

Greater Cambridge Local Plan Proposed Submission Consultation

Frequently Asked Questions

Introduction

What is a Local Plan?

Every local authority is required by Government to prepare a Local Plan for the future development of their area. Local Plans provide a basis for longer term decision making, setting out how a local area will change over a 15 year period or longer. They identify how many homes and jobs are needed, where development should go to meet these needs, and what infrastructure is needed to support this. National planning policy set by the government requires Greater Cambridge to plan to meet its needs through its Local Plan. Plans also identify wider strategic priorities for the area and set policies to ensure these are met. These priorities are then used to guide development and by the local authority to inform decisions on planning applications. The policies generally cover a wide range of issues, such as how the natural environment and historic places should be protected and enhanced, how development can be managed sustainably and contribute to reducing the impact of climate change, and how places can be designed to support community development and cohesion.

How are local plans prepared?

Local plans are prepared by local planning authorities. Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council have agreed to work together to prepare a joint Local Plan covering all of Greater Cambridge. Preparing a Local Plan is a complex task, involving multiple stages of drafting and many different tasks. To get to this stage, we have created a robust evidence base to understand local needs and issues, including site assessments, flood risk assessments and environmental assessment. The content of the plan has also been shaped by a series of

consultations with the community and other stakeholders to inform the plan's content. In between these, we have been working closely with key partners and stakeholders, whose work will ultimately ensure our Plan can be delivered, and with other local authorities in the area whose own Plans may be affected by ours.

Collectively, these inputs have helped to shape a vision and key objectives and led us to a preferred strategy for the area which will ensure these are met.

What are the stages of the Local Plan?

The Greater Cambridge Local Plan has been prepared through a series of statutory stages over several years. Preparation began with early stakeholder engagement in 2019, followed by the First Conversation (Issues and Options) consultation in 2020, which invited views from residents, businesses and organisations on the future of the area. This was followed by extensive evidence gathering, including assessments of housing, employment, transport, water, the environment and potential development sites. A Preferred Options consultation took place in 2021, informing the preparation of the Local Plan, which was published for consultation in 2025. Feedback from the consultation, alongside updated technical evidence, has been used to refine the plan before it progresses to this Proposed Submission (Regulation 19) stage, ahead of independent examination by a Planning Inspector.

How can communities and individuals get involved?

The Regulation 19 (Proposed Submission) consultation is the final opportunity for communities, businesses and organisations to comment on the Greater Cambridge Local Plan before it is submitted to the Government for independent examination. During the consultation period, anyone can review the proposed plan and submit representations. Comments should focus on whether the plan is legally compliant and sound (positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy). Supporting evidence can also be submitted. Information on consultation events, guidance on how to respond, and all consultation documents are available through the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning consultation website.

How can you comment on the Plan?

The easiest way to comment on the Local Plan is via our consultation system at: <https://consultations.greatercambridgeplanning.org/proposed-submission-greater-cambridge-local-plan>

This requires you to login (or register if you are not already a user). It allows you to leave comments and add attachments, and it means we can get in touch with you if we have any questions. You can comment on all or just some parts of the Plan such as the chapter you find most relevant to you.

If you have difficulty commenting online, please contact the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Policy Team on 01954 713694 or email us at localplan@greatercambridgeplanning.org

Alternatively, you can make comments in writing. You can [download a response form from our website](#), or else request a response form by calling us using the details above. Completed response forms should be emailed to localplan@greatercambridgeplanning.org

or posted to: Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Policy Team, South Cambridgeshire District Council, South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, Cambridge CB23 6EA.

Is there any guidance on how to submit comments using the online consultation system?

On our [website](#) we have published a guide for making a representation to the consultation using the consultation system.

A [video](#) has also been published on our consultation system to guide users when submitting comments online.

If I want to make comments on multiple policies, do I need to this under separate submissions?

