

# Greater Cambridge Local Plan

## First Proposals Draft Statement of Common Ground



**GREATER CAMBRIDGE**  
SHARED PLANNING

August 2021

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# 1. Introduction

A statement of common ground is a written record of the progress made by strategic policy-making authorities during the process of planning for strategic cross-boundary matters. It documents where effective co-operation is and is not happening throughout the plan-making process and is a way of demonstrating at examination that plans are deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working across local authority boundaries. It is also part of the evidence required for local planning authorities to demonstrate that they have complied with the duty to cooperate.

This draft version of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan Statement of Common Ground forms part of the consultation on the Greater Cambridge Local Plan First Proposals. It documents the outcomes of co-operation to date in preparing the local plan in order to inform and shape a positively prepared and justified strategy. In doing so, it addresses and takes account of the requirements set out in the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>1</sup> and Planning Practice Guidance<sup>2</sup>. It has also had regard to relevant advice produced by the Planning Advisory Service<sup>3</sup>.

As a draft Statement of Common Ground, this document sets out Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council's current position regarding points of common and uncommon ground in for relevant strategic cross-boundary matters. The Statement will be updated in the light of relevant stakeholders' responses to the Greater Cambridge Local Plan First Proposals consultation. See section 7 Timetable for Agreement, Review and Update for more details

## Relationship with other documents

The following two documents are closely related to this Statement of Common Ground and should be read alongside it:

- The Greater Cambridge Local Plan Duty to Cooperate Statement of Compliance, which sets out the process completed to date as part of the ongoing cooperation with relevant bodies regarding strategic cross-boundary matters
- The Greater Cambridge Local Plan Statement of Consultation, which records the formal consultation process completed to date and how consultation responses have informed the Preferred Options consultation

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<sup>1</sup> In particular paragraphs 24 – 27.

<sup>2</sup> PPG Plan-Making - Maintaining effective cooperation.

<sup>3</sup> PAS Statement of Common Ground Advice and Template, January 2019.

## 2. Parties Involved

This principal bodies that have an interest in this Statement of Common Ground are those neighbouring authorities and prescribed bodies identified in the Greater Cambridge Local Plan First Proposals Duty to Cooperate Statement of Compliance, as follows:

- neighbouring local planning authorities (identified as strategic policy-making authorities in the NPPF and PPG);
- neighbouring County Councils;
- Cambridgeshire County Council (Local Highways Authority and responsible for a range of infrastructure and services including education and social care);
- Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (Local Transport Authority; includes the Business Board which is in effect the Local Enterprise Partnership – a prescribed duty to cooperate body; responsibility to prepare a Non-Statutory Strategic Spatial Framework; responsibilities for funding); and
- the prescribed bodies for which substantive strategic matters are identified

## 3. Signatories

We propose that the central signatories should be (see section 7 for Timetable for Agreement, Review and Update) the three councils with relevant statutory responsibilities within Greater Cambridge, namely Cambridge City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council together with the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority. In addition, given that a statement of common ground should document those matters with cross-boundary implications, we also propose that those local authorities with boundaries directly adjoining Greater Cambridge should be signatories to the document. These are:

