
To: Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Services
Date: 13 December 2021
Subject: Response to First Proposals for the draft Local Plan
Contact: Edward Leigh / 01223 312 377 / edward@smartertransport.uk

Contents

Policy S/CB: Cambourne.....	2
Policy I/ST: Sustainable transport and connectivity.....	2
Traffic growth	2
Park & Ride	3
Travel hubs.....	4
Rail	4
Road	5
Non-motorised user tracks	5
Sequencing.....	5
Policy I/EV: Parking and electric vehicles	6
Policy I/FD: Freight and delivery consolidation.....	8

Policy S/CB: Cambourne

Inexplicably, this policy makes reference to East West Rail, but not to the Cambourne–Cambridge busway, planned by the Greater Cambridge Partnership.

Policy I/ST: Sustainable transport and connectivity

This sentence needs expanding in more specific terms:

Innovative and flexible solutions will be sought to internalising trips and reducing vehicle use, including through measures such as digital infrastructure and last mile deliveries.

- “internalising trips” is about locating more amenities – for work, education, retail, leisure, sport, culture and health – within a comfortable walking or cycling distance of people’s homes.
- “digital infrastructure” is about installing reliable high-speed broadband into all homes, businesses, schools and co-working spaces.
- “last mile deliveries” is about providing a hierarchy of break-out/consolidation depots to enable efficient movement of goods to and from homes and businesses. These will also provide collection points for private individuals, so that they do not have to be at home to accept a delivery.

The evidence base for this policy includes a Transport Evidence Report (TER). This sets out to model the travel demand that will derive from the build-out of the Preferred Option. It also seeks to model the modal shares for trips in 2041. There appear to be some errors in the report, which we have reported separately. These need to be corrected and any modelling connected with those errors checked.

There are two areas of grave concern:

1. The modelling assumes that motor traffic will continue to grow from the 2015 baseline, contravening an objective of the Greater Cambridge Partnership and a key recommendation of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Climate Commission.
2. The modelling also assumes a huge growth in use of Park & Ride, creating a very substantial amount of land which is not allocated in the draft Local Plan.

Traffic growth

The TER quotes modelling that has the following changes relative to a 2015 baseline:

- 19.5% increase in trips by car in 2041 based on current Local Plan commitments.
- 23% increase when new developments in the draft Local Plan are also included.
- 27% increase if and when all land allocated in this plan is built out.

This contrasts with local authority commitments to reduce traffic:

- The Greater Cambridge Partnership aims to “reduce city traffic flows by 10–15%” on 2011 levels, which equates to a 17.7–22.2% reduction on 2015 levels
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority supports “action to reduce car miles driven by 15% to 2030 relative to baseline,” as recommended by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Climate Commission.

Furthermore, the government’s [Decarbonising Transport](#) strategy states (on p53), “By 2030, we will aim to have half of all journeys in towns and cities cycled or walked.”

This Local Plan must therefore not only restrain growth in motor vehicle trips, it must contribute to a significant reduction in trips and mileage. The modelling indicates that it will do neither.

There is no doubting the scale and difficulty of the challenge, but it is no answer to the climate crisis to pursue policies that further deepen it.

Park & Ride

The TER assumes a 245% increase in usage of Park & Ride car parks for onward journeys into Cambridge by bus, cycling or walking. In fact, the 2015 base usage of Park & Ride is almost certainly lower than the modelling assumes, since the daily trip quantity implies around 8,800 parking spaces, when only 6,743 were available in 2015.

In absolute numbers, the TER assumes that there will be 60,846 car trips to and from Park & Ride sites in 2041, even if all currently planned, but not yet committed, transport measures are implemented. This equates to around 30,400 parking spaces,¹ compared with just over 7,000 now. The GCP plan to add another 7,000 at:

- Foxton (200)
- Hauxton (2,150)
- Babraham (2,000)
- Madingley (2,000)
- Longstanton (650)

There are no published plans for any more P&R car parks, though there is an indication on some GCP maps of a site at Barton. There is therefore a shortfall of somewhere in the region of 16,000 parking spaces. That is more than double the number of spaces currently available. At a compact land allocation of 3.5 hectares per 1,000 parking bays, there is an implied requirement for nearly 60 hectares for car parks and access roads.

¹ The assumed ratio of usage to capacity is two trips to one parking space. Usage can exceed the static capacity of a car park as there will be some turnover during the course of a day (i.e. one parking space may be occupied by two cars at different times, generating four trips to and from the site). However, that is likely to be more than offset by underuse on some or all days. Usage tends to self-regulate at around 85% because that is when people perceive the car park to be full.

