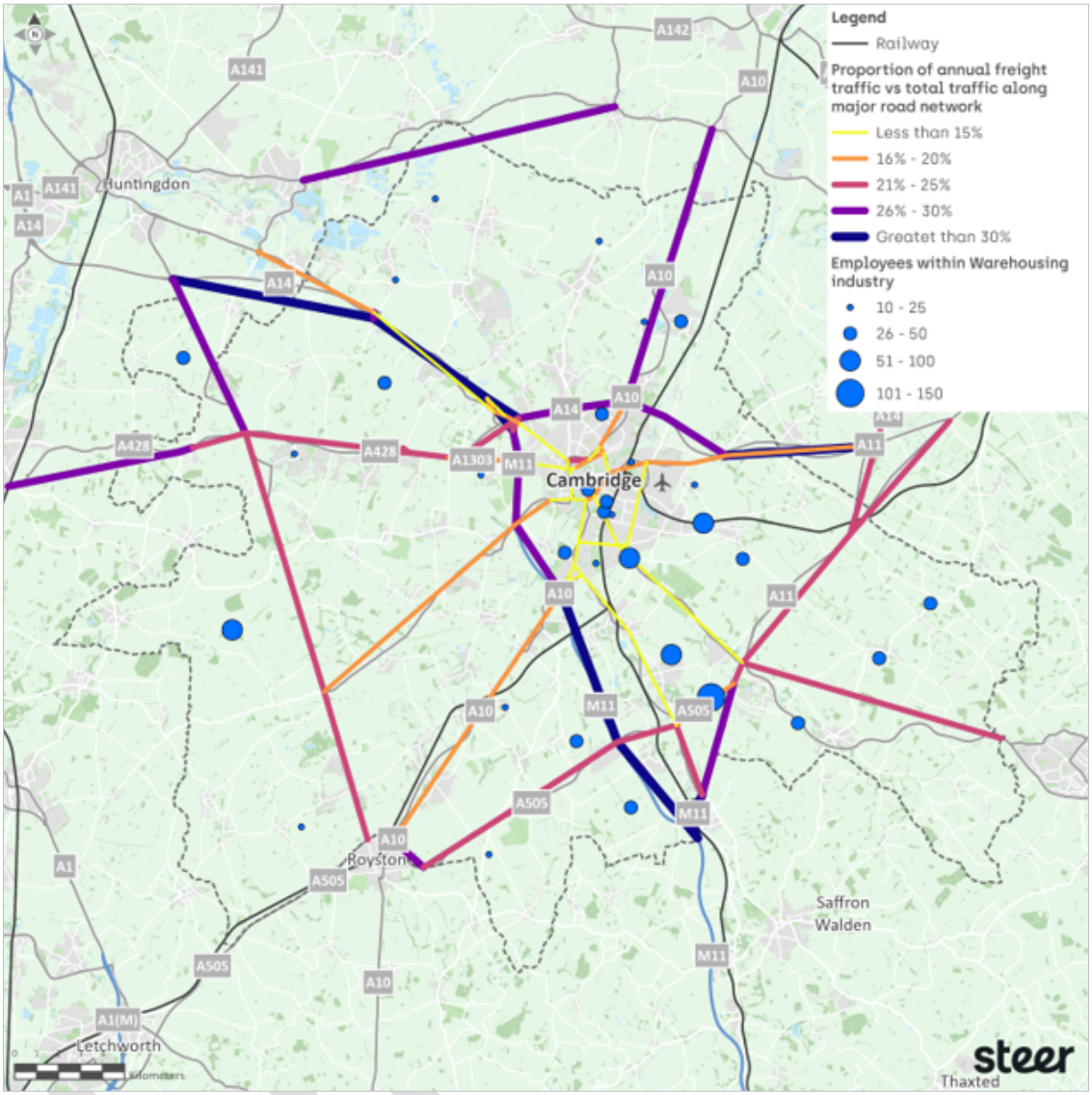
For logistics and servicing requirements within the city region, Central Cambridge is not well suited to absorbing heavy goods vehicle trips. For this reason, there is a need to provide for freight distribution on the edge of settlements, such as through the proposed 90,000 m² lorry parking, storage and distribution site south of Cambridge Services along the A14. This would enable a new approach to first/last mile freight movement and related low-emission interventions, including micromobility and e-mobility solutions.