If you want to make a representation on multiple policies, we advise that you do this under one submission. Under the full text submission, you can put your full response to all the policies that you have identified. Following completing your full text submission you can then make your individual representations on each of your selected policies and add the relevant text from this submission across to policies of the Plan.

Any attachments that you provide under this submission will be available to view alongside each of the representation that you make for each of the policies.

Will you being using AI to summarise representations during this consultation?

During the last consultation on the Draft Local Plan, we received a range of feedback on the use of AI to summarise comments. For this stage of the consultation, the comments received will only be AI summarised if the user selects to do so, using the consultation system. The AI summarisation tool can be used by the user inputting the comments when the word total is more than 100 words. No other comments will be summarised using AI.

Where can I view a paper copy of the Plan?

The consultation documents can be viewed:

- on the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service website www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/local-plan
- By appointment at Cambridge City Council's Customer Service Centre: Mandela House, 4 Regent Street, Cambridge, CB2 1BY (phone 01223 457000);

- By appointment at South Cambridgeshire District Council Reception: South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, Cambridge, CB23 6EA (phone 01954 713000) during normal opening hours;
- at Cambridge Central Library (7 Lion Yard Cambridge CB2 3QD) during normal opening hours;
- at Cambourne Library (Sackville House, Sackville Way, Cambourne, Cambridge CB23 6HD) during normal opening hours.

If you have difficulty viewing the documents please contact the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Policy Team on 01954 713694 or email us at localplan@greatercambridgeplanning.org

Can I request for a copy of the plan or supporting documents to be sent to me?

The Local Plan and supporting documents are over a thousand pages. If members of the public are unable to access the documents online, then copies of the Plan will be available for inspection at our drop-in exhibitions as well as at both Cambourne Library and Cambridge Central Library. You will need to make appointments to view the documents at the Cambridge City Council's Customer Service Centre, Mandela House and South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne.

If you would like a printed of the Local Plan or other supporting documents we can provide you with a copy, however, you will be charged for both printing and postage.

- [Greater Cambridge Propose Submission Local Plan](#) = £40 (plus £8.75 postage)
- Sustainability Appraisal, non-technical summary and appendices = £53 (plus £8.75 postage)
- [Habitats Regulation Assessment](#) = £12 (plus £2.50 postage)

Prices for printed copies of other documents can be provided on request.

If you would like to enquire about purchasing a physical copy of the plan or any of the supporting documents, please contact us via our email

localplan@greatercambridgeplanning.org or call 01954 713694.

What makes a sound Local Plan?

At end of the plan making process, Local Plans are examined by an independent examiner, to assess whether they have been prepared in accordance with legal and procedural requirements and whether they are sound. The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) states:

“Plans are ‘sound’ if they are:

- a) Positively prepared – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area’s objectively assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;
- b) Justified – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;
- c) Effective – deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the Statement of Common Ground; and
- d) Consistent with national policy – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this Framework and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant.”

How does the Greater Cambridge Local Plan fit in with the plans for local government re-organisation for a unitary authority?

The Local Plan is expected to be adopted around the time the new unitary authority is created. We do not yet know the outcome of Local Government Reorganisation for Cambridgeshire. Plans which cover only cover parts of the new unitary geography can still be applied to those areas.

How is the local plan affected by the new National Planning Policy Framework 2026?

A new [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) was published on 17 August 2026, which sets out the government's policies for plan-making and for making decisions on development proposals in England and how these are expected to be applied.

For planning applications, the NPPF 2026 applies immediately alongside the relevant adopted development plan; in Greater Cambridge these are the Cambridge Local Plan 2018 and South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018. The new NPPF advises that Local Plan policies which are materially inconsistent with the new national decision-making policies in the NPPF should be given very limited weight.

The emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan, currently being consulted upon, is following the legacy plan process, and its soundness will be tested against the previous [2024 version of the NPPF](#) (see paragraph 8 of the [NPPF 2026](#)).

