

Appendix C1: Anti-Poverty and Inequality Topic Paper

Introduction

Greater Cambridge is an area of strong economic growth and with high house prices, but along with many successful cities, there are inequalities within the community. The aim of this paper is to set out Cambridge City Council's (CCC) and South Cambridgeshire District Council's (SCDC) shared commitment to tackling poverty and inequality in the context of the North East Cambridge development. This includes considering how the development relates to surrounding neighbourhoods, and spreading the benefits of the development more widely. The evidence has been prepared in liaison with the Council's Equality and Anti Poverty Officer.

Context

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

The National Planning Policy Framework¹ (NPPF) discusses several issues relating to poverty. Paragraph 61 states: 'The size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes)'.

Further, Paragraph 62 states: 'Where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required, and expect it to be met on-site unless: a) off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be robustly justified; and b) the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.

Access to jobs is also highlighted within the NPPF with paragraph 72 highlighting that large scale developments should 'ensure that their size and location will support a sustainable community, with sufficient access to services and employment opportunities within the development itself (without expecting an unrealistic level of self-containment)'. Other issues surrounding anti-poverty and inequality in the NPPF include achieving healthy and safe communities. Paragraph 92 promotes 'social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other' alongside ensuring places are 'safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion'.

¹[National Planning Policy Framework: 2019](#)

The provision of open space and recreation is highlighted in Paragraph 96, complimented by Paragraph 102 where 'high quality places and access to employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities' is promoted.

Cambridge City Council Corporate Plan (2019-2022)

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

To accompany the vision, the Cambridge City Corporate Plan² sets out five strategic-level objectives. Objective one and two reflect the issues highlighted in this topic paper. Objective one: 'Helping people in Cambridge who have the greatest need' aims to implement the current Anti-Poverty Strategy, deliver the Housing Strategy and support vulnerable members of the community. Objective two aims to achieve sustainable development through: 'Planning for growth and ensuring our new communities are successful'.

Cambridge City Anti-Poverty Strategy (2017-2020)

The Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources approved the first Cambridge City Council Anti-Poverty Strategy³ 2017-2020 in 2015. The report presents a revised approach to addressing poverty in Cambridge. It aims to improve the standard of living and daily lives of residents in Cambridge experiencing poverty through several objectives to address poverty alongside 57 actions to be carried out by City Council services. The key areas of focus include:

- Supporting residents to access benefits and responding to the impacts of welfare reform.
- Supporting residents in fuel and water poverty to reduce their energy and water bills.
- Working with partners to support low income residents into higher paid employment and raise skills, attainment and life chances.
- Constructing new Council homes and working with social landlords and developers to deliver more affordable homes.
- Providing housing, employment and skills support for homeless people in Cambridge.

²[Cambridge Corporate Plan: 2019-2020](#)

³[Cambridge City Council Anti-Poverty Strategy: 2017-2020](#)

- Delivering a range of projects to support groups of people that are more likely to experience poverty, including women, children and young people, older people, people with disabilities, and BAME people.

South Cambridgeshire District Council Business Plan (2020-25)⁴

South Cambridgeshire District Council's Business Plan includes a commitment of "building homes that are truly affordable to live in". It states that SCDC will "Build vibrant communities in locations where people have good access to facilities and transport links, so they can genuinely afford to lead a happy and healthy life." The plan includes a list of measures that will be undertaken to help achieve this.

Cambridge Local Plan (2018)

Within Cambridge City Council's Local Plan⁵, 15 strategic objectives are set out. The objectives aim to create and maintain inclusive communities alongside promoting social cohesion through provision of sports, recreation, community and leisure facilities. Other objectives discuss the promotion of affordable housing, accessible innovative economic areas whilst ensuring centres and shopping facilities are within reach for people living, working and studying in the city.

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

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

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

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

⁴ <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/media/15107/business-plan-2020-to-2025.pdf>

⁵ [Cambridge Local Plan: 2018](#)

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2018)

The SCDC's Local Plan⁶ sets out the vision in Policy S/1 alongside the objectives of the plan in Policy S/2. The six objectives highlight the need to deliver land for housing with a range of types, sizes, tenures and costs. The objectives also present the need to support economic growth and education while providing a range of services and facilities for residents.

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

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

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

Measuring poverty in the UK and Cambridge

According to Cambridge City Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy⁷ identifying measures of poverty within Cambridge remains a significant challenge as there is no official measure of poverty for the UK. The strategy finds that the most common measure in the UK is relative income poverty (households with less than 60% contemporary median income after taxes and benefit). Other measures identified in the Joseph Rowntree Foundation UK Poverty report⁸ (2018) identify other possible causes of poverty as insecurity in job roles, low-paid jobs, low skills or education, ineffective benefits system, discrimination, weak family relationships, childhood poverty and abuse or trauma. As a result, effects of this poverty include housing problems, homelessness, crime, health problems, drug or alcohol problems, teenage parenthood, relationship and family problems and lower educational achievements. Although the Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy recognises that some of the indicators including pay, benefits, qualifications and fuel poverty have improved over the period of the first two Anti-Poverty strategies, a number of indicators of poverty remain prevalent in Cambridge.

