Cambridge City Council

Cabinet

Date: Tuesday, 24 March 2026

Time: 5.00 pm

Venue: Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Market Square, Cambridge, CB2 3QJ [access the building via Peashill entrance]

Contact: democratic.services@cambridge.gov.uk, tel:01223 457000

AGENDA

This meeting is open to any member of the Council who wishes to ask questions of the Cabinet on items included on this agenda. Could members please notify Democratic Services if they wish to attend and speak.

1 Apologies

2 Declarations of Interest

3 Minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2026 (Pages 5 - 16)

4 Public Questions

KEY DECISIONS

5 Draft Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document Adoption (Pages 17 - 168)

Links to the following appendices can be found below:

Appendix 2: Draft Equality Impact Assessment for the Planning Obligation Supplementary Planning Document.

Appendix 3: Consultation Statement: Draft Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document

Appendix 4: Draft Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report.

Appendix 5 Draft Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document Sustainability Appraisal.

Appendix 6: Planning Obligations SPD Costings Update.

Appendix 7: Tracked Changes Version of the Draft Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document: Version for Adoption.

Appendix 8: List of subsequent changes to the Planning Obligations SPD following the Planning Obligations SPD.

6 Climate Change Strategy (Pages 169 - 294)

Appendix C – Climate Change Strategy Engagement Report

7 Biodiversity Strategy Mid-term review (2022 - 2025) and Action Plan (2026 - 2031) (Pages 295 - 514)

8 Urban Forest Strategy (Pages 515 - 588)

Link to Appendix 4 – Topic Papers 1-12 V5

9 City Centre Heat Network (Pages 589 - 628)

Due to the large file size Appendix 2 can be found here: democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/documents/s72045/Outline Business Case.pdf

NON-KEY DECISIONS & MONITORING ITEMS

10 Transition Plan – Guildhall and Corn Exchange (Pages 629 - 646)

11 Consultation on the establishment of a centrally led Urban Development Corporation for Greater Cambridge (Pages 647 - 650)

12 Local Nature Reserve Designations in Cherry Hinton (Pages 651 - 660)

13 Greater Cambridge Authority Monitoring Report 2024-25 (Pages 661 - 670)

Due to the size of the appendices links have been inserted below:

Appendix 1 – Authority Monitoring Report

Appendix 1 to Appendix 1

Appendix 2 to Appendix 1

14	Strategic Policy and Partnerships Report	(Pages 671 - 690)
15	Risk Management Strategy and Framework	(Pages 691 - 716)
16	Quarterly Performance Report	(Pages 717 - 750)

Cabinet Members: Holloway (Chair), Wade (Vice-Chair), Bird, Moore, Nestor, Smart, A. Smith, S. Smith, Thornburrow and Todd-Jones

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Further information on public speaking will be supplied once registration and the written question / statement has been received.

CABINET 10 February 2026
5.00 - 6.35 pm

Present: Councillors Holloway (Chair), Wade (Vice-Chair), Bird, Moore, Nestor, Smart, A. Smith, S. Smith, Thornburrow and Todd-Jones

Other Councillors present: Councillors Bick, Porrer and Young

Also present (virtually): Councillors Bennett and Clough

Officers Present:
Chief Executive: Robert Pollock
Chief Operating Officer: Jane Wilson
The Head of Finance Ds151 Officer: Matthew Fernandez-Graham
Democratic Services Manager: Dan Kalley
Team Leader: James Fisher
Deputy Democratic Services Manager: Claire Tunnicliffe

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

26/10/Cab Apologies

No apologies were received.

26/11/Cab Declarations of Interest

Name	Item	Reason
Councillor S Smith	All	Personal: Sits on the Cambridge Investment Partnership Board
Councillor Bird	All	Personal: Sits on the Cambridge Investment Partnership Board
Councillor Nestor	All	Personal: Trustee of Cambridge Museum

26/12/Cab Minutes

The Leader of the Council informed those present of the following:

i. Last week, two significant government consultations had been launched which were a centrally led Development Corporation and the Local Government Reorganisation. Both would have major implications for the future of Cambridge City and the wider area. These consultations

address issues that would help shape the long-term development of Cambridge, its surrounding villages, and the local countryside.

ii. Would encourage residents to complete these consultations via the following links or to contact their local Councillor to share their views.
Establishing a Development Corporation in Greater Cambridge - GOV.UK
Local government reorganisation in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough - GOV.UK

iii. A letter had been sent to the Mayor of Minneapolis in light of the recent events, expressing solidarity during these challenging times. An initial response had been received, acknowledging and appreciating the support offered.

The minutes of the meetings held on 16 December 2025, and 13 January 2026, were then approved as correct record and signed by the Chair.

26/13/Cab Public Questions

Public Question 1

i. Members of the Cabinet may already be aware that I have been trying to raise awareness about the Tourist Information Centre in the Guildhall and might have gathered that I have been putting together the case for its inclusion in the plans for the renovated Guildhall after completion.

ii. As part of putting together this case, which I am trying to build as comprehensively as I possibly can, I would like to invite all the members of the Cabinet to come and visit and spend some time with us, so we can show you what we have built, talk more about it and answer any questions you might have.

iii. If you each are willing, will you please confirm receipt of this invitation and make arrangements with me to organise a convenient time for this to happen?

In response the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources asked all Members to make a note of Mr Bannell's request and contact details to arrange an appointment if and when convenient.

Supplementary

i. Would like to repeat my invite to all Cabinet Members visit the Tourist Information Centre to ensure that you are fully aware of what we are doing, how it works, and the value it provides. As key decision-makers,

it's important that you have a clear understanding of the services operating in the city.

ii. We would be happy to answer any questions, explain the setup and sustainable funding model, and outline the benefits a Tourist Information Centre bring to residents, visitors, and the Council.

iii. The key message was simple: designing a Guildhall without provision for a Tourist Information Centre would be a significant mistake.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources and the Leader both thanked the public speaker for their invitation and taking the time to attend the meeting.

26/14/Cab Community Infrastructure Levy draft charging schedule consultation

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Transport introduced the report.

The report referred to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which was a charge that could be levied by local authorities on new development in their area. This was a fixed, non-negotiable charge that developers must account for from the outset of their projects. The funds could be pooled centrally and directed to areas of greatest need, rather than being restricted to specific development sites.

In response to questions from Cabinet Members and those Councillors present, the Cabinet Member for Planning and Transport responded with the following:

i. Section 106 (S106) agreements would remain in place. This was essential for securing site-specific community and social infrastructure and would continue to be used where particular measures were required to support the needs of an individual development.

ii. When CIL was received, a process would be in place to determine how the money was allocated, including whether contributions should be pooled with those from other sites to support wider infrastructure improvements. There would also be an element of engagement and negotiation with local communities as part of this decision-making process.

iii. CIL would apply to every development project. Unlike S106 agreements, which were typically negotiated on large and significant sites only, CIL would generate infrastructure funding from all developments covered by a proposed charging schedule.

iv. The charge had been set following professional advice to ensure it was proportionate and not onerous. Once implemented, a process would be

established to determine how incoming CIL funds would be allocated. Funding would also be influenced by the area in which it was collected; where a parish council or neighbourhood forum existed, a proportion of CIL income would be allocated for spending in those communities, with local bodies deciding how it should be used. A citywide contribution would still be made from all projects.

v. Following a consultation in 2014, proposals had been developed to move to a CIL system. However, due to subsequent changes in planning legislation and emerging Government discussions on a future national infrastructure levy, the Planning Service decided not to proceed at that time but to remain prepared for potential new requirements.

vi. South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) did not operate CIL but was aware that East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC) did; had experience of working with ECDC when working as an architect before becoming a Councillor and the CIL process had been simple and easy to understand.

vii. The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service believed the introduction of CIL as the right approach, it ensured all developers contributed to necessary infrastructure. This formed part of the Service's ongoing engagement work with communities.

viii. The Shared Planning Service Youth Engagement Service (YES) had been awarded the Thornton Education Trust (TET) Inspire Future Generations Award for Best Local Authority in Youth Engagement which recognised the work in engaging young people and bridging the gap between the built environment and younger communities. The Service believed that moving to CIL would further support engagement and investment in local areas.

ix. Noted that the Performance, Assets and Strategy Overview and Scrutiny Committee did not call this matter in for scrutiny as it was going to consultation but would remain on the Forward Plan.

x. Confirmed that CIL was liable on residential developments.

The Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development said the following:

i. The delay in implementing CIL was due to several regulatory changes and statements by Government(s) positions over recent years. The current Government confirmed last year that it did not intend to introduce a national levy, after which work begun to develop a CIL to address Greater Cambridge's strategic transport needs.

ii. Strategic transport contributions were often avoided under the Section 106 process which required Cambridgeshire County Council and the Council to demonstrate that a development could not proceed without contributions towards that infrastructure. It was this widespread

avoidance of strategic transport contributions through the S106 regime which had prompted the move toward CIL

iii. CIL included clear enforcement powers, allowing the Local Planning Authority to issue a stop notice on development where the levy was not paid at commencement.

iv. Stated that CIL had been criticised nationally for contributing to viability issues that were delaying developments. Over the last few months there had been a narrative in London regarding emergency provision setting aside CIL.

v. The proposed local CIL rates had been set carefully with viability consultants to ensure they remained affordable in the context of development values and in the context of S106 obligations including affordable housing that applied to those eligible developments.

vi. Expected that the consultation would generate a range of views, the outcome of the consultation would be reported back to Council.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources thanked the Team Leader (Delivery) and the Officers for their considerable work on the CIL, noting that it represented vital funding for transport infrastructure across Greater Cambridge.

Cabinet **unanimously resolved** to:

i. Approve a public consultation on the draft CIL Charging Schedule and associated documentation

26/15/Cab Budget Setting Report and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2026/27

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources introduced the report.

The report referred to the Budget Setting Report (BSR) and appendices which set out the Council's draft budget proposals for 2026/27, Medium-Term Financial Strategy for the following five years, 30-Year Housing Revenue Account Business Plan, Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy. These items had been integrated into a single report following the recent Group Redesign Programme (which brought together the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Finance functions) and changes to council governance

The Cabinet Member said in response to the questions and statements asked by those present:

i. As set out in the medium-term financial strategy forecast, only a small level of net savings would be required over the five-year period to maintain a balanced budget.
ii. Due to the scale of expenditure reductions already achieved, these savings were considered readily attainable through continued service improvement.
iii. The Council remained on a solid financial footing, which enabled additional investment in frontline services during the current year, in response to priorities identified through the budget consultation.
iv. There were many local authorities who were experiencing significant financial pressures, it took a substantial effort to manage and absorb these pressures. Maintaining financial stability required year-round focus on balancing budgets and controlling costs, and Cambridge City Council had maintained such discipline for many years.
v. It was clear how easily local authorities could fall into financial difficulty. Some had attempted to borrow and invest in commercial property to generate income for services, but several had subsequently been unable to service the associated debt or achieve the expected rental returns, leading to serious financial problems. Others had faced unexpected spending pressures.
vi. Noted the comments made by Cabinet Members, who highlighted the range of work and projects delivered across their respective portfolios.
vii. It was important to highlight that the budget did not fully reflect the work undertaken through the Council's community leadership role, which was not statutory but provided crucial frontline services, supporting the residents of Cambridge, free lunch clubs and activities and emphasised the importance of recognising the wider collective work underway to improve Cambridge. Examples were as follows:
    - Officer support to the Conservators of the River Cam to progress the investment required to repair the locks and protect the river.
    - Leading the Cambridge Heat Network Project.
    - Contributing £1million investment in the Greater Cambridge Impact scheme which had leveraged a further £5 million from social enterprise investors with the aim of improving life chances for vulnerable residents and reducing poverty and deprivation.
viii. Noted the comments by the Chair of the Performance, Assets and Strategy and Scrutiny Committee which were as follows:
    - Asked Cabinet to keep the Folk Festival bid under regular review, given concerns that the proposed budget might prove insufficient depending on developments over the summer.

- Expressed concern over the response to the consultation, specifically that young people were not well represented.
- Requested a summary of movements in/out of the Civic Quarter Development Reserve.
- Requested additional information on the crematorium, car park equipment, playground, weeds and herbicide management bids, and the Cowley Road depot, all of which had been provided in the updated papers and had been welcomed. Asked these bids were regularly reviewed.

ix. Local Government Reform was expected within two years and would require significant preparatory work with neighbouring authorities. Although further budgets would be set, the savings targets for 2027/28 and 2028/29 were small. However, this did not preclude continued work on service reform where appropriate.

x. The priority now was to focus on collating data and information with neighbouring authorities in preparation for reform, as this would be the next major area of change.

xi. The emerging business plan would require substantial investment but was projected to deliver savings over a five-year period. Work would be to focus on the major strategic programme rather than on seeking minor additional savings at this stage.

xii. The Council had shifted from being a near-monopoly provider of the crematorium and bereavement services to operating in a more competitive market, with two new crematoria opening in the catchment area and a growing online cremation had reduced demand. The cost-of-living crisis had also contributed to the public spending less on bereavement services than in previous years.

xiii. While income from crematorium services had fallen yet was still forecast to generate £550,000 in net revenue in the coming financial year.

xiv. Described the proposed expenditure set out in the budget papers was described as essential to address health and safety needs and protect the crematorium following prolonged deferred investment.

xv. The Council had received compensation from Highways England for the A14 works, which had affected travel to the crematorium, and this provided some mitigation. The focus was now on maintaining service continuity and future revenue, a detailed action plan from the business planning process would be brought forward in due course.

xvi. Commercial property investment was a long-term activity, and local authorities were restricted in such investment. The Council's portfolio continued to be strengthened where appropriate, with the team commended for their work.

xvii. The redevelopment of Park Street car park had been funded by an £85m loan secured at a low interest rate; the redevelopment was generating sufficient income to cover both interest and capital repayments while providing a surplus for services.

xviii. Acknowledged that some investments performed better than others.

xix. A Strategic Steering Group had been established for the Civic Quarter project, one of the key objectives was to review all project costs and identify potential savings through value engineering; the current estimated cost stood at £97.5 million.

xx. The Council would seek to secure a fixed-price contract to mitigate the risk of cost overruns. Work was also taking place to examine the financing arrangements, which were critical to the overall cost of the scheme. These arrangements were expected to involve a level of borrowing; the Council would only borrow where the debt could be serviced through commercial income generated by the scheme.

xxi. The Civic Quarter project would be brought back to Cabinet and Full Council later in the year. Members would have the opportunity to decide on whether to proceed with the scheme.

The Leader stated that the Council was proud to be investing in key public assets as part of the Civic Quarter project, emphasising that the Council was retaining and improving publicly owned buildings and spaces rather than disposing of them.

The Head of Finance Ds151 Officer confirmed that the Council had never been able to reclaim Housing Benefit subsidy for individuals housed by certain charities, the subsidy provided by the Council was a statutory requirement. The current budget report had simply made the position more visible to Members, and work was now under way to address this ongoing issue.