How is the local plan affected by the Development Corporation Proposals?

In June 2026 the Government confirmed their intention that a new centrally led development corporation will be created for Greater Cambridge, with development management powers for determination larger planning applications above set threshold limits. It will also support the draft Greater Cambridge local plan through to adoption and seek to exercise plan-making powers to deliver future growth once the local plan has been adopted in 2028. Further information on the proposals can be found on the [government website](#).

The Greater Cambridge Local Plan has been prepared by the two Councils, and reflects evidence prepared on behalf of both Councils.

Strategy

How many new homes and jobs are needed?

Our evidence has explored how many new jobs we expect in the area, taking into account the strength of the local high-tech industries and life sciences sectors which are nationally important. We anticipate around 73,300 additional jobs will be created in Greater Cambridge between 2024 and 2045. Our plan responds to this by planning to deliver at least 48,096 additional homes between 2024 and 2045, or 2,289 per year. This housing figure is the minimum number that Government requires us to plan for; but our evidence shows that this figure would support the forecast jobs.

Our existing adopted plans mean that we have a strong foundation to build on. We expect places that are already planned and being built, like Darwin Green on the edge of Cambridge and the new towns at Northstowe and Waterbeach, along with windfall sites (sites that were not allocated that come forward via the planning applications process), to deliver around 37,865 homes by 2045. We have identified sites that will deliver around 13,460 further homes by 2045 to meet the needs and provide headroom above this to ensure the target is met. We also plan further development for needs of specific employment sectors, and to ensure we have a sufficient flexible supply of employment land.

How did you decide where new homes and jobs should go?

We considered a wide range of alternative strategies to consider the pros and cons of meeting needs in different locations. You can find information about them in our strategy topic paper and evidence library.

Our development strategy aims to direct development to where active and public transport is the natural choice, where green infrastructure, including parks and other green spaces, as well as space for wildlife, can be delivered alongside new development, and where jobs, services and facilities can be located near to where people live. We have sought to make the most of brownfield land, and to use the land we have identified efficiently.

We applied the following order of preference to identify development needs, reflecting the sustainability of different locations to accommodate development:

- Within the Cambridge urban area;
- On the edge of Cambridge whilst considering the impact on Green Belt purposes;
- At Cambourne and new settlements; and
- In the rural area at Rural Centres and Minor Rural Centres.

How have you considered the Green Belt in planning for the area?

The Cambridge Green Belt was established to preserve the unique character of Cambridge, maintain and enhance the quality of its setting, and prevent communities around Cambridge from merging into one another and with the city. Whilst building on the edge of the city to meet development needs has benefits in terms of proximity to the jobs and services of the city, it would also cause harm to those Green Belt purposes. We think there are other ways that the development needs we have identified can be met sustainably. The only Green Belt releases we have identified in our Plan are to meet the very specific needs of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus and the Babraham Research Campus. The approach to the Green Belt, and Grey Belt, is set out in the [Strategy Topic Paper](#).

Sites

Why has land near me been included on the Local Plan Site Register?

Land may be included because it has been put forward by a landowner, developer or site promoter, or because the Councils have identified it as land that could potentially be suitable for development.

Does a HELAA assessment mean planning permission has been granted?

No. The HELAA is an evidence-gathering exercise and does not grant planning permission. It is one of a number of factors the Councils use when deciding which sites should be allocated in the Local Plan.

Why have some site submissions been assessed more than once?

The Councils must consider any new information submitted about a site through the local plan consultations. Depending on the type of information provided, some or all parts of the assessment may be updated.

For example, if a new landscape study is submitted, landscape officers may review the evidence and update the assessment. If a site's boundary changes significantly, a full reassessment by all assessment teams may be needed.

Why are many of the sites not allocated for development?

Many submitted sites are not allocated because they are unsuitable, unavailable, undeliverable and/or do not fit the overall Local Plan development strategy for the area.