⁶ [South Cambridgeshire District Council Local Plan: 2018](#)

⁷ [Cambridge City Council Anti-Poverty Strategy: 2017-2020](#)

⁸ <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/uk-poverty-2018>

Particularly, unemployment, health and housing indicators have declined since 2014. Unemployment was shown to have increased from 4.2% in 2014 to 4.8% in 2019, the gap in life expectancy also increased. For women between the most and least deprived areas of the city the gap increased from 9.6 year in 2014 to 10.1 years in 2018. However, the gap between men reduced slightly from 10.0 years to 9.9 from 2014 to 2018. The affordability of housing continues to be a key issue for those on low incomes with The Centre for Cities⁹ presenting Cambridge as the third most unaffordable housing in the UK in 2018 (based on the ratio of average house prices to average earnings). According to data presented in the Anti-Poverty Strategy, the lower quartile house prices were 16.3 times lower quartile earning in March 2018 (up from 14.6 times lower quartile earnings in March 2014). The lower quartile monthly private rents increased from £563 in 2014 to £950 in 2018.

Who is the new community for?

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

The North East Cambridge will provide office and research space and offer potential for workshops and light industrial units to provide for a wide range of employment. The re-provision, intensification and diversification of the range of existing business uses will provide opportunity for a wider variety of business and industrial use in the area. The area to the east of Milton Road will predominantly be a housing-led mix of uses, including space for business uses, and for the relocation of existing industrial uses where they can be suitably located. A range of housing typologies will be provided to allow for a mix of residents such as local workers, first time buyers, renters and homeowners with genuinely affordable housing.

In existing new communities in Cambridgeshire, it has been found that there are many people of different ethnicities (for example, in the Southern Fringe developments 48 languages are spoken). The fact that there are people from a large number of different ethnicities means that there may be greater need for support to welcome them to new communities and support them in understanding how access to public services works (for instance, in other areas it has been assumed that people from other countries know about school holiday dates that has caused issues for households that work). To help welcome people of different ethnicities in one of the new developments on the Southern Fringe hosting an international café was

⁹ <https://www.centreforcities.org/reader/cities-outlook-2018/>

found to be effective. This worked as a 'one-stop shop' for people to meet one another to develop social networks and ask any questions they have about living in the new community.

Spatial Inequalities in Cambridge City and their relation to North East Cambridge

The collection of district-level data on poverty in existing new communities in Cambridgeshire remains limited, however the current data from the latest 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation¹⁰ (IMD) shows that the ten most deprived Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Cambridge lie in the North and North East of the city, in Abbey, Arbury, East and West Chesterton and Kings Hedges wards. The North East Cambridge development is in close proximity to East Chesterton and King's Hedges. Two of Abbey's LSOAs were in the most deprived 20% of LSOAs in the country in 2019, according to the IMD. In 2015, there were also 2 LSOAs in the most deprived 20% of LSOAs nationally, in King's Hedges ward.

The proposed boundary for the North East Cambridge development adjoins the Fen Road community on the eastern side of the railway line that includes 209 Traveller pitches¹¹.

Gypsies and Travellers have the lowest rate of economic activity of any ethnic group, at 47 per cent, compared with 63 per cent for England and Wales overall. The Office for National Statistics states that the most common reasons for Gypsy or Irish Travellers being economically inactive were looking after the home or family (27%) and due to long term sickness or disability (26% - the highest proportion across all ethnic groups). Question 83 of the Issues and Options consultation allowed feedback on potential positive and negative equalities issues related to the development of the area. Some representations highlighted that a new road access to the north end of Fen Road would make a valuable positive impact on that community with regards access to the emergency services, travel and employment opportunities, currently limited by the Fen Road level-crossing.

The Cambridge City Council Equality and Anti Poverty Officer advised that people from low-income areas of the city, including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people, have felt excluded from the city centre and can often stay within the boundaries of their own wards or neighbourhoods. There is an opportunity to seek input from communities in King's Hedges and East Chesterton especially, on the development of North East Cambridge to help prevent social and economic exclusion of these communities and thus contribute towards achieving the vision for the new

¹⁰ [Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: English Indices of Deprivation 2015](#)

¹¹ Source: [Cambridgeshire, King's Lynn & West Norfolk, Peterborough and West Suffolk Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2016](#)

development. Actively engaging the Gypsy and Traveller community on Fen Road with the support from individual public sector workers who have positive relations with the community will likely result in positive impacts for community cohesion.

Moreover, some accommodation is likely to be built close to the existing Fen Road developments. This needs to be considered throughout the process of developing the AAP to mitigate impacts on the amenity of surrounding existing communities.