The Cabinet Member Housing said the following in response to those present on the Housing Revenue Account:

i. Noted the comment from Housing Advisory Board who had supported the HRA Budget Proposals, particularly to endorse the Budget Bids, which represented an improved service for tenants and leaseholders. The Board Members also recognised the current financial pressures and thanked Officers for putting together a balanced budget.

ii. The Council had taken deliberate action to strengthen frontline housing delivery where it matters most to tenants the previous year. The subsequent compliant C2 grading had confirmed that this approach was effective. The current year's work had built on this position using the rebased 30-year HRA Business Plan and operational data to align the

budgets with the true costs of compliance, inflation and regulatory requirements, rather than allowing financial pressures to emerge later as overspends.

iii. The additional funding for damp, condensation and mould (DCM) works supported the step change in regulatory expectations following Awaab's Law. The compliant C2 grading confirmed that the Council was meeting the required standards. The investment builds on the compliance measures by enabling the Council to respond more quickly, undertake thorough investigations, and intervene earlier in more complex cases.

iv. To undertake DCM works required specialists' expertise and rapid mobilisation to meet statutory time scales. Using third-party providers allowed properties to be accessed quickly while the Council retained oversight, assurance, and accountability.

v. Increasing rents had been a difficult decision, such increases were challenging for tenants. Previous efforts had been made not increase rents, but this was no longer sustainable. The increase was necessary to continue delivering services and to ensure that tenants' homes remained safe and secure.

vi. Noted the comments by the Chair of the Performance, Assets and Strategy and Scrutiny Committee which were as follows:

- Had raised questions on the maximum and minimum impact on rent convergence.
- Concerns on the robustness of the savings assumptions relating to bad debt, void improvements and the related software implementation. Would ask that Cabinet regularly reviewed these areas.
- Noted the overall level of risk and borrowing contained within the HRA proposals, and the need for constant monitoring and regular and ongoing review of underlying assumptions.
- Had requested and received further detail and information on the following bids, damp, condensation and mould (DCM) repairs, housing disrepair claims and compensation costs, increase cost of void repairs and housing management teams.

The Leader acknowledged the comments regarding the importance of monitoring progress against savings targets and keeping oversight of borrowing levels. Suggested that the level of borrowing was partly a result of the Council's ambitious house-building programme. However, this also introduced additional financial risk and expressed appreciation for the Performance, Assets and Strategy and Scrutiny Committee's role in scrutinising these risks effectively.

Cabinet **unanimously resolved** to recommend to Full Council:

Council tax:

a) Confirms delegation to the Chief Finance Officer of the calculation and determination of the Council Tax base which is set out at Appendix A(a).

b) Approves the increase to the city council share of council tax for 2026/27 at 2.99%, and the updated council tax levels as set out at section 10 of the Budget Setting Report 2026/27.

Housing rents and charges:

c) Approves an increase in rents for all Social Rent, Social Rent shared ownership and Affordable Rent properties of 4.8% (September 2025 CPI plus 1%), with effect from 1 April 2026.

d) Agrees to fully implement rent convergence for all Social Rent tenants at a maximum rate of £1 per week from 1 April 2027, then £2 per week from 1 April 2028, in line with recent government announcements, for a period of up to 10 years.

e) Approves an increase in rents for Affordable Rent shared ownership properties in line with the maximum permitted in each individual property lease (generally RPI plus 0.5%).

f) Approves that garage and parking space charges are increased by up to 4.8%, as set out at section 10 of the Budget Setting Report 2026/27.

g) Approves the methodology for calculating Housing Revenue Account service charges and leasehold administration costs as set out at Appendix K, and delegates authority to the Chief Finance Officer to carry out the detailed calculation of 2026/27 charges in line with this methodology, noting that the council will endeavour to limit increases to 4.8% where possible.

Revenue budgets:

h) Approves the General Fund revenue proposals shown at Appendix E.

i) Approves the Housing Revenue Account revenue proposals shown at Appendix H.

Capital budgets:

j) Approves the General Fund capital proposals set out at Appendix F(a) and the revised General Fund capital plan set out at Appendix F(c).

k) Approves the Housing Revenue Account capital proposals set out at Appendix I(a) and the revised capital plan set out at Appendix I(b).

l) Approves the proposed capital financing plans set out at section 5 (General Fund) and section 7 (Housing Revenue Account) of the Budget Setting Report 2026/27, whilst noting that the constitution delegates all

executive decisions on borrowing, investment or financing to the Chief Finance Officer, who is required to act in accordance with CIPFA's Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Local Authorities.

m) Notes in particular that the council's ambitious Housing Revenue Account investment programme, including the 10-year new homes programme, will require new borrowing of around £483 million over the next 10 years, as set out at section 7 of the Budget Setting Report 2026/27.

Risks and reserves:

n) Notes the key risks to the council financial standing and sustainability, and mitigations in place, as set out at section 8 of the Budget Setting Report 2026/27.

o) Notes the impact of the Budget Setting Report 2026/27 on General Fund and Housing Revenue Account reserves, as set out at section 8 of the Report.

p) Approves the new allocations to earmarked reserves set out at section 8 of the Budget Setting Report 2026/27, namely:- • £2.5 million to a new Local Government Reorganisation Reserve; and • £1.0 million to the Civic Quarter Development Reserve.

q) Sets the 2026/27 prudent minimum balance at £8.059 million for the General Fund, and £6.801 million for the Housing Revenue Account, with a working target balance of 120% of the prudent minimum balance in each case, in line with the advice of the Chief Finance Officer.

Medium-Term Financial Strategy:

r) Approves the council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account as set out at section 9 of the Budget Setting Report 2026/27.

s) Notes the key assumptions used in the development of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy at Appendix C, and in particular the sensitivity of the Housing Revenue Account 30-Year Business Plan to changes in these assumptions, as set out in detail at Appendix J.

Capital and Treasury Management Strategy:

t) Approves the Capital Strategy attached at Appendix O.

u) Approves the Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27 at Appendix P, including the prudential and treasury management indicators set out at Annexe C.

v) Approves an increase in the council's authorised limit for external debt to £650 million in 2027/28, £700 million in 2028/29, £750 million in 2029/30, then £850 million in 2030/31 in order to accommodate the borrowing required to support the new build homes programme. w) Approves an

increase in the deposit limit for enhanced money market funds from £5 million per fund to £10 million per fund, and an increase in the deposit limit for money market funds from £15 million per fund to £20 million per fund, as set out at Annexe A to the Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27 (Appendix P).

Other:

x) Delegates authority to the Chief Finance Officer to reallocate budgets between services in relation to corporate and/or departmental restructuring, and any reallocation of support service and central costs in accordance with the CIPFA Service Reporting Code of Practice for Local Authorities (SeRCOP) (including where necessary the recalculation of recharges between the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account).

y) Delegates authority to the Chief Finance Officer to approve an in-year increase or decrease in the capital budget for Disabled Facilities Grants in any year, in direct relation to any increase or decrease in the capital grant funding available for this purpose, and to determine the most appropriate use of any additional Disabled Facilities Grant funding for the wider benefit of the Shared Home Improvement Agency.

z) Delegates authority to the Director of Communities to review and amend the level of fees charged by the Shared Home Improvement Agency for Disabled Facilities Grants and repair assistance grants, in line with any recommendations made by the Shared Home Improvement Agency Board.

aa) Notes the Equality Impact Assessments undertaken in respect of budget proposals in the General Fund (Appendix S(a)) and Housing Revenue Account (Appendix S(b)).

bb) Approves the schedule of proposed fees and charges for 2026/27 set out at Appendix T(A) and confidential Appendix T(b).

Section 25 report:

cc) Notes the Chief Finance Officer's section 25 report, covering the robustness of estimates and adequacy of reserves, included at section 11 of the Budget Setting Report 2026/27.

The meeting ended at 6.35 pm

CHAIR

REPORT TITLE: Draft Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document Adoption

To:
Councillor Katie Thornburrow Cabinet Member for Planning and Transport

Cabinet 23 March 2026

Report by:
Stephen Kelly, Joint Director for Planning
Email: stephen.kelly@greatercambridgeplanning.org

Wards affected:
All

Director Approval: Director Stephen Kelly confirms that the report author has sought the advice of all appropriate colleagues and given due regard to that advice; that the equalities impacts and other implications of the recommended decisions have been assessed and accurately presented in the report; and that they are content for the report to be put to the Cabinet/Cabinet Member for decision.

1. Recommendations

1.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:

a. Agrees the draft Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations SPD (attached at Appendix 1) and accompanying Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) (Appendix 2) are formally adopted subject to any changes following the Cambridge City Council Cabinet; and

b. Agree that any subsequent material amendments following the SPD's adoption to be made by the Cabinet Member for Planning and Transport, and that any subsequent minor amendments and editing changes that do not materially affect the content prior to consultation be delegated to the Joint Director of Planning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Transport.

This report presents the draft Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations SPD, which once adopted will be a material consideration in the determination of planning

applications. The SPD will support the Council's in securing infrastructure necessary to provide for the needs generated by new development. It will also improve the process of negotiating, preparing and completing a S106 agreement.

2. Purpose and reason for the report

2.1 The Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets out the approach, policies and procedures taken by Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council in respect of the use of planning obligations. It will supplement policies in the adopted 2018 Local Plans, detailing the planning obligations the Councils may seek through section 106 on a range of topics, and providing clarity on the processes to be followed, with an overall aim to speed up the planning process.

This report presents the results of a second round of consultation that was held in August 2025 on the draft Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations SPD. The decision to proceed to a further consultation was agreed by each of the respective CCC and SCDC Committees. This report presents the final version of the SPD for members consideration and seeks agreement for its adoption.

The purpose of the Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations SPD is to provide guidance on how the Councils seek to apply planning obligations, through the Section 106 process, to new development proposals. It supplements Policy 85: Infrastructure delivery, planning obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018 and Policy TI/8: Infrastructure and New Developments of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018, alongside other policies within the adopted development plans that seek to secure infrastructure necessary to support the needs generated by proposed developments.

The document has been prepared to:

Aid the smooth functioning of the planning application process by making developers and landowners aware of the procedures for securing planning obligations, including the

provision of affordable housing;
Clarify the types of planning obligations that may be sought depending on the nature of the development proposal and site circumstances and assist in the timely negotiation and agreement of those obligations;

Clarify the relationship between planning obligations and planning conditions; and

Help to deliver good quality sustainable growth across the Greater Cambridge area that accords with the policies and requirements of the Development Plans.

3. Alternative options considered

3.1 The options available to members are:

a. Make a decision to adopt the draft SPD as provided in Appendix 1 and formally adopted along with the accompanying EqIA in Appendix 2.
b. Not to adopt the draft Planning Obligations SPD and to continue to make amendments to the SPD.
c. Not progress with the draft Planning Obligations SPD and continuing to use the Cambridge City Council Planning Obligations Strategy (2010) and parts of the South Cambridge Open Space in New Development SPD (2009) when securing planning obligations.

4. Background and key issues

4.1 The Planning Obligations SPD is intended to be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The SPD provides guidance on the application and translation of existing development plan policies through the S106 process. The document also offers guidance to developers on other forms of community benefits that might not be explicitly required through extant planning policy but which, because they reflect broader ambitions around inclusive growth expressed in other statutory plans for the area, have previously been offered by and secured through the S106 process in

Greater Cambridge. The guidance in the SPD is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) and policies in the adopted Development Plans for Greater Cambridge. The SPD outlines the relevant policy requirements set out in the Development Plans, and the types of obligations likely to arise as a result of applying these local planning policies. In the Planning Obligations SPD, the process of negotiating, preparing, and completing a S106 agreement is also outlined.

The SPD is split into chapters that set out specific types of infrastructure or obligations that may need to be secured in line with adopted local planning policies. The types of infrastructure or mitigation applicable is dependent on the land use proposed (residential, commercial, mixed-used), the scale of development proposed, the location of development, and its impacts (environmental, economic, social) both on the immediate and wider area. In this respect, the SPD makes very clear that each planning application will be assessed on its merits and only those obligations applicable to the development proposed will be of relevance.

Upon adoption, the Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations SPD will supersede both the Cambridge City Council Planning Obligations Strategy SPD 2010 and specific elements of the South Cambridgeshire Open Space in New Development SPD will be superseded, in particular in relation to costings, but the document overall will remain a material consideration.

The proposed consultation draft SPD has been subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment screening, and in both cases the requirement for further reassessment was screened out. It has also been subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment.

The first draft of the Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations SPD went out to consultation between November 2024 to January 2025. The results of the consultation were taken to South Cambridgeshire District Council Cabinet meeting and the South Cambridgeshire District Council Cabinet meeting and the Cambridge City Council Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee meeting in March 2025. Following this, it was agreed at both meetings that subject to the SPD providing additional evidence and

a decision being made by the Lead Cabinet Member for Planning at South Cambridgeshire District Council and the Cabinet Member for Planning and Transport at Cambridge City Council, on the revisions made to the SPD, that it could then proceed to an additional round of public consultation in Summer 2025.

The SPD was revised in light of the representations received to the first round of consultation and further evidence was prepared including the Planning Obligations SPD Costing Update Paper. The Planning Obligations SPD Costing Update paper was produced by AtkinsRealis as part of their commission in preparation of the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and was completed in July 2025. The Costings paper provides an update on the costs of specific infrastructure provision – namely, open space, green infrastructure, indoor and outdoor sports facilities, playgrounds, and community buildings. These costs replace outdated costs being relied upon from within the CCC Planning Obligations Strategy SPD (March 2010, updated 2023) and the approaches used by SCDC, including the Open Space in New Developments SPD (2009).

In August 2025, the decision to proceed to a further round of public consultation was made by both the the Lead Cabinet Member for Planning at South Cambridgeshire District Council and the Cabinet member for Planning and Transport and at Cambridge City Council.

The re-consultation on the Planning Obligations was held between the 22 August to 17 October 2025. In total, the Councils received 142 responses to the revised draft of the SPD. The responses came from a range of sources, including local residents, statutory consultees, Parish Councils, developers of both housing and commercial floorspace and a Cambridge College.

Officers have considered the comments received and, where considered appropriate or necessary to address specific objections, have made further changes to the SPD as detailed in the consultation statement (see Appendix 3). These changes include the deletion of parts of the SPD (notably on affordable workspace) and adjustments to requirements on skills and inclusive growth related matters, on community infrastructure contributions and on the Councils emerging ambitions to secure enhanced commitment to Biodiversity Net Gain. A new section is proposed in respect of Heritage matters

following advice from Historic England. The consultation statement also details how the Councils responded to comments received during the consultation in Winter 2024. Relevant services from across the Councils were re-consulted during the preparation of the SPD to assist with responding to the representations made and to ensure that sections of the document remained up to date. All representations made on the Planning Obligations SPD at all stages of consultation are publicly available here.

As a result, following the consultation on the draft Planning Obligations SPD, the following changes have been made:

Review for accuracy, clarity and conciseness of wording across the SPD including in the sections on consultation and pre-applications.

Review of requirements to clarify where these are required of policy or to be encouraged. Specifically around Biodiversity Net Gain, affordable workspace provision and employment and skills plans.

References to Neighbourhood Plans have been strengthened throughout the SPD.

Updates to the relevant names of Health bodies following the national NHS transformation initiative.

Amendments for clarity to costs associated with financial viability and confidentiality of viability assessments.

Inclusion of reference to the recently adopted Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) in the context of Biodiversity Net Gain.

Revisions to clarify that obligations from commercial development towards community facilities will only be sought from development proposals within Cambridge City, including fringe sites, noting the different drafting that applies to the SCDC Local Plan. Amendments to the Waste Chapter to reflect the latest position regarding RECAP and costings.

Amendment to clarify that only residential development that generates child yield needs consider education provision.

Revisions for clarifications to the requirements for minor and major development with regard to Burial Space.

Amendments to the Employment and Skills Plan section to clarify that this not a policy requirement but provides guidance on the form obligations may take if offered by a development for weighing in the planning balance.

Amendments to the Public Rights of Way section have been included to strengthen this section and refer to the Environmental Land Management Schemes grants.

Provide a new Chapter addressing the Historic Environment to reflect representations from Historic England.

Table A-6 has been added to Appendix A to set out the multiplier for SEND.

Removal of tables of costs in chapters 5, 7, 13, and 14.

Amendments to the Affordable Workspace chapter and Employment and Skills to explicitly state that this is an aspiration.