### *Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy implications*

- The GCTS should advocate for national level investment in through strategic freight movements, such as the Ely Area Capacity Enhancement and Haughley Junction rail schemes, to unlock wider growth and capacity for local passenger and freight movements.
- The GCTS should support local servicing and logistics growth consolidation on urban edges (e.g. near the Science Park) to protect users from the impacts of heavy goods vehicles.

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**Figure 2.27: Greater Cambridge freight network (GCTS Evidence Base, 2026)**



# 3 Theme Alignment

The 19 challenge statements in this Need for Intervention Report align well with the five key emerging themes for the new GCTS to consider. There is a clear many-to-many relationship between the statements and themes which will allow for a cross-cutting GCTS.

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**Figure 3.1: Policy theme alignment matrix**

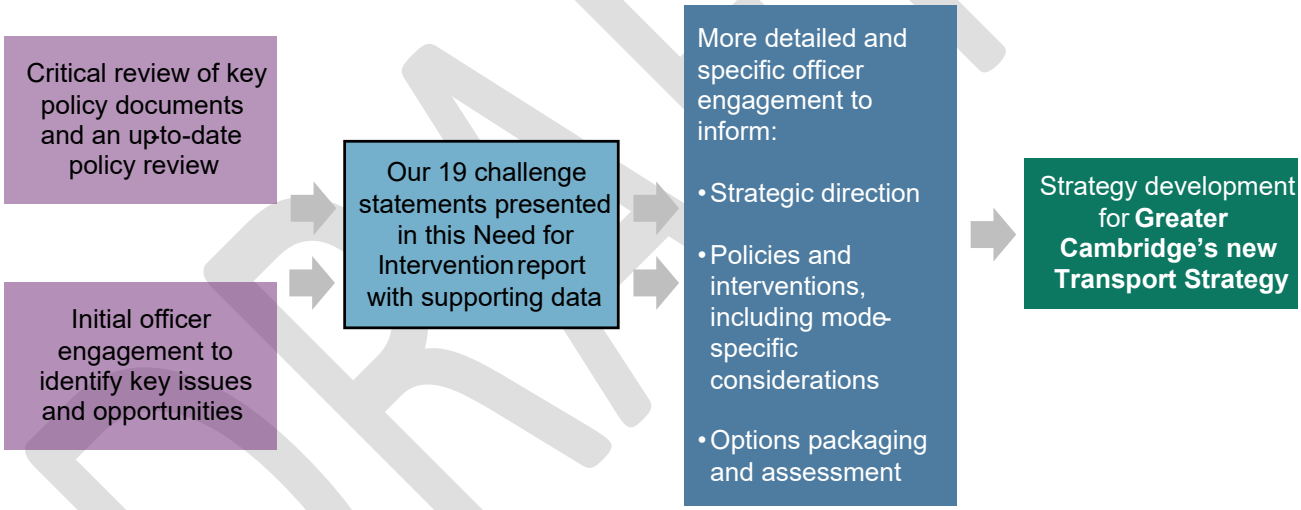
| | Policy Review themes / Need for Intervention headlines | Theme 1: Congestion impacts and reliability | Theme 2: Thriving economy and enabling key employment areas | Theme 3: Sustainable growth | Theme 4: Connectivity and inclusive access | Theme 5: Climate change and local environment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Enabling Wider Outcomes | Planned development + growth | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| | Global competitiveness and quality of transport | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| | Travel to work area | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| | Population and age profile | | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| | Physical activity | | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| | Road safety | ✓ | | | | |
| | Noise and air quality | ✓ | | | | ✓ |
| | Access to healthcare | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| | Access to further education | | | | ✓ | |
| | Social exclusion | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| | Rate of decarbonisation | | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Transport & Mobility | Congestion and user experience | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| | Active travel | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| | First/last mile connectivity | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| | Bus services, journeys + reform | ✓ | | | ✓ | |
| | Opportunity for mass transit | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Maximising rail opportunities | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| | Access to private vehicles | | | | ✓ | |
| | Freight, servicing + logistics | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |

# 4 Next Steps

This baseline report will be used to further develop our understanding of the key issues and opportunities for Greater Cambridge and inform an ambitious strategic direction for the Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy. Alignment of the challenge statements with the emerging GCTS key themes ensures that there is breadth and the challenges resonate with the key policy priorities for Greater Cambridge. This report and the supporting work provides a robust framework for a new vision-led GCTS.

A summary of the process to inform an evidence and stakeholder-led GCTS is shown below.

**Figure 4.1: Next steps diagram**




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