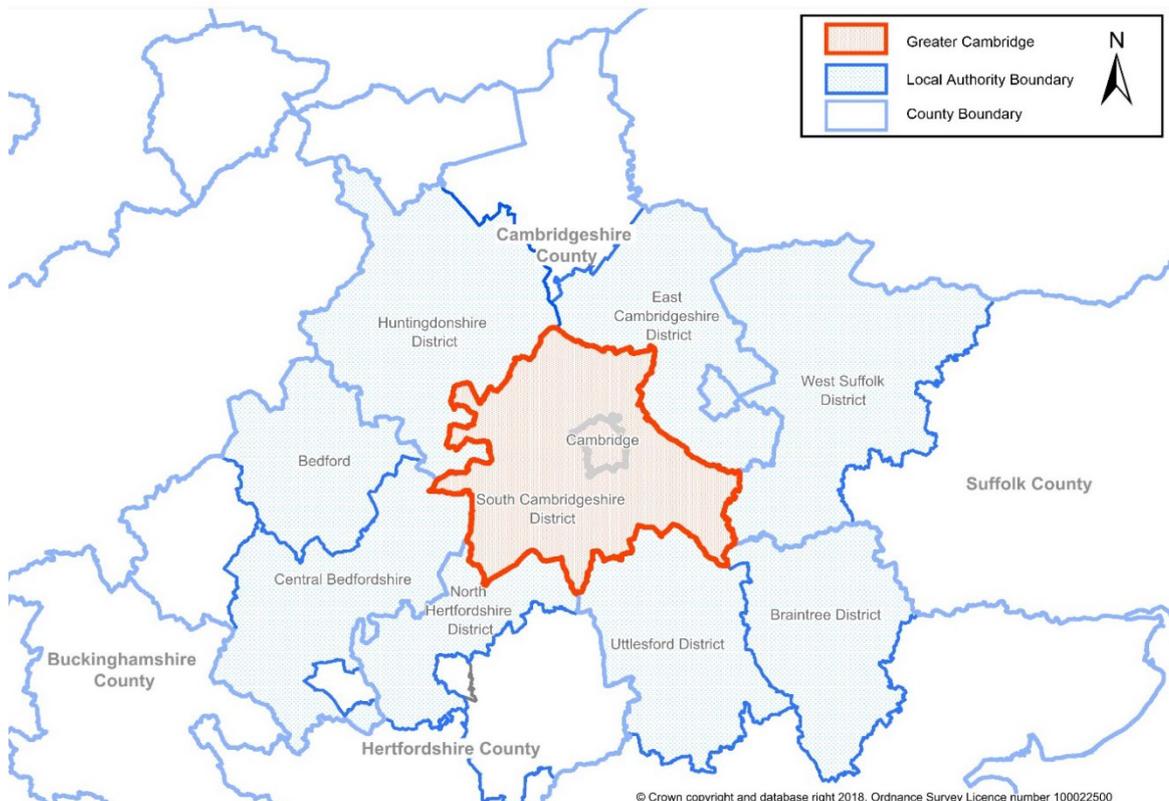
- Huntingdonshire District Council
- East Cambridgeshire District Council
- West Suffolk Council
- Braintree District Council
- Uttlesford District Council
- North Hertfordshire District Council
- Central Bedfordshire Council
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Essex County Council
- Suffolk County Council

Additional signatories will be those prescribed bodies which are identified in the Duty to Cooperate Statement of Compliance as having an interest in a specific strategic cross-boundary matter or matters of substance. The individual signatories are set out at the end of this document.

## 4. Strategic Geography

This Statement of Common Ground addresses strategic cross-boundary matters relating to the Greater Cambridge geography, incorporating Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire districts, as shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1:** Strategic Geography for the Greater Cambridge Statement of Common Ground



Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire have a strong functional relationship and the Greater Cambridge area forms the centre of the previously identified Cambridge sub-region Housing Market Area and the Cambridge Travel To Work Area. While other districts are included within these defined geographies, the strongest housing market and commuting connections are between North Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. The Greater Cambridge area also forms the core part of the functional 'Greater Cambridge' economic geography identified in the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Independent Economic Review.

The councils consider that it would not be appropriate to extend the geographic focus of this statement of common ground to a wider functional geography such as the Housing Market Area or Travel to Work Area, given that not all of the other authorities within those areas are producing a plan currently, and that there is currently no strategic planning arrangement between the authorities. However, the councils remain open to the potential that further statements of common ground may be required to address specific strategic cross-boundary matters, which could address functional geographies covering a wider area than just Greater Cambridge.

## 5. Strategic Matters

The strategic matters have been identified through a scoping exercise and neighbouring local authorities and prescribed duty to cooperate bodies were asked for their views on the identified strategic cross boundary matters. Further details are set out in the Duty to Cooperate Statement of Compliance.