The following changes have been identified and modifications changed post Cabinet at South Cambridgeshire District Council for clarity. These changes have been included for consideration as part of this report. These changes have been made to Appendix 1 and Appendix 7, and Appendix 8 has been created additionally to set out these changes. As a summary, these changes are:

Minor formatting / editorial changes including references to correct table numbers.

Amendment in 5.12 to 'Appropriate contributions will be negotiated on a case by case basis. Developers will be encouraged to apply Natural England’s 8 hectares per 1,000

population for Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGS) measure.'

Amendment to Chapter 14 Public Open Space to clarify process, including to Paragraphs 14,27 and 14.28 to clarify the management of public open space, offering it to Town and Parish Council to won and manage and where the community asset is transferred to a management company, how it should be managed.

Amendment to Table 14-1 – summary of Cambridge open space standards to amend the informal open space figures for accuracy.

Amendments Table 14-3 and Table 14-5 to say excluding the costs of land.

Maintenance costs for open space typologies in the new table 14-3 have been added back in.

Amendment to Table 14-6 to amend some maintenance costs for Children's play space for accuracy.

The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service is separately considering the potential to bring forward a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Any proposed CIL would complement rather than duplicate the obligations set out in a S106 agreement.

5. Corporate plan

5.1 The draft Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations SPD aligns with the visions and strategies as set out in the Cambridge City Council Corporate plan 2022-2027: Corporate plan 2022-27: our priorities for Cambridge - Cambridge City Council

Priority 1: Leading Cambridge's response to climate change and biodiversity emergencies

If adopted, the SPD would support the Council in addressing the impacts of development on a range of issues that have climate related impacts including transport

and biodiversity. For example, in relation to biodiversity, the SPD sets out the approach to S106 and requirements of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

Priority 2: Tackling Poverty and Inequality and helping people in the greatest need

If adopted, the draft SPD seeks to secure mitigation measures from appropriate developments to address impacts to community services and facilities.

Priority 3: Building a new generation of council and affordable homes and reducing homelessness.

If adopted, the draft SPD explains the Councils' approach to the delivery of affordable housing through Section 106 planning obligations. It is supplementary to and expands upon the Local Plan policies for affordable housing, which are set out in the Cambridge City Local Plan (Policy 45) and the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (Policy H/10 and H/11). It explains how the policies will be applied and provides additional information on what will be expected when dealing with planning applications for development for which an element of affordable housing should be provided.

Priority 4: Modernising the council to lead a greener city that is fair for all

If adopted, the SPD would support the council in achieving this priority as the document seeks to ensure that sufficient S106 funding is secured to address the impacts of development to make it acceptable in planning terms.

6. Consultation, engagement and communication

6.1 During the preparation of the draft SPD a range of consultation had taken plan with relevant Council Teams, and other organisations, including the County Council. The Council's approached these key stakeholders when responding to representations during the consultation and when making certain modifications to the document. Appendix 3 of this report sets out how the Planning Obligations SPD was consulted on.

7. Anticipated outcomes, benefits or impact

7.1 If adopted, the Planning Obligation SPD will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The SPD will support the Council's in securing infrastructure necessary to provide for the needs generated by new development. It will also improve the process of negotiating, preparing and completing a S106 agreement.

8. Implications

8.1 Relevant risks

In the writing of this report consideration was given to the following implications:

A) Financial
B) Legal
C) Equality and socio-economic implications
D) Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental Implications
E) Procurement Implications
F) Community Safety Implications

All of the implications listed have been considered below.

Financial Implications

8.2 The SPD seeks to provide guidance on how we address planning obligations, which have financial implications. The council does not stand to benefit from the increase in S106 income as it will be passed on. The guidance that has been provided within the document ensures that this is a robust and effective process. There are no fraud risks identified as a result of this report.

Legal Implications

8.3 Officers have sought appropriate legal advice from 3C Legal throughout the development of the SPD, including taking and considering advice from Counsel, and

Counsel having had regard to the third-party consultation responses received.

Equalities and socio-economic Implications

8.4 The Draft Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations SPD has been informed by an Equality Impact Assessment and the impacts identified are positive. The SPD has positive impacts on all protected characteristics because it secures the delivery of financial and non-financial obligations to ensure development is delivery affordable housing, community facilities, access to open space, for example. Factoring in design that will reduce anti-social behaviour and hate crime directed at: disabled people, LGBQI+ people, transgender people, people of different ethnicities, different faiths, and women.

Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental implications

8.5 The SPD would seek to secure climate change related mitigation measures from new developments, supporting matters like recycling, sustainable transport, food security, and biodiversity. These could be judged as medium positive.

The SPD supports the Council to address the impacts of development on a range of issues that have climate related impacts including transport and biodiversity. For example, in relation to Biodiversity, the SPD sets out the approach to S106 and requirements of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). The SPD also contributes to minimising the impact of development on carbon emissions and refers to the South Cambridgeshire District Council Zero Carbon and Doubling Nature Strategies.

The SPD would have a net low positive impact. The SPD does not introduce new standards but supports the adopted Local Plan which includes policies to ensure development has a positive impact on the environment and addresses climate change.

Procurement Implications

8.6 There are no procurement implications arising from the report.

Community Safety Implications

8.7 There are no community safety implications arising from the report.

9. Background documents

Planning Obligations Strategy SPD (2010)
Open Space in New Developments SPD (2009)
Cambridge City Council Planning Obligations strategy SPD 2010
Cambridge City Local Plan (2018)
South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2018)
Draft Local Plan Viability Report (2025)

9.1 Upon adoption, it is intended to revoke the Cambridge City Council Planning Obligations Strategy SPD 2010, as it will be superseded by this SPD.

10. Appendices

10.1 Appendix 1: Draft Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document: Version for Adoption.

Appendix 2: Draft Equality Impact Assessment for the Planning Obligation Supplementary Planning Document.

Appendix 3: Consultation Statement: Draft Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document

Appendix 4: Draft Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report.

Appendix 5 Draft Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document Sustainability Appraisal.

Appendix 6: Planning Obligations SPD Costings Update.

Appendix 7: Tracked Changes Version of the Draft Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document: Version for Adoption.

Appendix 8: List of subsequent changes to the Planning Obligations SPD following the Planning Obligations SPD.

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document

Version for Adoption – February 2026

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Foreword

There are significant challenges with accommodating further growth and development within the Greater Cambridge area. Planning obligations play a vital role in ensuring that the adverse impacts of any development proposals are appropriately managed, and that new development contributes towards meeting local infrastructure needs and achieving inclusive communities.

This Supplementary Planning Document explains how Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council will approach the use of planning obligations. It provides guidance on when planning obligations may be sought, the form an obligation may take, and how the scale of any obligation is to be determined and secured.

The overall aim of the guidance is to provide greater clarity on the process and expectations around planning obligations with the objective of speeding up the planning process. We look forward to developers and infrastructure providers using the guidance for future development in Greater Cambridge.



Councillor Katie Thornburrow

Executive Councillor for Planning Policy, Cambridge City Council



Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins

Lead Cabinet Member for Planning, Cambridgeshire District Council

Executive Summary

The Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets out the approach, policies and procedures taken by Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council in respect of the use of planning obligations. It supplements the policies in the adopted Local Plans, detailing the planning obligations the Councils will seek through Section 106 on a range of topics, and proving clarity on the processes that will be followed, with an overall aim to speed up the planning process.

Planning obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, commonly known as “Section 106 agreements”, are a mechanism used by the Council to make a development proposal acceptable. They are focused on site specific mitigation of the impact of development by way of direct provision of infrastructure (both on and off site of the development) and through the payment of financial contributions to the local planning authority.

The guidance provided forms an integral part of the development management process, as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. It will support the Councils in securing infrastructure necessary to provide for the needs generated by new development and will also improve the process of negotiating, preparing, and completing a Section 106 agreement.

To promote consistency, the Councils have worked closely with Cambridgeshire County Council to incorporate infrastructure or service requirements for which the County Council is the delivery authority, including schools, transport and community services such as libraries and social care facilities.

The SPD is split into chapters that set out its purpose, approach to planning obligations and how the document can be used. Chapter four sets out the specific types of infrastructure or obligations that may need to be secured by applying policies of the adopted Local Plans to help to deliver good quality sustainable growth across the Greater Cambridge area.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Purpose of this document

1.1 The purpose of the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is to provide supplementary planning guidance in support of the Policy 85: Infrastructure delivery, planning obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy of the Cambridge City Local Plan 2018 and Policy TI/8: Infrastructure and New Developments of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018, alongside other policies within the adopted development plans that seek to secure infrastructure necessary to support the needs generated by proposed developments.

1.2 The purpose of this Planning Obligations SPD is to clearly set out the approach, policies, and procedures to be taken by Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council (here after referred to as 'the Councils') in respect of the use of planning obligations.

1.3 It has been prepared to:

- Aid the smooth functioning of the planning application process by making developers, landowners and other stakeholders aware of the procedures for securing planning obligations, including the provision of affordable housing;
- Clarify the types of planning obligations that may be sought depending on the nature and scale of the development proposal and site circumstances;
- Enable planning obligations to be considered by applicants from the earliest stages of formulation of development proposals;
- Allow for more timely and cost-effective decisions on planning applications that involve Section 106 Agreements; and
- Help to deliver good quality sustainable growth across the Greater Cambridge area that accords with the policies and requirements of the Development Plans.

1.4 The obligations listed in this SPD are those that might be expected given the types of development provided for by the Local Plans, including adopted Neighbourhood Plans. However, it should be noted that other types of obligations, not covered within this SPD, may be required to manage or mitigate a specific development's impacts.

Status of the document

1.5 This document is being prepared as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Part 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 ("the Regulations") sets out the procedure for the production of SPDs. This version of the Planning Obligations SPD constitutes the consultation version required to be carried out under Regulation 12 of Part 5 of the Regulations.

1.6 The Planning Obligations SPD is intended to be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The SPD does not introduce new planning policy but seeks to give effect to existing development plan policies. The guidance in this SPD is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) and is consistent with the policies in the adopted Development Plan for the area. The SPD does not repeat policies or guidance within the NPPF, NPPG, the Local Plans, Area Action Plans, Waste & Minerals Local Plan, or other SPDs. Therefore, this SPD should be read in conjunction with these documents.

1.7 Upon adoption, it is intended to revoke the Cambridge City Council Planning Obligations Strategy SPD 2010, as it will be superseded by this SPD. Specific elements of the South Cambridgeshire Open Space in New Development SPD will be superseded (specifically: the tables in paragraphs 2.8, 2.14 and 2.28 will be superseded by Tables 14-5 and 14-6 in this SPD, but the document overall will remain a material consideration.

Consultation on the Planning Obligations SPD

1.8 A draft of the Planning Obligations SPD was consulted on from November 2024 to January 2025 to seek feedback from statutory bodies, key stakeholders, and members of the public. Following the receipt of comments and amendments to the draft SPD, it was agreed by both Councils that the SPD should be subject to a further round of consultation.

1.9 The second round of consultation took place between August 2025 and October 2025. During the consultation the Councils provided a track change version of the SPD that detailed all the changes that had been made as a result of representations received during the first consultation and amendments to a number of infrastructure costs, following production of a Costings Update Paper prepared by AtkinsRealis. The Costings paper provides updated costs for specific types of infrastructure provision – namely, open space, green infrastructure, indoor and outdoor sports facilities, playgrounds, and community buildings – and was prepared in recognition that

those previously relied upon from within the Cambridge City Planning Obligations Strategy SPD (March 2010, updated 2023) and the approaches used by SCDC, including the Open Space in New Developments SPD (2009), were significantly outdated. A copy of the Costings Update Paper was made available alongside the re-consultation draft of the SPD.

1.10 Following the second round of consultation, the Councils have considered the further representations received and, where appropriate, have made further changes to the SPD in response. The Councils consideration of the responses and the changes made as a result are detailed in the Statement of Consultation.

Managing the impact of new development

1.11 Across Greater Cambridge, the two adopted Local Plans make provision for an additional 33,500 new homes and 44,100 new jobs between 2011 and 2031. This growth will result in increased pressure on local infrastructure, services, and facilities, creating demands for new provision. The Councils' and developers have a responsibility, through the planning process, to manage the impact of this growth and ensure that any harm caused by development is mitigated and that necessary infrastructure is provided in a timely manner.

1.12 The infrastructure required to support Greater Cambridge's planned growth has been identified in the respective Infrastructure Delivery Plans (IDPs) prepared in support of the Local Plans. The Councils expect new development to contribute to site related and wider infrastructure needs through a combination of the following mechanisms:

- Planning conditions
- Planning obligations
- Section 278 Agreements
- A future Community Infrastructure Levy or similar.

Planning conditions

1.13 Planning conditions are requirements made by the local planning authority, in the grant of planning permission, to ensure that certain actions related to the development proposal are carried out. Planning conditions are likely to cover, amongst other things, the submission of reserve matters; controls over the materials to be used; controls over the occupation of new buildings or further stages of development until certain other actions are completed; the requirement to undertake further investigations as work proceeds (for

example, archaeological recording); construction in accordance with the submitted method statement; and the requirement to implement works in accordance with the submitted plans such as landscaping, tree planting, drainage works etc; and requirements for the certification of works following completion.

1.14 Where there is a choice between imposing planning conditions and entering into a planning obligation to manage the impacts of a new development, the use of planning conditions is always preferable.

Planning obligations

1.15 Development standards, such as those prescribed in local planning policies, and site-specific works, are an integral part of the acceptability of a development proposal in planning terms and are normally required to be implemented as part of the delivery of a development scheme. Where a development proposal does not meet the standards required of local planning policy, it may be possible to make development proposals acceptable in planning terms through the use of planning obligations.

1.16 Planning obligations are used to secure measures which are essential for the development to proceed and measures which are required to mitigate the impact of the development. Planning obligations do this through:

- Prescribing the nature of a development (for example, by requiring a proportion of affordable housing);
- Securing a contribution from a developer to compensate or re-provide for loss or damage created by a development (for example, the creation of habitats); and
- Mitigating a development's impact on the locality (for example, through the securing of environmental improvements and the provision of both on and off-site infrastructure and facilities to serve the development).

1.17 The outcome of the use of planning obligations should be that the proposed development is brought into compliance with the Local Plan policies and that any development specific works are undertaken satisfactorily. Used properly, planning obligations can significantly increase the quality of development.

1.18 While planning obligations can secure benefits capable of mitigating the adverse impacts of a development, they cannot however, be used to make an inappropriate application acceptable for example, a scheme does not comply with the spatial strategy and land use principles of the Local Plan.

S278 Agreements

1.19 These are agreements, made with the Local Highways Authority under the Highways Act 1980 (as amended), to authorise works on the adopted highway network that have been identified and determined as necessary for planning permission to be granted. This SPD does not specify the circumstances in which a s278 agreement will be required. Requirements for s278 agreements will be negotiated separately, including any associated fees.

A future Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or similar

1.20 CIL is a levy (expressed as pounds per square metre) that is charged on the net additional floorspace created by certain types of new development. The purpose of a levy is to contribute towards local infrastructure such as schools, transport, libraries, parks, leisure facilities and other strategic infrastructure that is needed to manage the cumulative impacts of new development and to create sustainable communities.

1.21 The Councils are continuing to review whether a CIL should be introduced to support sustainable development in Greater Cambridge.. Any proposed CIL would complement rather than duplicate the obligations to be secured in a S106 agreement.

Legislative and planning policy context

Legislative Context

1.22 The legislative framework for planning obligations is set out in Section 106 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by Section 12 of the 1991 Planning and Compensation Act, and the Localism Act 2011.