Affordable Housing Needs

Data from Savills Greater Cambridge Report¹²2017 highlights the lack of affordable new housing for households on income below £45,000. It finds that the lower quartile house prices are 13 x the lower quartile income compared to the national average of 7. The report states that there is an increase in PRS and renting rather than buying with 28% of households in Cambridge in PRS. As a result of the decreasing affordability of housing and a lack of appropriate new homes for lower income households, more professional couples and families are moving into the PRS.

The 2018 Local Plans plan for 33,500 new homes. Currently Cambridge City Affordable Housing Programme¹³ aims to deliver a minimum of 500 new homes for council rent by March 2022. This is in recognition of the growing 'affordability gap' where even middle-income households are being forced out of the market with limited housing options for low-cost home ownership or the private rented sector. Of the 8,000 new homes in North East Cambridge, the AAP identifies that 40% will be affordable housing, split between, including social housing and other affordable housing options. The AAP will provide mix of different sizes for different sized households.

A further issue in the city is the lack of temporary accommodation for people who have been made homeless who often must reside in Peterborough before they are assigned social housing. Cambridge City Council is aiming to focus on moving from short-term hostel accommodation to supporting homeless people and rough sleepers in provision of one-to-one support and re-enablement services including skills and employment through Housing First. This uses independent, stable housing as a platform to enable individuals with multiple and complex needs to begin recovery and move away from homelessness.

Fuel Poverty

A household is considered to be fuel poor if they have fuel costs that are above average (the national median level) and were they to spend that amount, they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line. The latest data for the

¹²[Savills Greater Cambridge Partnership: Affordability Analysis Report 2017](#)

¹³[Cambridge City Council: Affordable Housing Programme](#)

city of Cambridge is that 11.1% of the population or just above 5,500 households are in fuel poverty, above the national average of 10.3% (Annual Fuel Poverty Statistics in England, 2020 (2018 data) published by BEIS).

The three drivers of fuel poverty are energy efficiency, energy prices and incomes. Two of these issues are covered some detail in other topic papers (with a desire to encourage a good range of job opportunities in the local area and the requirement to build new homes to high levels of energy efficiency). But there are points to highlight around both energy efficiency and energy prices and their interrelationship.

In the drive to embed resource efficiencies which support the transition to zero carbon living - combining low-tech green solutions with high-tech smart city technology - it is critical that any interfaces must be simple and user-friendly to ensure easy access and operation for all residents. Across the UK, the very limited number of households connected to heat networks in particular, means very few people have experience of these space/water heating technologies, their operation or the types of billing employed. This does lead to inequitable disparities in energy costs. The following points should be carefully considered for NEC:

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

Health Inequalities

Health inequalities are marked in the city with as there is a life expectancy gap of nearly 10 years between the richest and poorest wards in the city. Moreover, in existing new communities in Cambridgeshire, it has been found that there is an increased need for public services compared to neighbourhoods that have existed for a long time. Therefore, it is very important that health services are prioritised and available before people move into the area. Other means to prevent ill-health for existing communities surrounding the new development and for people in the new development itself are to provide open space and potentially free exercise

equipment, and in the development of well-placed and accessible pedestrian and cycle lanes.

Of importance relating to existing communities surrounding new developments is the stark health inequalities between Gypsy and Traveller people especially and settled communities – where life expectancy gap is between 10 and 12 years. Several submissions to the Women and Equalities Select Committee¹⁴ stated that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people, especially travelling families, tend to use emergency services such as A&E rather than any structured approach to healthcare, due to previous poor experiences. This leads to disrupted health provision and makes preventative care very difficult to administer. Accessibility to GP services is a key priority to improve the health of people living along Fen Road.

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

Educational Inequalities

Cambridge has the highest proportion of working age people with qualifications at NVQ level 4 and above of any UK city. But we have amongst the lowest levels of social mobility in the country, and there are significant inequalities in educational attainment. Less than a third of pupils from low income families achieved 5 GCSE grades A*-C, compared to two thirds of children from other income groups. In addition, of importance to the North East Cambridge development given the proximity of the Fen Road site, national research has found that after key stage 4 a quarter of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children go into neither education nor employment.

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

The planning of access routes, amenities and open space could also help ensure that space around the already existing businesses is used that can raise awareness of opportunities and raise aspirations and prevent these spaces from being quiet at weekends that may mean they are subject to anti-social behaviour.

¹⁴ House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee 2019: Tackling inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities Seventh Report of Session 2017–19

Preferred Approach

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

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

- Placement of transport links, including pedestrian and cycle paths, from already existing communities into the development such as the Fen Road site.
- Location of housing to ensure that there is a mixture of tenure types in any given area.
- Provision of affordable local shops, and places to socialise, which were key areas of dissatisfaction for residents of the Southern Fringe new communities in a recent resident survey.¹⁵
- Provision of on-site community and cultural infrastructure for communities to use that are multi-functional for different ages and abilities. The community facilities including flexible indoor and outdoor spaces will facilitate and encourage social activity, reducing a range of inequalities.

¹⁵[Cambridgeshire County Council: 'Cambridgeshire Southern Fringe: A survey of residents' 2019](#)