Can new sites still be submitted?

The Local Plan has now been through a number of consultation stages where sites have been submitted and considered. This consultation on the Proposed Submission Local Plan focuses on whether the plan is sound and legally compliant.

People can still make comments on sites that they believe should have been included or excluded from the Plan in order to make the plan sound. All comments received during this consultation will be submitted to the independent Planning

Inspector, who will examine the Local Plan after it has been formally submitted by the Councils.

When will the Cambridge Airport site become available for development?

In June 2026 Homes England and The Hill Group announced that they have completed the acquisition of the Cambridge airport site, and that Cambridge Growth Company (a subsidiary of Homes England) will work in collaboration with Hill to deliver the site. The announcement includes that Marshall will relocate its operations by mid-2029, and that the partners will have a focus on accelerating housing delivery.

Why is more land proposed at Cambridge Biomedical Campus?

Cambridge Biomedical Campus is a key location for medical research and healthcare, recognised at a national and international level. The current campus has some amazing buildings and institutions, but it suffers from a poor layout, under used spaces, and a lack of facilities for its staff and visitors. In addition some of its buildings, including the Addenbrooke's hospital building itself, are aging. If it is to maintain and develop its role as Europe's leading centre for medical research and health science then significant improvement is required. To meet the future needs of the campus and to enable the improvement of the existing campus the Local Plan identifies the release of an area of Green Belt south of the campus, accompanied by enhancement of green spaces and the landscape adjoining it. However, development will only be allowed if it is accompanied by the right infrastructure, that will deliver the range of supporting services and facilities that workers, visitors and residents need and will contribute towards the goal of making it a world class campus.

Why do you still have a policy for North East Cambridge when the government funding for relocating the Waste Water Treatment Works has been withdrawn?

The area around Cambridge North Railway station and Cambridge Science Park offers significant opportunities for development to meet needs for homes and jobs and also to provide better integration with the areas and communities surrounding.

We had been preparing a plan for this area for several years, including planning for development on the site of the Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant which was planned to leave the location. In August 2025 the [Government withdrew funding for the relocation of the wastewater site](#). This has created uncertainty as to whether the earlier published vision for North East Cambridge remains achievable.

The Proposed Submission Plan includes a special policy area for North East Cambridge (known as an “Area of Major Change”) to support delivery of office, research & development, and light industrial and mid-tech uses, as well as new homes in appropriate parts of the site recognizing that CWWTP is likely to remain on site. The Councils would seek to deliver the previous preferred vision for mixed use comprehensive redevelopment, should funding again become available to fund the relocation of the CWWTP, noting the significant benefits that development at this site would bring. The policy has sufficient flexibility to allow for this to move forward, should the situation change.

Why have you identified a New Community south east of Cambridge (at Land adjacent to A11 and A1307 at Grange Farm)?

Creating a new community in this location provides an opportunity to deliver new homes near to the three existing science campuses in this area, and where planned improvements to public transport which would offer connections to the Cambridge Biomedical Campus and the city of Cambridge. The homes would be supported by services and green spaces that respond to the new community’s setting.

Reference is made in the Northstowe allocation to “Policy S/SEA/NS”, where do I find policy text on this policy?

The Northstowe Strategic Enhancement Area (SEA/NST) forms part of the Northstowe policy. Therefore, you will see specific reference to it within the policy wording, rather than a stand alone policy. On the Policies Map and indicative Northstowe Spatial Framework, there is a clear designation set out to highlight the geographical area this SEA applies to.

What is a place book for site allocations?

A place book is a way to set out the place making principles, outcomes and quality expectations that will guide its planning, design and delivery. A place book including strategic design codes and parameter plans, to fix key site requirements such as access and movement, land uses, green and blue infrastructure, scale and massing and densities. In part, this should be informed by a Landscape Visual Impact Appraisal and Heritage Impact Assessment.