1.23 In accordance with the Town & Country Planning Act, planning obligations:

- May be either positive, i.e. requiring a person to carry out a specified action, or negative, i.e. restricting a person from developing or using the land in a specified way;
- May be entered into either by agreement with the Local Planning Authority or by an undertaking by the developer to which the Local Planning Authority is not a party (e.g. unilateral undertaking);
- Must be entered into by means of a Deed;
- Must be registered as a local land charge (for the purposes of the Local Land Charges Act 1975);

- Run with the land and may be enforced against the person entering into it and against any successors in title; and
- Can be enforced by means of a contractual claim in the civil courts or injunction.

1.24 Further detail on these aspects of planning obligations is provided in Chapter 2 of the SPD.

1.25 Further statutory provisions are set out in Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 ("the CIL Regulations"), as amended.

1.26 The CIL Regulations place into law for the first time, the Government's policy tests on the use of planning obligations. As of 6 April 2010, it became unlawful for a planning obligation to be taken into account when determining a planning application for a development, or any part of a development, if the obligation does not meet all of the following tests:

a. necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
b. directly related to the development; and
c. fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

National policy

1.27 At the national level the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) (NPPF) sets out the Government's economic, environmental and social planning policies for England. Paragraphs 56 to 58 of the NPPF, deal with the use of planning conditions and planning obligations. These reiterate the use of planning obligations to make unacceptable development acceptable in planning terms; the tests for use of obligations set out in the CIL Regulations; uphold the long-standing principal that planning conditions are preferable to planning obligations; and how any implications for development viability may be addressed.

1.28 The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) provides further advice on the nature of planning obligations especially at paragraphs 001 Reference ID: 23b-001-20190315 to 006 Reference ID: 23b-006-20190901. In particular, paragraph 004 (23b-004-201901) states that policies on planning obligations should be informed by evidence and that it is not appropriate to set out formulaic approaches to planning obligations in supplementary planning documents. This SPD follows this guidance. Each application is to be assessed on its merits having regard to the relevant standards set out in the extant policies of the respective Local Plans, and only those obligations necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms will be

requested. While formulae are used for certain types of infrastructure, this is intended to update costs assumed in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan prepared in support of the 2018 Local Plans, providing an indication of the likely level and/or cost of an obligation to inform negotiations specific to a development proposal.

Local policy

1.29 The Local Plans for the Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District were both adopted in 2018. With respect to the Cambridge City Local Plan, Policy 1 defines sustainable development in a Cambridge City context. Alongside housing and employment needs, it identifies a number of specific land use requirements needed across the City to support its growth, including additional education spaces, a district heat network, and the provision of a high-quality sustainable transport network. Policy 1 also highlights Cambridge's outstanding historic environment that must be protected and enhanced for growth within the City to be considered sustainable. The latter extends to the City's townscape and the landscape setting of the city edge.

1.30 Subsequent policies in the Plan go on to provide more detail on how new development proposals are to give effect to the requirements of Policy 1, including the delivery of sustainable transport infrastructure (Policy 5); the protection and enhancement of the River Cam environs (Policy 7); the setting of the City (Policy 8); carbon and water efficiency (Policy 28); water management (Policy 31); the provision affordable housing (Policy 45); responding to local context (Policy 55); creating successful places (Policy 56); conservation of the historic environment (Policy 61); and protecting open space (Policy 67) and biodiversity (Policy 69). Policies 10 – 27 set out existing and proposed development opportunities and identify the site-specific requirements to be delivered as part of any proposals coming forward.

1.31 Policy 85 specifically addresses infrastructure delivery and planning obligations. It states that planning permission will only be granted where it can be demonstrated there is, or will be, sufficient infrastructure capacity to support and meet all the requirements arising from the new development. If existing infrastructure will be placed under strain due to the impact of new development, improvements to existing infrastructure or compensatory provision should be made so that an appropriate level of infrastructure is maintained.

1.32 Policy 85 also includes an indicative list of planning obligations that may be sought in the course of applying the other policies of the Local Plan to new development. This includes transport infrastructure; public transport; drainage and flood protection; waste recycling facilities; education; healthcare; leisure

and recreation facilities; community and social facilities; cultural facilities, including public art; emergency services; green infrastructure; open space; and affordable housing. It clarifies that this list is not exhaustive and contributions towards ongoing maintenance may also be required where deemed appropriate.

1.33 With respect to the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, Policy S/2 establishes the strategic planning objectives for the District, many of which are likely to be relevant to the securing of planning obligations. These include part b. protecting local character, built and natural heritage; part c. housing choice; part d. responding to climate change; part e. access to a range of services and facilities; and part f. maximising sustainable travel.

1.34 Policies SS/1 - SS/8 allocate land for development and contain specific development requirements that concern the protection/retention of existing features, the mitigation of impacts, and the provision of new infrastructure. Other policies throughout the plan set out the standards and requirements new development are to meet through the layout, design, and use of land and buildings, including the provision of affordable housing, environmental quality, and the delivery of sustainable transport and infrastructure.

1.35 Policy TI/8 states that planning permission will only be granted for proposals that have made suitable arrangements for the improvement or provision of infrastructure necessary to make the scheme acceptable in planning terms. It establishes that the nature, scale and phasing of any planning obligations sought will be related to the form of the development and its potential impact upon the surrounding area, and that the obligations may include a contribution towards the future maintenance and upkeep of facilities.

1.36 The supporting text to Policy TI/8 sets out an indicative list of infrastructure types to which new schemes may be required to deliver as part of the development or contribute towards, including affordable housing, including for key workers; education (including nursery and pre-school care); health care; public open space, sport and recreation facilities (including strategic open space); improvements (including infrastructure) for pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians, highways and public and community transport; other community facilities (e.g. community centres, youth facilities, library services social care, and the provision of emergency services); landscaping and biodiversity; drainage / flood prevention; waste management (pursuant to the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Minerals and Waste Development Plan); arts and cultural provision; community development workers and youth workers; other utilities and telecommunications; and the preservation or enhancement of the historic landscape or townscape. As well as capital costs, depending on the nature of the services and facilities, contributions may also be required to

meet maintenance and/or operating costs either as pump priming or in perpetuity, provided through an obligation.

1.37 Both Plans were supported by a detailed evidence base. This included an Infrastructure Delivery Study (updated in 2015), which explored infrastructure needs and costs, when and where infrastructure will need to be provided, the scale of funding needed to achieve this, and potential sources of funding. A new study is being prepared to inform the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

1.38 Paragraph 10.47 of Policy TI/8 states that there are some forms of development where contributions will not be sought as set out in national planning practice guidance. It suggests this might apply to custom and self-build housing schemes as well as starter homes. However, since publication of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, no such exemptions have been expressed in national planning practice guidance with respect to the seeking of appropriate s106 obligations. As such, no developments are exempt from securing obligations as required to make a development acceptable in planning terms other than where expressly stated in the Local Plan policies or national policy.

Geographic Extent of this SPD

1.39 While this SPD is to apply to development within either Cambridge City or South Cambridgeshire, the Local Plans acknowledge that each administrative area shares and benefits from infrastructure provided within the other. As such, it is important that the impact of any development should be considered in its widest context rather than constrained by administrative boundaries, and that, as a matter of principle, a development in one Local Planning Authority area could be required to contribute towards infrastructure in another. In the same context, Greater Cambridge sits within a wider sub-region, and there may be instances where infrastructure needs may be better met in neighbouring administrative areas.

Chapter 2: Approach to Planning Obligations

Introduction

2.1 Planning obligations will typically be secured through a s106 Agreement, made under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). Where planning obligations are required, planning permission will not be granted until such time as the s106 Agreement has been prepared and completed by all relevant parties.

2.2 This section of the SPD sets out the process of negotiating, preparing, and completing a s106 Agreement in association with the handling of planning applications in an efficient and timely manner.

2.3 It details the actions required to be undertaken by the applicant and the Councils, as Local Planning Authority, at the pre-application and application stages of the planning application process. It also outlines the procedure for agreeing any planning obligations, and identifies the steps required to be taken before a planning application is formally submitted and during the consideration of a planning application. The main objectives are to ensure that, as far as possible:

- All appropriate information is provided by the applicant and is available from the date of submission of the application (this information should enable the Local Planning Authority and consultees to respond properly to applications); and
- Where approval is recommended, the detailed proposed heads of terms will need to have been agreed prior to the application being considered by the Planning Committee (Cambridge City Council Planning Committee, South Cambridgeshire District Council Planning Committee and the Joint Development Management Committee); such that
- The time taken to complete and issue the agreement (assuming approval is granted) is kept to a minimum.

2.4 The main stages of the procedure are:

- Stage 1: Pre-application;
- Stage 2: Submission of the planning application (including accompanying proposed Heads of Terms, draft Legal Agreement or draft Unilateral Undertaking); and
- Stage 3: Appraisal, validation and agreement of a related planning obligation.

Pre-application stage

What types of obligations might be sought?

2.5 In accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act, the Councils will consider each application on its merits against relevant policy and other material considerations and will negotiate and secure planning obligations on a site-by-site and application-by-application basis.

2.6 While the Councils expect most impacts of development to be mitigated through good design and layout (in accordance with Policies 57 & 59 of the Cambridge City Local Plan and HQ/1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan), some development specific impacts are likely to require physical works or other forms of improvement to mitigate them.

2.7 The possible obligations, set out in this document, are not exhaustive. The SPD focuses on the policy requirements set out in the Local Plans, and the types of obligations likely to arise from applying these. However, the nature of site-specific impacts means they may vary widely depending on the site, its local context, and the nature of the development proposed. It is therefore not possible to list every type of development that might be subject to a planning obligation or to ascribe a set of circumstances under which certain types of obligations will be sought as a norm. The Councils may therefore wish to negotiate other obligations, not included in this SPD, where they are relevant and necessary to a particular development.

2.8 Nevertheless, the purpose in setting out possible obligations is to assist applicants in preparing their planning applications, and to facilitate pre-application discussions around policy requirements, including affordable housing, development impacts, and appropriate mitigation. It is hoped that this ensures negotiations on planning obligations are conducted in a way that is seen to be fair, open and reasonable.

2.9 This SPD not only covers financial contributions but also benefits in kind negotiated as part of planning applications. In many cases provision in kind is preferable and suitable, especially where this secures the timely delivery of the required infrastructure and/or reduces overall construction and management costs.

2.10 Where development sites are proposed to be developed in phases, the Councils will consider the site in its totality and, as far as possible, seek to match the provision of required infrastructure to the pace of the development through the use of appropriate triggers.

Pre-application discussions

2.11 In preparing a planning application, applicants should fully consider the impacts of the proposed development and any planning conditions or obligations that might be required to mitigate those impacts. To assist this process, applicants should have regard to the relevant policies of the development plan, neighbourhood plans (if relevant), and any other material considerations, including supplementary guidance as appropriate.

2.12 Where obligations are likely to be required, applicants are encouraged to engage in pre-application discussions with the Local Planning Authority prior to the formal submission of a planning application (Pre-Application Advice Service) and where relevant, Cambridgeshire County Council. This is particularly important for schemes that trigger an affordable housing requirement in relation to the amount, type and mix of affordable housing to be provided, as agreement at the pre-application stage avoids delays and costs to the applicant at the subsequent submission stage. The pre-application process offers the opportunity for the applicant and Council officers to discuss, without prejudice, the types of obligations to be entered into, and whether these can or should be provided 'in-kind' either on or off site, or whether a financial contribution towards provision is appropriate.

2.13 For strategic scale and complex developments, the Local Planning Authority encourages a collaborative Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) process. Through the PPA, infrastructure requirements and potential obligations are identified and discussed with the applicant team through an iterative process of assessment from a scheme's earliest stages through to submission of the planning application. This is especially advised for phased development proposals and applicants seeking to advance hybrid planning applications.

Submission stage

Submission of the planning application

2.14 Where it is identified that a planning obligation will be required, the applicant should submit with the planning application a draft unilateral undertaking (in the case of straightforward agreements containing financial contributions) or a draft s106 Agreement. Applicants are encouraged to use the Local Planning Authority's standard template for a draft s106 Agreement, which can be obtained from Legal Services. The use of the template will aid in shortening

the time for completion of the agreement. However, in the case of large-scale development proposals (which for the purposes of this SPD is c.100 dwellings or more or c.5,000sqm or more), a detailed proposal setting out draft 'Heads of Terms' (HoT's) should be submitted. Applicants are strongly encouraged to provide financial undertakings (on validation of an application) to cover the cost of the Councils' legal services in reviewing the draft s106 Agreement or HoT's, which should be commenced alongside and at an early stage in the consideration of an application.

2.15 In respect of each obligation, the applicant should ensure the draft s106 Agreement or proposed HoT's quantifies the nature and scale of the obligation, taking account of the requirements of the relevant Development Plan policies and this SPD, and specify how provision is to be made.

2.16 In accordance with national planning policy, there is a presumption that infrastructure to be provided through planning obligations should be provided 'in-kind' and 'on-site'. Where an obligation is to be provided other than 'in-kind' and on site, the draft s106 Agreement or proposed HoT's should explain the reason why this is and should specify whether provision is to be made on an alternative site or by means of a payment in-lieu. Where an obligation is to be provided off-site or by means of a payment in-lieu, the applicant should identify the level of contribution applicable to their proposed development.

2.17 If the applicant considers that, in respect of a particular obligation, no provision should be made, the applicant will need to provide sufficient information with their planning application to support their position.

Title information

2.18 Planning obligations are legally enforceable against the owner(s) (including their successors in title) of the land to which they relate. Only those persons having a legal interest in the land can enter into obligations even if a prospective purchaser/developer of the land has applied for the planning permission (although it is possible for prospective purchasers to be party to the obligations where they have exchanged contracts to purchase).

2.19 Because planning obligations run with the land, all parties with an interest in the land, including owners, lessees and mortgagees, should be signatories. The planning obligations are registered on the Local Land Charges Register, which forms part of the publicly available statutory planning register. Therefore, in addition to the draft s106 Agreement or Heads of Terms, applicants should submit with their planning application all necessary title and deed information as appropriate.

Matters to be taken into account in the drafting of a s106 Agreement

Financial contributions

2.20 The s106 Agreement will set out how the contribution is to be used and may include cascades to ensure that the investment in infrastructure is assured if any infrastructure provider withdraws consent for the identified project, or where more suitable alternative option for meeting the need from a development is identified post completion of the Agreement.

2.21 Financial contributions within s106 Agreements will be payable at specific stages in the development process, usually on commencement or on first occupation of the development. However, there may also be cases, typically for large-scale development, where contributions can be phased, in order to match the proportional impact of each phase of the development.

2.22 Trigger dates for the payment of financial contributions will be included in the s106 Agreement. Typically, the Councils will expect a repayment period to be no less than 10 years and substantially longer for strategic phased schemes. Repayment terms may also depend on the infrastructure to be secured which may require contributions to be pooled with other s106 contributions or alternative funding streams secured to deliver the infrastructure or improvements required.

Maintenance payments

2.23 Where contributions are secured through planning obligations towards the provision of facilities, it may be appropriate for the applicant to make provision for the physical upkeep of those facilities. Such payments may be required for the lifetime of the development, although generally a period of 15 years is standard.

2.24 For all maintenance payments, the Councils and the developer will need to negotiate the type of payments to be made.

Index linking

2.25 Financial contributions relating physical infrastructure, including maintenance sums, will be index linked to the Building Cost Information Service's General Building Cost index to maintain the value of the contribution to implement the

necessary actions required by the agreement. Other indices where a contribution relates to a service could include the Retail Price Index or Consumer Prices Index as appropriate.