Where will these new Park & Rides be located? How many sites will be in the Green Belt? What will be the trip generation characteristics of more Park & Rides for congestion and air quality in South Cambridgeshire villages? Park & Ride bus services will abstract passengers from rural bus services, which will potentially lead to a reduction in rural service quality, and an increased requirement for public support for those services. This has clear equality impacts for those who do not have access to a car – for instance under-17s, many disabled people, and a large proportion of the poorest households.

Travel hubs

Travel hubs are mentioned in the draft policy. Their function and conceptual design need to be explained, especially as the term is now being used by the Greater Cambridge Partnership to refer to 2,000-space Park & Rides.

In essence, travel hubs are small railway or bus stations, served by trains and/or express bus services to major local destinations (e.g. Cambridge city centre, Cambridge Biomedical Campus, and railway stations). Rail and bus services would normally run frequently from early morning (before 6am) to late evening (at least 11pm).

Travel hubs are connected to the surrounding settlements, workplaces and other amenities by safe and convenient non-motorised user paths. They also include space for feeder and demand-responsive bus services to stop to transfer passengers; and a pick-up/drop-off zone for taxis and private vehicles. They would normally have an enclosed waiting area and toilets. They may also have some car parking, but this should be determined at a local level (e.g. by the parish council).

Travel hub car parks, where provided, may also be used for other purposes, including farmers' and craft markets, and mobile services (e.g. public library and health screening). A travel hub may be co-located with a school (more usually secondary or further education), health centre, co-working offices, shops, a delivery collection point, and/or other amenities.

Rail

Because of the geometric constraints applying to railway infrastructure, it is important that the Local Plan provides some protection for land that could plausibly be used for a railway line or station.

Potential sites for stations include:

- Fulbourn Hospital
- Six Mile Bottom
- Cambridge airport site (Cambridge East station)
- Little Shelford
- Due west of Sawston
- Between Comberton and Toft (East West Rail line)
- Little Thetford

Potential alignments for railways (heavy or light):

- Coldhams Lane to east of Fulbourn, via airport site and between Cherry Hinton and Teversham
- Southern Guided Busway to Girton Interchange via Cambridge station square, city centre and West Cambridge (potentially with some central sections and stations underground)
- Haverhill to Stapleford
- Haverhill to Saffron Walden, continuing to West Anglia line

Road

The Local Plan should provide some protection for land that could plausibly be used for new or re-routed roads, including

- Link slips between A14 west and A11
- Link slips between M11 north and A11
- Link slips between A428 and M11
- Link slips between A428 and A1307
- Link between Airport Way and new A14 west-only junction at Lower Fen Drove Way, replacing Junction 34 (Horningsea Rd)
- Harston southern bypass (A10) between Foxton and London Rd, Harston, to the south of the railway line

Non-motorised user tracks

Creating a dense network of safe non-motorised user routes is key to creating 15/20-minute neighbourhoods (where most amenities people need to access regularly are within a 15/20-minute walk or cycle ride). The Local Plan should provide some protection for land that could plausibly be used for new non-motorised user tracks, especially where route choices are most limited, including:

- cut-throughs in built-up areas, especially when linking residential areas to local amenities;
- grade-separated crossings of railways and major roads (bridge or underpass);
- bridges over rivers;
- causeways over flood zones;

Sequencing

Absolutely critical to promoting sustainable travel behaviours is having safe and attractive options available to people at the time that they move house, start a new job or start at a new school. If the only safe and convenient option is to drive, driving will be the default choice for all trips even if alternatives become available later.

Therefore, no development should be occupied until the full range of active and public

transport options planned are available to use. Public transport may start as a demand-responsive service to local travel hubs, served by rail and/or express bus services.

If it is determined that, for instance, Net Zero targets for transport can only be met with large mode-shares for rail-based transport from new settlements or to new employment centres, then the infrastructure and services must be in place and operating before homes and offices or labs are occupied. This would apply to East West Rail or to any light rail (or other mass transit) network planned for Greater Cambridge.