Climate Change

How has the Local Plan responded to the challenges of climate change?

Climate change is a key priority across the Councils’ plans and strategies, but the Local Plan is a particularly important tool for implementing change. How Greater Cambridge mitigates and adapts to climate change is a key theme of the Plan and runs through many of its policies.

Our development strategy promotes a pattern of growth that locates development close to low carbon transport modes, reducing harmful emissions. Our policies for shaping the form of development meet and, in many cases, go beyond nationally set standards, supporting the transition to net zero carbon by 2050. This includes establishing a positive framework for renewable energy projects in the right

locations, requiring new development to reduce heat and power demand wherever possible, preventing new development from being connected to the gas grid, and setting rigorous standards for water efficiency in new development.

The availability of a sustainable water supply is a particular challenge in Greater Cambridge, and alongside preparation of the Local Plan, the Councils have been working closely with the Government's Water Scarcity group which is working to identify and bring forward a range of solutions.

Biodiversity and green spaces

Will the plan provide new green space and protect existing spaces?

The Local Plan aims to ensure that development leaves the natural environment better than it was before. The Proposed Submission Plan includes 14 strategic green infrastructure initiatives to help restore our area's habitat networks and provide more green spaces for people to enjoy, including for example the River Cam Corridor, and North Cambridge Green Space. It also includes a full set of green infrastructure standards to protect, enhance and increase the network of green spaces. Strategic allocations specify the green spaces that they will provide and contribute to, and the Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plan includes a list of deliverable projects that would support the achievement of the objectives of our strategic Green Infrastructure initiatives. Developer contributions arising through our green infrastructure standards as described above should provide a significant funding source to support these, alongside other funding opportunities.

How will the Local Plan improve biodiversity with so much development?

The Proposed Submission Local Plan requires new development of 10 dwellings or more to improve biodiversity by at least 20% based upon the development site's level of biodiversity before it is developed. This is referred to as 20% biodiversity net gain (BNG).

Wellbeing and social inclusion

Will the plan introduce restrictions help to tackle gambling and betting harm?

In response to concerns expressed during the consultation of the Draft Local Plan and subsequent research which indicated high risks of problem gambling in Cambridge, Policy WS/HD: Creating healthy new developments in the Proposed Submission Local Plan includes new restrictions on the location of betting shops and amusement arcades within Greater Cambridge. The proposed policy seeks to limit new gambling premises to designated centres and to prevent concentrations of premises within these centres. The policy also clarifies that health impact assessments will be required for betting shops and amusement arcades as developments likely to have a significant impact on health and wellbeing.

Great places

How will the Local Plan ensure that buildings are well designed and built to a high quality?

Our Great Places theme policies focus on good design, but all the thematic policies across the plan are relevant to ensuring that development meets our needs and mitigates its impacts. These policies will be used to guide decisions regarding planning applications. For our largest developments, a place book or strategic design code will be required as part of the planning application, establishing clear rules and guidelines tailored to the requirements of the site, that can apply across multiple phases of development.

Jobs

How does the Local Plan support the Greater Cambridge economy?

The Local Plan will continue to support Greater Cambridge's diverse, fast-growing, dynamic economy, maintaining the area's global reputation for education, research and innovation and supporting other sectors to thrive. We have proposed a flexible

supply of land across a wide range of locations, which will allow our main employment centres to continue to flourish and compete on a global scale, whilst fostering job creation across different sectors at other growth locations across Greater Cambridge. Our proposals are based on a wide range of evidence, including jobs and floorspace forecasts to 2045, and other specialist studies that have looked at our different sectors.

Does the Plan support other kinds of jobs as well as the science and technology ones?