2.26 Contributions will be indexed linked from the date that the s106 Agreement was entered into until the time of payment unless the s106 Agreement specifically advises otherwise. In some cases, it may be appropriate for contributions to be linked to an alternative time, such as the date of committee resolution or the consultation date identifying the contribution amount. Indexation provisions will require that no sum in the s106 Agreement shall be reduced as a result of indexation.

Land costs

2.27 In cases where land is required to accommodate the infrastructure required, the cost of land will be a legitimate consideration for inclusion in the cost of the infrastructure.

2.28 Regarding the types of infrastructure that should include land value within an obligation, the general rule of thumb is that for infrastructure typically or required to be delivered on-site to mitigate or meet the needs of the development, the land cost should be treated as a developer cost and be excluded. However, if provision is otherwise i.e. off-site or a contribution towards off-site provision, then the land value cost should be included.

2.29 In the circumstance where a new facility is required to meet unmet needs beyond that generated by a development itself, the developer should be entitled to offset the cost of the additional provision, including a pro rata land cost should the additional provision require an increased land area.

Transfer of land / facilities

2.30 Occasionally obligations will require land or facilities to be transferred to the relevant Council or another public body, usually in respect of public realm, highways, community or sports facilities and open space obligations. In such cases the s106 Agreement will contain a requirement to pay the Council's or public body's legal costs in respect of the land transfer and provisions relating to the condition of the land to be transferred.

Legal costs

2.31 The legal costs of a s106 Agreement are an impact of a development, one which the Councils would not have to bear if the development were not to take place.

2.32 For legal costs associated with the preparation of the s106 Agreement, any deeds of variation, or review of any unilateral undertaking, the applicant will be asked to cover the Council's legal costs. The Developer's legal adviser will be expected to provide the Council's Legal Services with an undertaking to pay the Council's reasonable legal fees within 48 hours of any such request and in any event before Legal Services commences any work related to the matter. In the limited cases where a Developer is not legally represented and as such cannot provide a solicitor's undertaking, the Developer will be expected to make a payment on account of costs prior to any work being undertaken by Legal Services.

2.33 The Council's Legal Service will be able to advise applicants on the legal fees. In the event that the actual fees incurred amount to less than the sum paid on account, the difference will be repaid. The Council's legal fees are payable whether or not the matter proceeds to completion i.e. in the event that the agreement/undertaking is drafted but not completed for whatever reason such as where planning permission is refused or where the developer decides not to proceed with the development proposal. Early provision of an undertaking to pay the Council's legal fees is strongly encouraged.

2.34 In all cases applicants are expected to provide timely comments on draft s106 Agreements, to ensure interested parties are sighted on the need for timely feedback on a travelling draft Agreement and expedite the signing of these once the draft Agreement is settled.

Monitoring and administration costs

2.35 Monitoring of obligations will be undertaken by the Councils to ensure all obligations entered into are complied with on the part of both the developer and the Council.

2.36 In addition to Council's legal costs, developers entering into s106 Agreements or Unilateral Undertakings will be required to pay a monitoring fee to cover the costs incurred by the relevant Council in the monitoring of the obligations or associated bespoke conditions and reporting on s106 agreements as required

by government guidance. The charging of a monitoring fee is provided for under Section 11 of the Local Government Act 1972, Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011, and is reflected in the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended).

2.37 The fee will cover officer resource and time in maintaining a dedicated database, logging agreements, checking triggers, determining indexed amounts, issuing of demand notices, arranging receipt of contributions, alerting and checking that they are used by service areas, making sure that records are kept of discharge of clauses, responding to solicitor enquiries and publishing annual Infrastructure Funding Statements etc.

2.38 For monitoring and administrative costs, the Councils will include within a s106 Agreement an amount to cover these costs. For developments in South Cambridgeshire a proportion of this contribution may be transferred to the Parish Council to cover additional costs associated with administering s106 contributions (including but not limited to additional Clerk expenses and financial audits which would not have been incurred were it not for the development). The current fee schedule is provided below:

- A base fee of £750 with additional fees set out below based on the content of the deed:

  a. An additional fee of £1,000 where the deed contains financial contributions
  b. An additional fee of £1,000 where the deed contains covenants relating to public open space (with the fee applying to each development phase or timing for public open space being provided)
  c. An additional fee of £500 where the deed contains covenants relating to affordable housing
  d. An additional fee of £500 is required for each covenant which the Council is required to approve or review a scheme that does not relate to public open space or affordable housing (i.e. approval of a "Custom Build Strategy", “Employment and Skills Plan” etc)
- A minimum fee of £250 per each deed of variation or supplemental agreement depending on the terms of any variation or supplemental agreement

2.39 Additionally, proportionate monitoring contributions may be required by Cambridgeshire County Council. These fees can be viewed here.

2.40 The monitoring fee associated with strategic and complex developments will continue to be negotiated on a case-by-case basis and may derive high values, for example, when developing a highly contaminated site requiring

specialist independent verification of data related to mitigation. All monitoring fees will be subject to indexation and will be increased annually on 1 April.

Late payments and enforcement

2.41 In the event of any delay in making any payment required under a s106 Agreement, interest shall be charged on the amount payable at the rate of five per cent per annum above the annual Bank of England base lending rate, from the date that the relevant payment falls due to the date of actual payment. Indexation will continue to run until payment is made. In the rare event of scheduled payments being agreed the sum charged will include interest at the rate normally charged by the Councils in addition to any indexing due.

2.42 Planning obligations are enforceable against the signatories to the s106 Agreement and anyone who subsequently acquires an interest in the land. The Councils will enforce obligations through the relevant legal channels once other reasonable approaches to address non-compliance with obligations have been taken. In such cases, the Councils will seek to retrieve its legal costs in taking action from the party that is in breach of its obligations as well as any additional indexation or interest on the sum that is due.

Appraisal, validation and agreement of a related planning obligation

2.43 In assessing the merits of the planning application and associated material considerations, regard will be had to requirements of the SPD as they relate to the proposed development, any comments received as part of the planning application process, and to the detail provided in the draft unilateral undertaking, draft s106 Agreement, or proposed Heads of Terms. All of these matters will form part of the assessment of the application proposals by the planning case officer and the planning obligations to be sought.

2.44 It is the responsibility of planning officers to consider whether it is appropriate, in policy and legal (Regulation 122 of the CIL Regulations) terms, to seek or accept planning obligations in respect of an individual application. The case officer will provide a summary of their assessment, in the form of a CIL compliance table, within their delegated report or report to Planning Committee. Where appropriate, the planning case officer will obtain, from Legal Services, legal advice as to the scope of permissible planning obligations and the content and form of the proposed agreement/undertaking.

Statutory consultation

2.45 Planning applications, Design and Access Statements, Environmental Statements, alongside other submitted documents, will be the subject of public and statutory consultation in accordance with the Greater Cambridge Statement of Community Involvement.

2.46 Consultation will be undertaken by the Local Planning Authority as soon as possible after applications have been validated and registered. As necessary, other relevant departments of the Councils will also be consulted on the detail of the planning application including the proposed planning obligations offered or to be sought in the draft unilateral undertaking, draft s106 Agreement or draft Head of Terms.

2.47 Where applicable, comments received from consultees will be discussed with the applicant where changes to likely obligations may be sought prior to the planning application being formally determined.

Viability considerations

2.48 Planning obligations are a necessary cost of development and it will be expected that the likely cost of obligations, including requirements for affordable housing provision, will be factored into the development cost from an early stage. Furthermore, both Local Plans have been informed by evidence of infrastructure and affordable housing need and supported by a proportionate assessment of viability that took into account all relevant policies, and local and national standards including the cost implications of planning obligations. Therefore, if a developer is seeking to raise viability concerns regarding the obligations due, the onus will be on the developer to provide robust information regarding the viability of an individual scheme.

2.49 Where an applicant reasonably believes their development proposal cannot fully provide the applicable obligations required by the Local Plan due to exceptional site circumstances, the Council will consider whether the particular circumstances justify a tailored approach to the delivery of a scheme. In order to determine such applications, the applicant is required to submit an open book financial viability assessment, reflecting the current recommended approach set out in National Planning Guidance.

2.50 It is important that the information provided for use in a financial viability assessment is accurate and assumptions will need to be clearly shown in any assessment used, so the Local Planning Authority can understand how the assumptions are made.

Requirements for open book appraisals

- Identify and justify (with comparable evidence where appropriate) all development value and cost variables specifying any ‘exceptional’ cost items with supporting evidence in writing from a reputable cost consultant;
- Adhere to the standard conventions in terms of appraisal calculations not least regarding developer’s profit;
- Specify all assumptions made concerning the provision of affordable housing and planning obligations;
- Provide up to date market evidence of current uses, costs and values to support Existing Use Values, where they are affected;
- Identify, in cash flow terms, the effect of deferred contributions;
- Demonstrate that the development proposal in financial terms is the only feasible option when compared to other possibilities including any role played by public sectors providers of ‘gap’ funding; and
- Satisfy where necessary any Independent Assessor’s evaluation.

2.51 A detailed list of requirements and expected sources is set out at Appendix B.

2.52 In cases where a dispute relates to the viability of a proposal, and in any case where the Local Planning Authority considers it appropriate, an independent financial assessor may be required. The assessor will be appointed by the Local Planning Authority, and the reasonable costs of the assessment will be met by the applicant. The independent financial assessor’s report will be provided to the Local Planning Authority and the applicant.

2.53 Where the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the proposed development cannot, for financial viability reasons, fully provide the obligations due, priority will be given to those obligations necessary to manage the most significant impacts of the proposed development and to the priorities provided in policy or as determined by the Local Planning Authority, taking account of the specifics of the site.

2.54 Issues regarding viability must be resolved, to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, before any meaningful negotiations can commence on the planning obligations to be secured.

2.55 Any viability assessment used to inform the determination of the planning application, should be prepared on the basis that it will be made publicly available other than in exceptional circumstances. Requests for confidentiality will be reasonably considered on a case-by-case basis, with material deemed

commercially sensitive redacted where justified. Even in those circumstances, an executive summary should be made publicly available.

2.56 To take account of changes in economic conditions, and in respect of development schemes where a much lower level of obligation than required by Local Plan policies or this SPD was agreed at the date of the planning permission, the Councils may require the inclusion of a viability review mechanism within the s106 Agreement to assess whether a higher level of obligation can be achieved at a later point. The review mechanism will reflect current best practice with the threshold, methodology, and the timing of any scheme re-appraisal to be determined on a case-by-case basis having regard to the level of shortfall in the obligation(s) due, the complexity of the development, the underlying causes of viability, and whether the development is phased.

2.57 Review mechanism provisions will include appropriate dispute resolution clauses allowing parties to refer the matter to RICS or the Law Society to appoint an arbitrator or independent expert for valuation in the case of disagreement. Any additional provisions will be capped at policy required levels and in all instances the review mechanism cannot be used to reduce further the policy requirements of the development.

Negotiation and agreeing the obligations

2.58 Once a planning application is submitted, Council officers will review the planning obligations proposed by the applicant alongside comments received from consultation and will confirm whether the obligations are acceptable or not.

2.59 In those circumstances where the Local Planning Authority is not satisfied with the proposed obligations or the form of the draft s106 Agreement or proposed Heads of Terms, it will advise the applicant of this, will set out what the Local Planning Authority considers would be acceptable obligations to be sought, and will provide an indicative timeframe for continued negotiations.

2.60 The Local Planning Authority is unlikely to present applications for approval unless the applicant agrees in principle to the draft s106 Agreement or to the detailed proposed Heads of Terms to be reflected in a planning obligation, both of which will normally include triggers for the discharging of each respective obligation.

2.61 For planning applications, where the Local Planning Authority considers the draft s106 Agreement or proposed Heads of Terms to be acceptable, the

Local Planning Authority will agree with the applicant that this be reported, along with the planning application and any other material considerations, to the Planning Committee for determination.

2.62 Should the undertaking, s106 Agreement or Heads of Terms not be completed or agreed in principle within agreed timescales, Council officers will consider refusing the application based on a failure to secure appropriate mitigation.

Post decision process

2.63 Where planning obligations are to be secured by means of a signed unilateral undertaking that has been agreed with the Council's legal team prior to the planning application being determined, if the application is approved (subject to the completion of the planning obligation) without further modification, the decision notice will be issued and, after payments of relevant costs where applicable, the undertaking will be placed on the local land charges register.

2.64 Where the draft s106 Agreement has been agreed in principle, prior to the application being determined, if the application is approved either by way of delegated powers or Committee decision, the s106 Agreement will then be formally completed and sealed prior to the decision notice being issued and the s106 Agreement being placed on the local land charges register.

2.65 The Local Planning Authority will work with applicants to finalise s106 agreements in a timely manner and will impose a long-stop deadline of 12 weeks, unless the parties both agree to a short extension.

Varying planning obligations

2.66 The principles for modifying planning obligations are set out in Section 106A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). Applicants are encouraged to seek pre-application advice prior to making a formal s106A application to vary previously agreed planning obligations. Where the request forms part of a fresh planning application (either as a s73 or standalone application), the application and supporting documents should be submitted via the Planning Portal. Requests to vary previously agreed planning obligations outside the application process should be made in writing to the Joint Director of Planning following guidance on Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service website.

2.67 Where a s106A application is made to vary a planning obligation in an existing agreement or undertaking, the costs associated with varying the

obligation, including negotiation, preparation and drafting of such variation, legal fees, and costs associated with independent assessment of viability (where relevant) must be met by the applicant.

2.68 Variations to an existing s106 Agreement may only be done by way of a Deed (except in relation to the modification or discharge of affordable housing requirements). In determining such applications, the Local Planning Authority will have regard to whether the obligation "no longer serve a useful purpose" or whether it "continues to serve a useful purpose…equally well" as modified. These principles will be the underlying considerations.

2.69 A person against whom an affordable housing requirement is enforceable may apply to the Council for its variation or modification pursuant to s106A.

2.70 Prior to submitting a s106A application to vary a planning obligation, applicants are encouraged to talk with the Local Planning Authority about the options available. Often the solution lies with varying the planning application itself, such as altering the mix of uses or the housing mix, to better address market needs and to improve the viability of the granted scheme. Other options included varying the payment schedule or the timing for delivery of obligations, to assist in improving cash flow.

2.71 Where the council is satisfied that an otherwise desirable development cannot be fully policy compliant and remain viable, a reduced package of planning obligations may be recommended.

2.72 Where viability has been raised by the applicant as a reason for the variation or discharge of an obligation, and the Local Planning Authority considers that a viability assessment (see 'Viability Considerations' above) is required to enable the Council to assess the viability of the development. The applicant will be required to provide any necessary cost and income figures to the Local Planning Authority and pay the Council's reasonable costs in appointing consultants to undertake the assessment.

Reporting

2.73 The Councils recognises that it is important that developers entering into planning obligations know where, when and how their money will be spent. The Councils maintain Records of financial and non-financial planning obligations including details of the developments site, relevant dates for the receipt of funds, the purpose of the obligation and the level of funding.

2.74 The value of contributions received and spent is reported and published annually in an Infrastructure Funding Statement that can be found via the respective Council websites for Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire, and Cambridgeshire County Council.

Chapter 3: How to use this SPD

3.1 Each of the following chapters deals with a specific type of infrastructure or obligation that may need to be secured applying the policies of the Development Plan. The types of infrastructure or mitigation applicable will depend on the land use proposed (residential, commercial, mixed-use etc), its scale, location, and its impacts (environmental, economic, social) both on the immediate and wider area.

3.2 Each chapter is broadly structured the same way:

Introduction – briefly summarises what the infrastructure / mitigation need is and its role/importance in relation to new development and growth.