Levelling up

Most of Greater Cambridge is severely deficient in the transport infrastructure and services that local plans are aiming to provide for new developments. The Local Plan needs to include a 'levelling up' policy that draws planning gain from new developments, match-funded where possible, to retrofit infrastructure that is missing from the wider community, such as:

- pavement widths that adhere to modern design standards;
- protected cycle lanes;
- renewal of degraded infrastructure, including footways, cycle tracks and lighting;
- secure on-street cycle parking;
- new cut-throughs to open up safer and more direct walking and cycling routes.

Policy I/EV: Parking and electric vehicles

This policy title should include the word "cycle" and/or "micromobility" in the title for ease of reference, e.g. "Parking and electric charging for cars, motorcycles, cycles and other micromobility vehicles"

The Local Plan needs to contain detailed, quantified standards for all sizes of developments, with higher standards for car-free developments, and explicit guidance for mixed-use developments where facilities (e.g. for visitor car and cycle parking and deliveries) are likely to be shared between site occupiers.

Micromobility vehicles include:

- Standard cycles
- Tricycles
- Tandem and triplet cycles
- Cargo cycles
- Cycles with trailers and trailer-bikes/tag-alongs
- Recumbent cycles
- Hand cycles
- Electric-assist versions of all the above
- Mobility scooters
- Push-scooters, including electrically powered

Standards on parking for micromobility vehicles should follow current best practice, which should be set out in the Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance, covering at least:

- Minimum ratio of secure cycle parking spaces per resident (not per bedroom) – ideally aiming for one-to-one in car-free developments and where possible elsewhere to ensure that lack of a secure cycle parking space is never a deterrent to taking up cycling.
- Proportion of cycle parking for off-gauge cycles – especially necessary for families living without a car.
- Proportion of cycle parking spaces that are inclusive. These are best located for disabled people to access and use. At least some of these spaces will also be off-gauge for tricycles and other larger disability-adapted cycles.
- Proportion of space allocated to other micromobility vehicles, including mobility scooters and e-scooters.
- Provision of secure charging facilities for micromobility vehicle batteries.
- Provision of secure storage lockers for accessories (helmets, panniers, waterproof clothing, detachable lights, etc)
- Maximum proportion of two-tier cycle parking – recognising that a person's height and upper-body strength determines whether they can use an upper-tier rack.
- Incline of ramps to access cycle parking – recognising that some people who cycle have restricted mobility that may make cycling or walking up a relatively steep ramp or walking up a large number of steps impossible. Wheeling ramps should be considered only ever as a last resort for providing cycle access between levels.
- Accessibility – access routes must be designed to ensure that all types of cycles, including non-standard cycles and mobility scooters, can be easily accessed without assistance. Particular attention should be paid to occupied parking bays potentially blocking access; doorways that have to be held open to pass through; lifts that are too shallow to accommodate longer cycles; 'airlock' doorways that are too close together to fit longer cycles; tight corners that impede movement of longer cycles; narrow passageways that cannot fit wider vehicles in opposing directions.
- Security and surveillance of cycle park entrances – recognising that natural surveillance is the best deterrent to would-be thieves.
- Security of cycle parking stands: tamper-proof ground-fixings and components.

Standards on car and motorcycle parking should include guidance on:

- Ratio of short-stay (up to 20 minutes), medium-stay (up to 4 hours) and long-stay (over 4 hours) parking provision per unit for visitors, deliveries and service providers (carers, doctors, cleaners, boiler servicepersons, etc).
- Acceptable methods of controlling use of these bays where they are not on the public highway – recognising that in a Residents Parking Zone or where no on-street parking is available, free off-street parking is likely to be occupied by non-visitors, such as commuters and shoppers.

- Number of club car bays in car-free developments, including to serve residents in the surrounding area.
- Proportion of bays allocated to motorcycles.

Policy I/FD: Freight and delivery consolidation

The success of this policy depends critically on having land available in the right locations for a hierarchy of break-out/consolidation centres around the region.

- The site should be able to operate around the clock without causing undue disturbance to any nearby residents.
- Site locations should support the most efficient movement of freight, minimising freight-mileage, especially in HGVs and MGVs.
- Access roads need to be appropriate for the number, size and weight of vehicles entering and leaving the site.
- Non-motorised user routes connected to the site must be sufficiently wide and safe for cargo bikes to use.

Land within the Girton Interchange could be a prime location for the principal freight hub for Cambridge. This would require additional slip ramps to be built to enable direct access from the A14 east and west, A428 and M11.

Other sites meeting the above criteria should be identified in the Local Plan for:

- Intermediate logistics hubs to serve all parts of Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire villages.
- Hubs for processing rail-born freight.