As well as supporting key sectors such as life sciences, technology and research and development, we have also responded to the needs of other growing sectors such as logistics and distribution and the cultural and creative industries, to ensure our economy remains competitive and diverse, and to secure a wide range of different jobs for the people of Greater Cambridge. The Local Plan supports different sizes of business, ensuring that employment development provides a mixture of different unit sizes and securing space for start-ups and affordable workspaces. We also recognise the key role of the tourism industry for Greater Cambridge, which makes a significant contribution to the economy and maintains many jobs. The Local Plan therefore seeks to meet increasing needs for visitor accommodation by supporting new hotels in key locations.

Homes

Will the plan help deliver affordable housing?

The plan requires at least 40% of new homes to be affordable housing, provided at a cost below market rates to meet the needs of those who cannot afford to buy or rent at market prices. Our policies also support innovative housing products, such as self-build, build to rent and co-living. We also require housing to meet specific needs including for older people and for Gypsies and Travellers.

Transport and Infrastructure

Is there enough water supply to support the plans?

Greater Cambridge's water supply currently comes from groundwater, and abstraction needs to be reduced to respond to climate change and protect our precious chalk streams. The government has formed the Cambridge Water Scarcity Group, bringing together relevant agencies to deliver short and long-term solutions.

Working with the group, we commissioned a study to explore whether the growth needs identified in the Local Plan could be met. In the shorter term, a range of measures are being implemented to improve the efficiency of how water is used. In the medium term, a pipeline connection to Grafham Water will boost supplies to the Cambridge area from 2032, and the Fens Reservoir will further increase supplies from the mid 2030's. The first new homes at new strategic sites including Cambridge East, Cambourne, and Grange Farm, are not anticipated to be completed in the housing trajectory accompanying this Local Plan until 2032 when the new pipeline connection is anticipated to be operational. Delivery and phasing plans will need to demonstrate engagement with the water industry, and respond to the availability of water supply improvements. Grampian conditions may be used if necessary to relate occupation to water availability.

The Regional Water Plan prepared by Water Resources East, identifies that in the longer term, into the 2040's and beyond, adaptive approaches and new infrastructure such as desalination will be needed in the East of England to ensure there continues to be water available to meet needs whilst protecting the environment. Cambridge Water adopted their [Water Resource Management Plan in Spring 2025](#), and this will be reviewed every 5 years.

Is there going to be enough capacity for dealing with sewage properly, particularly as funding was withdrawn for the new Cambridge waste water treatment works?

If the Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant (CWWTP) relocation does not take place, upgrades will be required to the existing CWWTP at North East Cambridge to

ensure it can deal with future wastewater flows in a sustainable way. Anglian Water have committed to identifying the alternative measures needed to address current and future development needs.

Investment will also be needed at other waste water treatment works to serve the allocations proposed in this plan. Anglian Water have started work on a new Drainage and Waste Water Management Plan (DWMP), a statutory plan they are required to prepare which identifies how they will accommodate future growth needs including arising from this local plan.

Can transport networks support the sites identified?

We have modelled the impact of the plans on the transport networks to see where improvements would be required. The larger new sites we have identified are already on transport routes that are planned to be improved. Cambourne for example will benefit from East West Rail as well as the Cambourne to Cambridge public transport scheme and A428 improvements. The Grange Farm new settlement would be connected to the Cambridge South East Transport scheme (CSETS). For each strategic site included in the plan we have set out the transport requirements for that site, including the design of development, transport policy requirements such as trip budgets, and physical infrastructure such as the schemes listed above. Detailed consideration of issues such as local traffic impacts will be considered at the planning application stage.

Alongside our new Local Plan, a Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy is being prepared by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority. The Combined Authority has published a draft interim Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy alongside the Local Plan and is committed to adopting a final Strategy in time to support the submission of the Local Plan. The [draft interim Transport Strategy](#) identifies transport measures for the area, including proposed solutions to address the severe congestion challenges experienced in Cambridge. In combination, these site specific and strategic measures demonstrate that the sites included in the plan can be delivered. The final Transport Strategy will be adopted before the Local Plan is submitted for independent Examination.

Last Updated 21/08/2026