Policy context – provides a summary of the key Local Plan policies relevant to the infrastructure topic, including any material considerations. As a summary of the policy context, not every potentially relevant policy may be listed and, therefore, applicants should still refer to the Development Plan when determining applicable policies specific to their proposal. In particular, it should be noted that Area Action Plans may have area specific policies. Neighbourhood Plans also include policies on a range of matters addressed in the SPD, so should also be consulted. In addition, there are other adopted Supplementary Planning documents that may be a material consideration.

Development types from which obligations will be sought – sets out the types of development, land use, or impact that may require mitigation or provision. This includes any relevant development thresholds specified in national or Local Plan policy.

Types of obligations – sets out the different types of measures that may be sought depending on policy requirements and the nature and scale of the impacts to be managed.

Form in which contributions / obligations should be made – establishes the preferred approach to securing provision, such as onsite, in-kind, offsite, or a financial contribution in lieu, and how the scale of the obligation will be determined. Where appropriate, it specifies other matters the Local Planning Authority may wish to manage through the obligation, including the timing or phasing of delivery and the submission of plans or strategies to assist with implementation, ongoing management, and/or monitoring.

Exemptions – sets out any land uses or forms of development that would be expected to be exempt from providing an obligation.

Further Guidance – sets out further guidance that may be relevant to an applicant in considering the nature and scope of the obligation.

Chapter 4: Affordable Housing

Introduction

4.1 Ensuring the delivery of affordable housing is long established as an integral part of Government and Local Plan policy and is essential in meeting the housing needs of, and providing housing choice to, people with different income levels and facilitating sustainable local communities.

4.2 This section of the SPD explains the Councils' approach to the delivery of affordable housing through s106 planning obligations. It is supplementary to and expands upon the Local Plan policies for affordable housing, which are set out in the Cambridge City Local Plan (Policy 45) and the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (Policy H/10 and H/11). It explains how the policies will be applied and provides additional information on what will be expected when dealing with planning applications for development for which an element of affordable housing should be provided.

The need for affordable housing

4.3 The Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2024 – 2029 and the associated Annexes, provide a summary of some of the key evidence and data sources which help to inform the Housing Strategy and Local Plan policies. It sets out:

- that average house prices across Greater Cambridge are well above the regional and national average.
- that the median house price to income ratio is high: 9.2 in Cambridge and 8.3 in South Cambridgeshire.
- there are approximately 4,270 applicants across Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire's council housing registers for social/affordable rent homes.
- there is a need across Greater Cambridge for c.750 additional social/affordable rent homes to be provided per annum up to 2040.
- This represents c.44% of the total strategic housing need for Greater Cambridge, although the Housing Needs Assessment (GL Hearn, Housing Needs of Specific Groups in Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk, 2021) emphasises that the scale of need suggests that the local authorities should continue to seek as much affordable housing delivery as viability allows.
- there is need for both social rent homes, and affordable rent homes, in accordance with Annex 4 of the Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2024-2029 - Affordable Rents Policy.

- that the clear need for additional rented housing would arguably mean that providing affordable home ownership would 'prejudice the ability' to meet the acute need for rented affordable housing.
- the evidence suggests a significant shortfall of affordable housing of all sizes of accommodation, most notably one- and two-bedroom homes. However, the greatest need, relative to supply, is for family affordable housing, which also reflects the inability of market housing to cater for lower income larger households.

4.4 Overall, the demand for affordable housing is projected to continue to increase due to shortages in overall housing supply; high and increasing house prices relative to incomes; the requirement for larger deposits to access home ownership; increasing housing costs; and the impacts of benefit caps.

Policy context

Cambridge

4.5 Cambridge Local Plan 2018 Policy 45: Affordable Housing and Dwelling Mix requires 25% of homes on sites of 11-14 dwellings to be affordable, and 40% on sites of 15 or more dwellings, or if the proposed residential units exceed 1,000 sqm.

South Cambridgeshire

4.6 South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 Policy H/10: Affordable Housing requires 40% affordable homes on all sites of 11 or more dwellings or if the proposed residential units exceed 1,000 sqm.

4.7 The policies in both adopted Local Plans refer to sites of 11 or more dwellings, however in November 2018 the planning committees of both Councils agreed to require affordable housing on sites of 10 or more dwellings in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

4.8 The South Cambridgeshire Local Plan also includes the provision of affordable housing for local people through Rural Exception Sites (Policy H/11).

Greater Cambridge (Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire)

4.9 Following public consultation, both Councils adopted a new joint housing strategy: Homes for Our Future Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2024 – 2029. This will be considered as a material planning consideration when determining planning applications that include a component of residential development, including affordable housing and non-conventional housing.

Development types from which obligations will be sought

4.10 Affordable housing will be sought from all forms of residential developments, including mixed-use that trigger the above policy thresholds.

4.11 The best use must be made of development sites in accordance with planning policies on design and density, and the overall objectives for sustainable development. The Councils will look closely at proposals that fall short of the affordable housing thresholds to make sure the optimum use of land is achieved. This includes the situation where a planning application forms part of a larger site where development of the larger site would be within the above policy threshold.

Form in which obligations should be made

4.12 On-site provision is the Council's preference for how affordable housing will be provided by developers. Only where exceptional circumstances exist, and where the Council is satisfied that it would be appropriate, will off-site provision be accepted. Where exceptionally housing cannot be provided on or off-site, a commuted sum will be required in lieu of provision to secure delivery of affordable housing on sites elsewhere. The method for calculating the contribution in lieu of provision is set out at paragraphs 4.33-4.36 below.

Perpetuity

4.13 The Councils require all social and affordable rent housing to remain available as affordable housing for future eligible households. Where properties are sold, the Councils would expect as much as possible of the capital receipts to be re-invested into affordable housing in the Greater Cambridge area, to meet the high levels of need identified locally. To ensure that affordable housing continues to be affordable to those in housing need, and managed to acceptable standards, the Councils require the legal interest and management of the affordable housing secured through s106 obligations (with the exception

of certain types of non-conventional affordable housing) to be transferred to a Registered Provider (RP), including the Council or equivalent. If the housing is transferred to an RP or the Council, these requirements will be deemed to have been met.

4.14 Shared ownership or other forms of low-cost home ownership will remain affordable in perpetuity but may be subject to occupiers 'stair-casing' to full ownership by purchasing additional equity in the property.

Nominations

4.15 For social/affordable rented properties, the Council will require nomination rights for 100% of initial lettings and 75% of relets. These will be required to be made available to those on the Home-Link Housing Register through the sub-regional choice-based lettings scheme (or its successor).

4.16 For Affordable Private Rent within a Build to Rent development, whilst the Councils will not seek nominations, there will be a requirement to agree the criteria for allocation.

Tenure mix

4.17 The Local Plan policies for affordable housing do not set out an expected tenure split. Annex 2 of The Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2024 – 2029 – Affordable Housing Requirements - states that the Councils are seeking to provide consistency in the tenure mix to be delivered through affordable housing obligations across Greater Cambridge. The aim is to ensure affordable housing provision best meets local housing needs having regard to the form of the housing development (i.e. flats or houses), its location, and any other site-specific considerations.

4.18 The percentage of affordable housing and tenure split will be rounded up to the nearest whole number.

Affordable housing mix by bedroom

4.19 The Councils' expectations on the affordable housing mix by bedrooms, as a starting point, is set out in Tables 2 & 3 of Annex 2 of the Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2024 – 2029 – Affordable Housing Requirements - for the City and South Cambridgeshire respectively.

4.20 In establishing the right mix of affordable housing sizes for a particular development, the Councils will consider matters such as the overall housing mix proposed for the scheme, the form of the development (flats or houses), changes to the profile of affordable housing applicants, and the turnover of existing affordable housing stock that becomes available. The Councils expectations are that the affordable housing provision will mirror the housing mix being promoted across the development proposal, unless there is clear evidence that an alternative mix would better meet local affordable housing needs. As such, applicants for new developments are strongly encouraged to engage the Housing Strategy Team early in the scheme design stage to understand the latest position with respect to the sizes of social/affordable rent, shared ownership homes, and other affordable tenures needed.

4.21 The mix for rural exception sites will be decided separately based on a specific local needs assessment for the village in which the development is located.

Phased development

4.22 Where developments are to be phased, the Councils will work to ensure that affordable housing delivery is maximised across the build out, whilst also ensuring any required infrastructure is delivered concurrently. Due to the longer delivery time, likely changes in market conditions and associated costs will need to be forecast to ensure that a development is deliverable and maximises the amount of affordable housing that can be provided.

4.23 The Councils will generally accept the phasing of schemes where it can be demonstrated that this approach would result in a policy compliant level of affordable homes being delivered within each phase or would secure the maximum provision of affordable housing across the scheme as a whole.

4.24 The Councils may require phased developments to submit a viability assessment if during any phase of the development, the amount of affordable housing being delivered during that phase decreases. The Councils will also expect a revised viability assessment to be submitted where any phase of the scheme has unavoidably stalled for 12 months or more. For the avoidance of doubt, any reduction in the amount of housing being delivered by the development as whole, would be subject to a Section 106A application to modify the applicable planning obligations of the original agreement. If the Councils do not consider a s106A application appropriate, due to the loss of affordable housing, a s73 application to amend the parent planning permission may be required.

4.25 If the Councils are minded to grant planning permission for phased development that proposes to deliver a below Local Plan policy compliant level of affordable housing, an obligation will be required to submit enhanced viability assessments at Early, Mid and Late stages. Applicants will need to justify any projected and abnormal development costs associated with the phasing in an Early-stage viability assessment. Any assumptions relating to projected changes in values and cost should be fully justified, based upon the local market conditions, and be reasonable and consistent with long-term new build trends, current market conditions and market expectations.

Negotiation of affordable housing

4.26 The Councils will seek all development sites of over 10 homes to be policy compliant. The affordable housing should be discussed with the Housing Strategy Team during the pre-application stage, to include property and tenure type, sizes, and location, in order to streamline the passage of the application through the planning process.

4.27 All relevant information regarding the affordable housing provision, including the tenure, type and size of all affordable housing units being provided, nomination rights and any other agreements, should be submitted as part of a planning application within a relevant application document (e.g. Affordable Housing Statements or Planning Statements). Plans of the proposed site layout should clarify the location of the affordable homes within the development, whilst planning application documents (e.g. Affordable Housing Statements, Design and Access Statements, or Planning Statements) should clarify how the proposed layout has been determined.

4.28 The Councils recognise that a number of factors can impact on the ability of a development to provide the expected proportion, tenure split and mix of affordable housing and comply with all other policy requirements. Where a deviation from the Councils' expected affordable housing requirements is proposed (e.g. an alternative tenure split), justification for why this is necessary should be set out in the Affordable Housing or Planning Statement accompanying the planning application. However, it should be noted that the Councils will not accept an inflated land value as justification for a departure from the requirements of this SPD and the Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy.

4.29 With respect to proposals for non-conventional and innovative housing models proposing non-policy compliant affordable housing offers, applicants will need

to explain how the proposed type of housing will contribute to meeting specific housing needs in Greater Cambridge.

4.30 Should the Council consider that the proportion of affordable housing or the proposed mix between social/affordable rent and shared ownership/ other housing tenures is not acceptable, permission for the development may be refused.

4.31 The Councils have established good relationships with a number of Registered Providers (RPs), as well as working through its own newbuild teams, that operate effectively in partnership with the Councils to provide affordable housing that meets local housing needs. The Housing Strategy Team encourages developers to meet their affordable housing obligations by forming a partnership with an RP. In the exceptional circumstance, where a developer is unable to contract with an RP, the developer is encouraged to engage with the Housing Strategy Team to see if they can assist with getting an RP on board or to agree an alternative approach.

Mortgagee in possession clause

4.32 The Councils support the inclusion of a Mortgagee in Possession clause within the s106 Agreement that allows a Registered Provider to maximise their borrowing power against their assets, so that they can invest in new affordable housing provision. Annex 2 of the Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy includes a standard Mortgagee in Possession clause.

Calculation of payments in lieu of on-site provision

4.33 Although the preference is to negotiate on-site affordable housing, where it can be demonstrated that on-site provision is not possible or appropriate, a financial contribution towards the future provision of affordable housing may be acceptable and justified.

4.34 The terms for payments in lieu will be financially neutral in respect of the benefit to the applicant relative to onsite provision requirements. A valuation will be undertaken by an independent valuer jointly agreed between the Council and the applicant, with any cost associated with the valuation met by the applicant. The independent valuer will be asked to provide their professional opinion on the following:

- The land value of the whole site without an on-site affordable housing contribution, and
- The land value of the site with an on-site affordable housing contribution where the amount of free serviced land is based on the notional scheme for the site

4.35 The commuted sum will be calculated based upon the difference in the residual value of the scheme as a 100% private housing scheme versus an affordable housing policy compliant scheme.

4.36 Commuted sums in lieu of on-site affordable housing provision received by the Councils will be ring-fenced to secure efficient delivery of new affordable housing within Greater Cambridge, including through Councils own affordable housing programme.

Exemptions

4.37 Apart from the exemptions set out in the Local Plan policies, there are no exemptions from providing affordable housing on suitably sized schemes.

Further guidance

4.38 Further details about the overarching strategy for delivering affordable housing, the need for affordable housing, and the need to provide housing for specific groups can be found in the Greater Cambridge's 2024- 2029 Housing Strategy and associated Annexes.

Chapter 5: Green Infrastructure

Introduction

5.1 Green infrastructure consists of multi-functional networks of protected open space, woodlands, wildlife habitat, parks, registered commons, village and town greens, nature reserves, waterways and bodies of water, historic parks and gardens, and historic landscapes. Different aspects of green infrastructure provide recreational and/or cultural experiences, while supporting and enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity, enhancing air and/or water quality and enriching the quality of life of local communities.

5.2 Both Councils have endorsed Natural Cambridgeshire's vision for doubling nature by 2050. South Cambridgeshire District adopted the Doubling Nature Strategy in February 2021, recognising the role development management and planning obligations play in the protection and enhancement of nature, and provision of green space. Cambridge City Council Biodiversity Strategy 2022 recognises the pressure rapid growth places on Green Infrastructure and the need protect and enhance biodiversity whilst also ensuring there is sufficient outdoor recreational space for residents to be able to access and enjoy.

Policy Context

Cambridge

5.3 Cambridge Local Plan 2018 Policy 8: Setting of the City supports Development on the urban edge, including sites within and abutting green infrastructure corridors and the Cambridge Green Belt, open spaces and the River Cam corridor, where it: a). responds to, conserves and enhances the setting, and special character of the city, in accordance with the Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment 2003, Green Belt assessments, Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy and their successor documents; b). promotes access to the surrounding countryside/open space, where appropriate; and c). safeguards the best and most versatile agricultural land unless sustainable development considerations and the need for development are sufficient to override the need to protect the agricultural value of land; and d). includes landscape improvement proposals that strengthen or recreate the well-defined and vegetate urban edge, improve visual amenity and enhance biodiversity.

5.4 This is complemented by Policy 68: Open Space and Recreation Provision through New Development, which seeks to deliver new on-site open space, or appropriate contributions to off-site provision.

South Cambridgeshire

5.5 South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 Policy NH/6 Green Infrastructure requires that all new developments contribute towards the enhancement of the green infrastructure network within the district. These contributions will include the establishment, enhancement and the on-going management costs.

Greater Cambridge (Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire)

5.6 The Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011) identifies a range of opportunities for enhancement in and around the district and has Cambridge and the surrounding area as one of its strategic areas. The Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Baseline Report, produced to support the emerging local plan, also identifies a network of enhancement opportunities. Natural England's Green Infrastructure (GI) Framework can be useful in helping to plan the quality and quantity of any GI required. In addition, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy also sets out local biodiversity opportunities and accessible natural greenspace measures that new development proposals should have regard to.