The agreed strategic cross boundary matters for Greater Cambridge are as follows:

- Strategy: pattern and scale of growth, including housing need and employment
- Gypsy & Traveller accommodation needs
- Transport
- Wildlife habitats, green infrastructure and landscape
- Water, including supply, quality, wastewater and flood risk
- Energy, carbon offsetting and renewable energy generation
- Social, health and community infrastructure
- Strategic developments on the boundary of Greater Cambridge

The Duty to Cooperate Statement of Compliance provides for each matter details of the relevant bodies, the joint evidence, engagement and the current position. For the purposes of this draft Statement of Common Ground only the current position is recorded, together with any areas where agreement has not been reached to date or where there are other outstanding issues.

### **Strategy: pattern and scale of growth, including housing need and employment**

#### Scale of growth

The First Proposals consultation identifies that the Local Plan will meet the following objectively assessed needs for development in the period 2020-2041:

- 58,500 jobs
- 44,400 homes, reflecting an annual objectively assessed need of 2,111 homes per year, which is rounded for the plan period

These objectively assessed needs reflect the following strategic cross-boundary matters:

- The objectively assessed needs are based on a medium jobs forecast and related housing requirement. This is derived from jobs that are specifically forecast to arise in the Greater Cambridge area. As such, these jobs are not expected to be drawn from elsewhere outside the area and, consequently, it is considered unlikely that there are implications in terms of limiting growth in other districts
- The identified housing requirement is based on the medium jobs forecast and applies a 1:1 commuting assumption for all jobs above those supported by Standard Method housing. As such, this would not result in Duty to Cooperate impacts outside of Greater Cambridge, assuming this figure can be met within Greater Cambridge, and that neighbouring districts plan for and are able to meet their own Standard Method Local Housing Need

## Delivery of growth

### Land supply

Sufficient development commitments and new sites exist to accommodate these growth levels within Greater Cambridge without the need to request that one or more neighbouring authorities should assist under the duty to cooperate.

### Water supply

A particular challenge currently is the ecological impact of water abstraction, including from development, on the chalk streams that supply the River Cam. This needs to be considered, in relation to the potential impact of future planned growth. Furthermore, due to concerns about constrained supply, the levels and distribution of development may be affected by water supply issues.

Discussion is continuing between the authorities and relevant bodies about the potential impact of growth on water abstraction and supply. Therefore, while there are not currently areas of formal disagreement on this strategic matter, it remains to be resolved fully, including through continued engagement with the relevant duty to cooperate bodies.

Under circumstances where it would not be possible to demonstrate that there is a reasonable prospect that the full development needs can be delivered by 2041, the Councils would have to discuss with neighbours the potential for them to meet that element of needs under the duty to cooperate, recognising that they may experience the same regional water issues.

## Pattern of growth

### Green Belt

There are no Duty to Cooperate issues currently arising from the preferred strategy with regard to the Green Belt (apart from those arising between Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, which will be fully addressed through the preparation of this joint plan).

### Summary

Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council agree on the approach to strategy, and there are no areas of disagreement with other parties on this strategic matter. The authorities will continue to engage with neighbouring authorities and other prescribed bodies as the strategy is refined, leading to the draft local plan.

## Gypsy & Traveller accommodation needs

The Greater Cambridge authorities are preparing a new Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTANA) as a joint commission with the nearby local authorities of East Cambridgeshire District Council, Fenland District Council, Huntingdonshire District Council, Borough of Kings Lynn & West Norfolk, Peterborough City Council, and West Suffolk Council.

The outcome of the GTANA has been delayed by the coronavirus pandemic and the study is now expected to report at the end of 2021.

The steering group for the GTANA includes officers from all the local authorities covered by the study. Any duty to cooperate issues arising through the GTANA work will be discussed via the steering group and duty to cooperate meetings with other neighbouring authorities, following the completion of the study.

There are no areas of disagreement on this strategic matter.