Development types from which Obligations will be sought

5.7 All new residential and commercial development is to make provision to enhance the Green Infrastructure network.

Form in which contributions should be made

5.8 Applications should consider and detail how they are addressing the requirement to enhance the Green Infrastructure network. Development should be designed to meet Natural England's 15 Green Infrastructure Principles and Major development should have a GI plan including a long-term delivery and management plan.

Cambridge

5.9 There may be significant opportunities to retrofit green infrastructure in urban environments. These can be realised through:

- green roof systems and roof gardens;
- green walls to provide insulation or shading and cooling;
- new tree planting or altering the management of land (e.g. management of verges to enhance biodiversity).

5.10 Reflecting Policy 8, development sites on the urban edge will be expected to provide opportunities to extend or enhance the Green Infrastructure network directly as part of their development. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis reflecting the wider aspirations of the development plan.

5.11 The informal open space standard, which forms part of the public open space standards addressed in chapter 14, incorporates natural greenspace.

South Cambridgeshire

5.12 Reflecting Policy NH/6 and its requirement for all development to contribute to the GI network, where GI enhancement is not part of an onsite proposal, offsite contributions to address the needs generated by a development may be considered acceptable. Contributions will be based upon Natural England's advice and recommended standards of provision, and the cost of acquiring land and maintaining it.

5.13 The cost of acquiring agricultural land is currently estimated at £20,000 per hectare, while the cost of creating green infrastructure on that land is c.£6,500 with maintenance of c.£2,000 per hectare per annum (Infrastructure Costing Review – Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations SPD July 2025).

Exemptions

5.14 Apart from any exemptions set out in the Local Plan policies, there are no exemptions from providing enhancements to the Green Infrastructure network on suitably sized schemes.

Further guidance

Cambridge

- Cambridge Biodiversity Strategy Cambridge City Council (2022)

South Cambridgeshire

- South Cambridgeshire Doubling Nature Strategy, South Cambridgeshire District Council (2021)
- South Cambridgeshire Zero Carbon and Doubling Nature Action Plan, South Cambridgeshire District Council (2021)

Greater Cambridge (Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire)

- Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy Cambridgeshire County Council (2011)
- Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Baseline Report Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council (2020)
- Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Recommendations Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council (2021)
- Greater Cambridge Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council (2022)

Other Sources

- Green Infrastructure Framework - Principles and Standards for England Natural England (2023)
- The Cambridge Nature Network: A nature recovery network for Cambridge and its surrounds Final Report Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire (2021)

Chapter 6: Biodiversity

Introduction

6.1 The Greater Cambridge Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document was adopted in 2022 and provides detail on how developments should address biodiversity and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). This Planning Obligations SPD focuses on the financial mechanisms and how it will be addressed in s106 Agreements.

Policy Context

Cambridge

6.2 Cambridge Local Plan 2018 Policy 70: Protection of Priority Species and Habitats, requires no net loss in biodiversity. In addition, a range of other policies address matters that could relate to or impact on biodiversity.

South Cambridgeshire

6.3 South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 Policy NH/4: Biodiversity, requires no net loss in biodiversity. In addition, a range of other policies address matters that could relate to or impact on biodiversity.

Greater Cambridge (Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire)

6.4 Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Biodiversity SPD (2022) provides practical advice and guidance on how to develop proposals that comply with the NPPF and the district-wide policies. The SPD guidance foresawe changes subsequently brought about through the Environment Act 2021, including the introduction of statutory BNG of 10%. However, the SPD is more ambitious in seeking an aspiration to achieve 20% BNG where possible. For clarity, developers are required to deliver the statutory 10% net gain but are encouraged to go further to assist the Councils in meeting their 20% aspiration.

6.5 In respect of delivery of BNG, the SPD advises that the Councils will seek to use planning conditions to secure on site habitat creation and its long-term management, and obligations, such as s106 Agreements, where BNG is on land outside the applicant's control.

Development types from which Obligations will be sought

6.6 BNG is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021). Schedule 7A defines what types of development are eligible for statutory BNG provision.

6.7 Under Schedule 7A, the types of development eligible for statutory BNG provision generally include:

1. Major developments: These are developments as defined by the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010, which include:
    - Residential developments of 10 or more homes or on sites larger than 0.5 hectares.
    - Non-residential developments with a floorspace of 1,000 square meters or more, or on sites larger than 1 hectare.
2. Minor developments: While initially minor developments (fewer than 10 homes or smaller commercial developments) were not required to meet BNG requirements, changes have meant that a range of minor developments are now encompassed by statutory BNG provisions.
3. Nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIPs): Large-scale infrastructure projects, such as transportation, energy, or water infrastructure, fall under statutory BNG requirements as per the Environment Act.
4. Development on public land: Any development by public authorities or on public land that triggers planning approval will generally be subject to the BNG provisions.

6.8 There are exemptions for certain types of developments, including:

- Householder applications (extensions, renovations, etc.).
- Development within the curtilage of existing homes.
- Self-build and custom build housing under a certain development and plot size.
- Some permitted development rights projects.

A full list of exemptions can be found on the Government website: Biodiversity net gain: exempt developments

Key Aspects of Statutory BNG

- Developers must ensure at least **10% biodiversity net gain** compared to the pre-development baseline.

- BNG can be delivered **on-site** or **off-site** (through purchasing biodiversity credits or enhancing nearby habitats).
- The biodiversity improvements must be maintained for at least **30 years**.

6.9 These provisions aim to ensure that new developments contribute positively to the environment, enhancing habitats and ecosystems alongside development projects. The Biodiversity SPD encourages 20% but does not set this as a requirement.

Form in which an obligation is made

6.10 For the purposes of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), s106 Agreements are one of the mechanisms under paragraph 9 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021) necessary to secure the maintenance of significant onsite habitat enhancements for at least 30 years. They are also required to register sites with the UK government for offsite gains (unless conservation covenants are used). Certain exemptions to statutory BNG apply as set out in the above legislation.

6.11 If BNG is required from a development proposal, a condition is imposed on a planning permission to secure its provision and development cannot commence until the condition is discharged. BNG can be achieved onsite, offsite (through an associated s106 Agreement) or through the purchase of statutory biodiversity credits. In respect of both onsite and offsite provision, applicants should have regard to local biodiversity characteristics and local needs as informed by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Cambridgeshire 2025.

6.12 As such, how BNG is delivered is determined on a case-by-case basis depending upon the context and constraints present at each site which will inform how and where biodiversity net gain can be delivered and whether a pre-existing s106 Agreement is in place at a recognised habitat bank. Such s106 Agreements will be with the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and the landowners and managers of the habitat banks and will be required to set out the appropriate long-term management and monitoring arrangements for off-site BNG.

6.13 Applicants must ensure that planning applications are supported by adequate ecological information, using up-to-date desk studies and site assessment by competent ecologists to inform survey methodologies sufficient in scope to allow the impact of a proposal to be appropriately assessed. This includes householders and developers of small sites, where there may be unexpected risks of impacts to habitats and species. Depending on the nature, scale and location of the development proposal, applicants will likely need to provide the following:

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA)

6.14 A PEA is often carried out by ecologists as an initial means of recording the habitats and condition of a development site and predicting the likely ecological constraints and impacts that might arise from its development.

Habitat Surveys

6.15 A Habitat Survey will be required where a PEA indicates that further surveys are required to support a planning application. The results of all such surveys and associated details of necessary mitigation measures will need to be submitted to validate an application. This is necessary to provide the LPA with certainty of likely impacts, and that effective and deliverable mitigation can be secured. Surveys of the development site to calculate the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat should ideally be done shortly before the submission of the planning application. Older surveys can be used where there has been no material change to the onsite habitat when the planning application is submitted.

Biodiversity Metric

6.16 Where an applicant believes the development would be subject to a BNG requirement, the application must be accompanied by the minimum information set out in Article 7 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 using the relevant and most up-to-date Defra Biodiversity Metric tool. This is to establish the pre-development biodiversity value(s), either on the date of application or earlier proposed date (as appropriate).

6.17 Pre-development biodiversity value must be calculated before any site clearance or other habitat management work has been undertaken, by the applicants or anybody else. However, if this is known to have happened, on or after 30th January 2020 the condition of the site will be taken as the habitat baseline stated in Schedule 14 Part 1 paragraph 6 of the Environment Act 2021.

Biodiversity Gain Plans

6.18 Some applicants may want to submit draft Biodiversity Gain Plans, including completed metrics of the post-development value of the onsite habitat, alongside a planning application. These draft plans may be particularly helpful if there are firm proposals for onsite habitats, including landscaping plans, which can generate an accurate post-development value for the onsite habitat.

Exemptions

6.19 Government guidance sets out the types of development that are currently exempt from the mandatory BNG requirements. The necessity of securing BNG requirements through a s106 obligation (either as net gain or statutory BNG of a minimum of 10%) are to be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Further guidance

6.20 Applicants are encouraged to engage with the LPA before submitting their application to identify, understand and seek to resolve issues; this will help to improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application process and identify whether a s106 Agreement may be necessary to secure BNG. In this regard a fee-payable Pre-Application service has been set up at Greater Cambridge Shared Planning to specifically advise on BNG. This includes understanding the likely costs of purchasing BNG credits as opposed to on-site delivery. Best practice for site planning should follow the mitigation hierarchy of avoid, minimise, rectify, reduce and off set as set out at para. 5.2 of the Biodiversity SPD and in NPPF guidance.

6.21 Where species classified as 'vulnerable to extinction' or 'near threatened' in the UK are present on a site, a separate mitigation package will be required for these species adjacent to the areas impacted and steps must be taken to improve sufficient appropriate habitat in nearby, adjoining areas to accommodate the displaced species.

6.22 If a developer wishes to deliver BNG off-site, a number of options will be available to secure this. The planning service has already negotiated and agreed s106 Agreements with offsite providers for the establishment of habitat banks locally that will act as important resources for those developments which cannot attain full onsite BNG.

6.23 Several S106 Agreements have been completed with landowners within the Greater Cambridge Area who provide BNG credits. These include County Farms at Lower Valley Farm (Fulbourn), the Wildlife Trust at Flack Field (Fulbourn) and Fleam Dyke (Fen Ditton) as well as Yen Farm (West Wratting), Coploe Hill (Ickleton) and land at Coton Countryside Reserve (Coton) managed by Cambridge Past Present and Future.

6.24 Should off-site BNG provision be proposed to be delivered at any site with a pre-existing s106 agreement in place that secures long term managed provision and monitoring contributions for the planning service, a s106 obligation is unlikely to be required and the BNG provision can be secured and discharged via planning condition.

6.25 To discharge a Biodiversity Gain Plan condition which seeks to secure off-site BNG, the LPA will need to ensure the BNG will be appropriately managed and monitored. If a developer applies to discharge a BNG condition reliant on off-site provision where there is no conservation covenant in place or an associated s106 Agreement securing long term management or monitoring contributions, BNG conditions will not be discharged.

6.26 Where BNG is proposed to be provided on-site the developer will be required to submit a habitat management plan for approval with monitoring reports needing to be submitted to the LPA at suitable intervals over the 30-year period. An ecology monitoring contribution appropriate to the scale and nature of the BNG being provided will be required to be paid to the LPA to oversee these.

Other Sources

- Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (2022)
- Biodiversity Net Gain Advice - Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service Website
- Biodiversity gain plan templates - DEFRA website
- Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough – Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority

Chapter 7: Community Facilities

Introduction

7.1 Community facilities such as community centres, village halls, and other publicly accessible buildings play a crucial role in maintaining a sense of local identity, as well as providing a base for a variety of different groups and activities, from pre-school groups to indoor carpet and short mat bowls, yoga, meetings or coffee mornings. The Councils are keen to ensure that all residents have access to facilities which are appropriate and suitable for their needs.

7.2 Cultural development will play a key role in how we collectively knit together existing and new communities and places. Cambridge City Council recently adopted a new Cultural Strategy in March 2025 outlining the Council's commitment to supporting culture and recognising the contribution of culture in enabling inclusive growth in the Greater Cambridge. A Cultural Infrastructure Strategy has also been commissioned to explore the specific infrastructure needed to support the area, and this will be published in due course.

7.3 Greater Cambridge is home to a range of new communities, which require appropriate facilities and support to make them successful. This is not only in terms of the right new buildings and facilities, but also the right support to get new communities started.

Policy Context

Cambridge

7.4 Cambridge Local Plan 2018 Policy 85 states that planning permission for new developments will only be supported where there are suitable arrangements for the improvement or provision and phasing of infrastructure, services and facilities necessary to make the scheme acceptable in planning terms. This includes community and social facilities and cultural facilities. Policy 73 provides further information on requirements for new or replacement facilities.

South Cambridgeshire

7.5 South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 Policy SC/4 requires all housing developments to include or contribute to the provision of community services and facilities necessary to meet the needs of the development. The scale and range of this provision or contribution will be appropriate to the level of need generated by the development and will address the specific needs of different

age groups, of people with disabilities, and faith groups and will be adaptable to population growth and demographic changes. It requires proposals for larger sites of 200 dwellings or more to be accompanied by their own assessments of need. The timely delivery of services and facilities when they are needed will be required, including the provision of key services and facilities for early phases of the development. Phasing will be established through planning obligations or conditions.

7.6 Policy SC/6 specifically addresses indoor community facilities. It requires all housing developments to contribute towards the provision of indoor community facilities to meet the need generated by the development. Where there is sufficient scale to generate the need for a new facility this should be delivered onsite unless it can be demonstrated that there would be advantages in delivery off-site. Other developments will contribute to off-site provision, based on a standard of 111m2 of such floorspace per 1,000 additional population.

7.7 The South Cambridgeshire Local Plan explains that the standard was developed through a community facilities assessment carried out in 2009 to understand the size and condition of village halls, community halls, church halls and other publicly accessible facilities.

7.8 In May 2025, South Cambridgeshire District Council published a new South Cambridgeshire Communities Facilities study which audited community facilities across the district regarding the quantity, quality and accessibility of existing provision, and identified needs for new or improved facilities in the district. The study builds upon and updates previous assessments, notably the 2009 Community Facilities Study Report. The study will inform the review of policy through the Greater Cambridge Local Plan but will also be used to inform consideration of needs generated by planning applications.

Greater Cambridge (Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire)

7.9 In addition to these district wide policies, both Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans include a range of site-specific policies which have specific requirements for community facilities related to the nature of the development proposals.

Development types from which Obligations will be sought

7.10 All new residential and mixed-use (with an element of residential) developments are to make provision for community facilities to meet the needs arising from the development proposal. Provision may also be sought

from major commercial developments within Cambridge City, including urban fringe sites.

Form in which contributions should be made

7.11 New developments will be required to mitigate their impact on community facilities through on-site provision, or through use of financial contributions towards off-site provision for smaller developments. The scale and range of this provision or contribution will be appropriate to the level of need generated by the development and will address the specific needs of different age groups, of people with disabilities, and faith groups and will be adaptable to population growth and demographic changes.

7.12 Proposals for sites of 200 or more dwellings (or groups of smaller sites which cumulatively exceed this figure) within South Cambridgeshire are required to provide detailed assessments and strategies regarding community needs and how they will be met. These should be prepared in consultation with service providers and stakeholders, and for approval by the local authority. They will be required to demonstrate how the new community will be effectively supported throughout the build phase of the developments, including at the outset of development, and how facilities will be managed and maintained (including governance arrangements).

7.13 Large scale commercial developments (above 5,000m2) within Cambridge City and fringe sites will be required to consider how the needs of their workers and visitors will be met for social and leisure facilities. If the need cannot be met though existing facilities onsite, in the surrounding area, or through new additional facilities onsite, an offsite contribution to address the impact on facilities is necessary and will be sought.