## Transport

For the transport modelling of the Preferred Option the local authorities and relevant partners have confirmed via the Transport subgroup a shared understanding of the certainty and timing of strategic transport infrastructure and schemes impacting on Greater Cambridge. These were included as baseline schemes within transport modelling supporting the First Proposals consultation. Also, the Councils have agreed with neighbouring authorities the development assumptions in the modelling for those districts. This engagement will continue to inform the full draft local plan.

There are no areas of disagreement on this strategic matter.

## **Wildlife habitats, green infrastructure and landscape**

There is broad support from the relevant bodies to the approach taken and, therefore, no significant issues arising under the duty to cooperate, albeit we recognize the impact of water abstraction on chalk streams including in terms of habitats, as referred to in this document under Strategy and Water.

## **Water, including supply, quality, wastewater and flood risk**

The Councils continue to engage with the relevant bodies responsible for water supply planning, including Water Resources East, the Water Companies and the Environment Agency, as well as with neighbouring authorities, about the potential impact of growth on water abstraction and supply (see also above under Strategy). A stakeholder group is working to identify interim solutions and to oversee longer term solutions, including the Water Resources East Water Management Plan.

As noted above under Strategy, under circumstances where it would not be possible to demonstrate that there is a reasonable prospect that the full development needs can be delivered by 2041, the Councils would have to discuss with neighbours the potential for them to meet that element of needs under the duty to cooperate, recognising that they may experience the same regional water issues.

## **Energy, carbon offsetting and renewable energy generation**

The councils are engaging with energy providers, neighbouring authorities and other relevant partners to ensure a coherent approach to energy and carbon issues within and outside Greater Cambridge, in particular involving these parties in the process of preparing the identified evidence base.

The councils will continue to engage with relevant bodies on these issues, particularly the need for new or upgraded energy infrastructure to inform the infrastructure delivery plan to support the local plan.

There are no areas of disagreement on this strategic matter.

## **Social, health and community infrastructure**

To date there are no specific duty to cooperate issues arising in relation to social, health and community infrastructure that would require substantive discussion with duty to cooperate bodies. However, this issue will be kept under review.

## **Strategic developments on the boundary of Greater Cambridge**

The councils are not aware of any strategic scale developments currently proposed by neighbouring authorities. The councils will engage with all neighbouring

authorities on an ongoing basis to understand and discuss any relevant proposals and potential impacts, including discussing with neighbours relevant sites proposed as part of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan process.

## **6. Governance Arrangements**

For the Greater Cambridge authorities, sign-off of the final Statement of Common ground will include member engagement, including consultation with lead members on behalf of the two councils.

It is anticipated that the other signatories to the statement will identify the relevant person to sign the document as they see fit, whether this involves political or senior officer approval.

## **7. Timetable for Agreement, Review and Update**

The Greater Cambridge authorities will work with relevant parties to address identified strategic matters on an ongoing basis and in relation to the output timings of relevant evidence where this is not completed. The aim is to resolve any outstanding matters through regular bilateral or group meetings where cross-boundary strategic matters will be addressed. This Statement is intended to be a living document that can be reviewed and updated through the Local Plan process as follows:

- As a draft Statement of Common Ground accompanying the Greater Cambridge Local Plan First Proposals consultation, this document sets out Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council's current understanding of points of common and uncommon ground for relevant strategic cross-boundary matters
- At draft plan stage we will publish an updated draft Statement of Common Ground, reflecting our updated understanding of points of common and uncommon ground for relevant strategic cross-boundary matters at that stage, including drawing on relevant stakeholders' responses to the Greater Cambridge Local Plan First Proposals consultation
- A further updated draft Statement of Common Ground will be published alongside the proposed submission local plan, including drawing on relevant stakeholders' responses to the draft plan consultation
- Following receipt of comments regarding the proposed submission local plan, we anticipate seeking signatures to a final Statement of Common Ground, confirming the formal position of relevant signatories for submission to the independent examiner as an Examination document
- Beyond the point of submission, if required the Statement could be further updated should further agreement be necessary through the examination process