7.14 For large-scale developments there may be additional community facilities requirements that will need to be addressed as part of the development, depending on the scale and impact of the proposed development. These will be assessed on a site-by-site basis, through the master planning process for the individual developments.

7.15 These could include all or some of the following:

- Dedicated faith provision.
- Dedicated youth facilities.
- Itinerant facilities such as youth buses.
- Arts and cultural facilities.

7.16 In some new community's, development has taken the form of community hubs, which may incorporate uses covered elsewhere in this SPD, such as libraries and health provision. It could also be based around multiuse spaces at an education facility (with Community Access Agreement to guarantee community use in perpetuity). This would need to be agreed with service providers.

7.17 Reflecting the aspirations of the Cambridge Cultural Strategy we will seek to ensure development contributes to the delivery of necessary cultural infrastructure. This could be through the mix of development, secured by condition, or through a s106 obligation.

7.18 With regard to faith space, the starting point for negotiation for provision in new communities will be the recommendation within the 2008 Cambridgeshire Horizon's Facilities for Faith Communities in New Developments of 0.5 hectares of free or heavily discounted land per 3,000 dwellings. South Cambridgeshire District Council has a Faith Land Allocation policy (March 2020) which will guide the allocation of land secured. Where standalone faith space is not feasible, the enhancement of other community meeting spaces to accommodate faith uses may be required.

7.19 Where dedicated new community provision is sought, the planning obligations requirements will likely require the new facility to be built by the developer. An alternative may be the provision of free serviced land and a financial contribution to cover the capital cost of the new facility and it's fitting out. Contributions to support the initial staffing and running of the facility will also be sought.

7.20 In addition to dedicated community facilities in new communities there will also be a need for commercial facilities important to community life, including childcare nurseries, local shops, restaurants and cafes and public houses.

7.21 In large scale new development such as urban extensions or new settlements developments will be phased over several years and critical to its success will be making sure that a sense of place and community is developed from the start. This also requires consideration of specific groups, such as children and young people. Research into new communities has established clear links between loneliness, poor mental health, and antisocial behaviours when there is a lack of community cohesion and social networks. Moving may isolate people from their normal support networks making them more vulnerable to everyday stresses and strains, which can be a greater challenge when there are no established social networks into which new residents can readily slot.

7.22 These issues should be considered in community strategies accompanying the developments, as well as the Health Impact Assessment. Where a need is identified planning obligations may be sought including:

- Meanwhile uses: Temporary ‘meanwhile’ projects, subject to viability, which create community services, small-scale business and retail spaces can achieve this, supporting local skills development and entrepreneurship, and meeting short-term gaps in the delivery of permanent community infrastructure.

- Community Support Workers: Funding for community workers could be required to address a range of issues, such as youth workers, health workers, or community development workers.

- Small grants scheme (community chest): A contribution (in the region of £12.50 per dwelling based on recently secure obligations), to be agreed, will be required for the development of community grants or an investment fund to support local residents of the new development, and or, to support the development and growth of social businesses in the local area.

Off Site Contributions

7.23 For smaller developments, and other developments where facilities are not delivered on-site, contributions may be required to address the needs generated by a new development. Such funding could be pooled to enable the delivery of a new facility or could be used to enhance capacity and use of an existing facility. Where funding is required, the project it will benefit will be identified. This may be a nearby facility in the ward or village, or it could be a more central facility where the need generated could most effectively be met.

7.24 Within Cambridge projects will be identified in consultation with the Cambridge City Council Communities Group who manage a range of Community Centres and facilities across the city.

7.25 In South Cambridgeshire, facilities are generally owned and managed by town and parish councils (or by local charities or trusts). Projects will be identified in consultation with the relevant organisations. The planning obligation will secure funding for the organisation to complete the project directly rather than the district council.

7.26 The South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 sets a standard of 111m2 per 1,000 population. The standard per square metre cost of provision has increased from that provided in the IDP prepared in support of the 2018 Local Plans, with the Infrastructure Costing Review (Greater Cambridge Planning

Obligations SPD – July 2025) providing a current cost of c.£4,020 per square metre and £117.57 per m2 for maintenance per annum as benchmarked against recent local projects..

7.27 There is no equivalent standard provided in the Cambridge City Local Plan, so the South Cambridgeshire standard should be considered as a guide for provision within the City.

7.28 The cost of providing community centres is £4,020 per m2 (Source of costs: Infrastructure Costing Review – Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations SPD July 2025) which is to be used as a starting point for a developer contribution towards community facilities.

7.29 The cost associated with maintaining (utilities, decoration, services, etc) community facilities is £117.57 per m2 (Source of costs: Infrastructure Costing Review – Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations SPD July 2025).

Exemptions

7.30 Housing provision consisting of Extra Care housing, and residential and nursing homes will not normally be required to contribute towards community facilities, but this will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Applications comprising retirement accommodation will be required to pay contributions in full.

Further guidance

Cambridge

- Community centres - Cambridge City Council website
- Cambridge Community Wealth Building Strategy - Cambridge City Council 2024
- Cambridge City Council Cultural Strategy 2024-29

South Cambridgeshire

- South Cambridgeshire Community Facilities Study 2009
- South Cambridgeshire Community Facilities Study 2025

Chapter 8: Social and Community Support Services

Introduction

8.1 Cambridgeshire County Council has a number of statutory duties around the care and wellbeing of its residents which includes providing supportive services to families and vulnerable people. This duty of care sits across broad strategic service areas covering children, families and adult services, which supports new communities across Cambridgeshire. The work of these services can fall under the following headings:

- Public Health (including mental health and well-being)
- Services to support children, young people and families (including Children's Social Care, Child & Family Centres, Youth Support, Targeted Support)
- Services to support vulnerable adults (including Adult social care and domestic abuse services)

8.2 New communities are recognised as having higher needs which escalate quicker than in more established communities and therefore, they are considered a vulnerable group. Much of the research into new towns or new communities has established clear links between loneliness, poor mental health and antisocial behaviours with a lack of community cohesion and social networks which is greatly influenced by lack of access to community facilities and supportive services.

8.3 Cambridgeshire County Council's focus is to support the formation of resilient families within self-supporting communities. Communities that are more connected and resilient require fewer public services, create good places to live and improved outcomes for residents. The emphasis is therefore placed on community development, preventative and early help services in new communities. However, more traditional intensive support must be provided to some families in the form of social care.

Policy Context

Cambridge

8.4 Cambridge Local Plan Policy 85: Infrastructure delivery, planning obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy states that planning obligations may be required for healthcare, community and social facilities.

South Cambridgeshire

8.5 South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 Policy TI/8 Infrastructure and New Developments states that planning obligations may be required for healthcare, community and social facilities.

Development types from which Obligations will be sought

8.6 All new residential development, including mixed-use schemes, are to make adequate provision for healthcare, community and social facilities.

8.7 Proposals for sites of 200 or more dwellings (or groups of smaller sites which cumulatively exceed this figure) are required to provide detailed assessments and strategies regarding community needs and how they will be met. These should be prepared in consultation with service providers and stakeholders, and for approval by the local planning authority.

Form in which contributions should be made

8.8 There are three core aims underpinning the County Council's approach towards addressing this area of need in new communities:

- Ensuring that infrastructure in new communities is designed to meet the needs of the community now and in the future;
- Supporting the development of self-sufficient, resilient communities by helping to build peoples' capacity to help themselves and others in order to create a good place to live, improve outcomes, support economic prosperity and make people less reliant on public services; and
- Ensure people living in new communities are supported by the right services that are available at the right time to meet their needs and are supported back to independence.

8.9 Meeting these aims will enable the development of strong, vibrant and healthy communities as required by the NPPF. In terms of how these aims translate into specific development requirements, the NPPF requires local planning authorities to plan for a mix of housing, including housing to address the needs of different groups in the community such as, but not limited to, older people, care leavers and people with disabilities.

8.10 For major development, and particularly development of a significant scale, the County Council will engage with the developer and relevant LPA during the pre-application period to scope the need for particular services and

facilities. The Council will also ensure, wherever, possible, that these requirements are addressed in masterplans for strategic sites.

8.11 Many of these infrastructure requirements will serve a range of purposes and people. This includes, for example, public open space, shared community facilities and public transport provision. Where more particular requirements exist, for example for extra care accommodation and short-term contributions to service provision, the Council will work with partners to negotiate the provision of these facilities through planning obligations.

Services, Facilities and Infrastructure

8.12 The need for services and facilities arising from new development will be considered on a case-by-case basis. However, the types of buildings and services that typically may be required to support vulnerable people include:

- Provision of specialist accommodation (e.g. residential care facilities, supported living accommodation, etc.) within large scale developments.
- Community buildings and sports facilities.
- Formal and informal meeting spaces and offices.

8.13 Funding may be required to support residents wellbeing and encourage place making (e.g. set up and initial running costs of groups and activities to promote resilience and prevent issues escalating, including staff). Contributions would be on a short-term basis as the community forms to mitigate the impact of increased demand the development will place on supportive services. The range and type of infrastructure, services and facilities necessary to provide social and supportive services in new communities are set out in the table below.

Requirements for Social and Supportive Services

Housing design and mix

- An appropriate proportion of homes, should be accessible and or adaptable to meet differing needs (most frequently set to the Lifetime Homes standard (or successor standards))

Specialist accommodation

- Provision of specialist housing to meet the needs of a range of client groups such as:
- Learning disabilities
- Older people
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- Young people leaving care
- Physically disabled
- Mental health needs

Funding

- Short term funding to kickstart community activity and community-led support this will include financial support for setting up groups & running activities.

Staff

- Community development workers
- Specialist workers (e.g. Mental Health, Domestic violence prevention, Youth, Child & Family Centre, Social).

Exemptions

8.14 No specific exemptions.

Further guidance

8.15 Applicants for planning permission should contact the County Council via email: GrowthDevelopment@cambridgeshire.gov.uk to obtain pre-application advice in the social and community implications for their development.

- Cambridgeshire County Council Draft Planning Obligations Strategy

Chapter 9: Libraries and Lifelong Learning

Introduction

9.1 New residential development can increase demand on libraries and other facilities which facilitate life-long learning, particularly with regard to equipment and space available.

Policy Context

Cambridge

9.2 Cambridge Local Plan 2018 Policy 85: Infrastructure delivery, Planning Obligations, and the Community Infrastructure Levy establishes that planning permission will only be granted if there is sufficient infrastructure capacity to meet the need arising from the new development. It includes community facilities which includes libraries. Policy 73: Community, Sports, and Leisure facilities also addresses the requirement for new community facilities.

South Cambridgeshire

9.3 South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 Policy SC/4: Meeting Community Needs includes library facilities, including promotion of shared spaces, where they support access to the infrastructure or service. They are also listed as a potential requirement under policy TI/8 Infrastructure and New Development.

Development types from which Obligations will be sought

9.4 All new residential development, including within mixed-use schemes that contain an element of residential development, is to meet the developments needs for new library provision.

9.5 Applicants should clearly set out with their planning application the details of the number of dwellings or expected population arising from the new development.

Form in which contributions should be made

9.6 The Cambridgeshire County Council Planning Obligations Strategy sets out the County Council's approach to securing contributions using the Museums Library and Archives Council (MLA) Standard Charge approach. It calculates the expected new population of development to assess impact on the existing

library catchment and identifies a project, if required, to mitigate this using specific costings.

9.7 The County Council has a statutory duty under the Public Library and Museums Act (1964) to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use of thereof. A service level policy (2005) sets the context of local need and defines the standard of service to be provide at libraries. Contributions towards stock and fit out, mobile services, extensions to existing libraries or new library buildings may be required to mitigate new residents. New library buildings may be provided as part of a shared community building.

9.8 New housing development will have implications for the existing library provision, which may require the following developer contributions towards the provision of:

- Sites for new libraries.
- A new library building (covering full building and finishes).
- Co-location with other services in 'community hubs'.
- Library fit out and new stock (including the provision of power, data, IT equipment, furniture, shelving and fittings).
- Upgrading an existing library and lifelong learning facility (might include an extension and/or improvement to the existing floor space).
- A mobile service, community provided or 'pop up' service.
- A revenue stream for the provision of new services for a period of time.

Exemptions

9.9 Residential development not reasonably likely to access library services, such as some extra care settings.

Further guidance

- Applicants for planning permission should contact the County Council via GrowthDevelopment@cambridgeshire.gov.uk email to obtain pre-application advice in the library implications for their development
- Cambridgeshire County Council Draft Planning Obligations Strategy

Chapter 10: Transport and Highways

Introduction

10.1 Most developments are likely to generate new transport movements and will have some impact on the local transport network. In the case of many development schemes, specific works and improvements will be required either on-site and/or off-site to mitigate the direct impact of the development scheme on the transport network and to make the proposed development acceptable in Highways terms. The types of improvements sought may include, but are not limited to junction improvements, provision of traffic signals, traffic calming, walking and cycling related measures, public transport enhancements, car clubs, and parking controls. These can be described as development specific transport works and are normally required to be implemented as part of the development scheme.

10.2 However, due to the congested highway network in and around Cambridge, there has been a change in transport policy approach away from the 'predict and provide' approach - where mitigation relies heavily on additional highway capacity being created - to a 'decide and provide' approach, particularly for larger development sites. This means the number of vehicular trips generated by the development is carefully controlled and limited by a vehicular trip budget. The type of transport mitigation required will focus less on highway measures and more on improvements to facilities and contributions towards services for non-car modes, along with measures to discourage travel to the site by vehicle such as reduced/restricted car parking.

Policy Context

10.3 The transport policies of both Local Plans seek to ensure that new developments will be located to help minimise the distance people need to travel and be designed to make it easy for everyone to move around and access jobs and services by sustainable modes of transport.

Cambridge

10.4 Cambridge Local Plan 2018 Policy 5 concerns strategic transport infrastructure and requires that development proposals must be consistent with and contribute to the implementation of the transport strategies and priorities set out in the Transport Strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. Policy 80 supports Policy 5 by requiring new developments to support and prioritise access to sustainable travel, such by walking, cycling

and public transport, including the safeguarding of land to secure provision. It further establishes the design requirements for new roads and/or road access. Policy 81 concerns the mitigation of the transport impacts arising from a development, including the requirement for the submission of a transport assessment and travel plans for all major developments, and requires contributions/mitigation to make the transport impacts of a development acceptable. Policy 82 sets out the parking standards and requirements to be applied to different forms of development as well as the need for new developments to adequately address their servicing requirements.

South Cambridgeshire

10.5 South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 Policy TI/2 –seeks to ensure development is located and designed to reduce the need to travel, particularly by car, and promotes sustainable travel. It ensures sufficient information is supplied that the transport (and associated environmental and health) impact, including cumulative impacts, is suitably assessed (in the form of a transport assessment or statement; a low emission strategy statement and travel plan) and mitigated through direct improvements and reasonable and proportionate financial contributions towards planned strategic transport improvements. Policy TI/3 seeks to ensure appropriate provision of car and cycle parking.

Other relevant plans and strategies

10.6 The adopted Local Plans were prepared in parallel with a Transport Strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. This provides a policy framework and programme of transport schemes for the area taking account of committed and predicted levels of growth, detailing the transport infrastructure and services necessary to deliver this growth.

10.7 Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority) This sets out the long-term overarching strategy to make transport in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough better faster, greener, and more accessible for everyone. It sets out a vision and goals for how transport supports a better future and describes the projects needed to make that new future possible. This includes things like better buses, more train services, less pollution and carbon emissions, and helping more people to cycle and walk.

10.8 Reflecting the transport plans for the area, the Greater Cambridge Partnership are bringing forward a range of sustainable transport initiatives. These are part

funded by the Greater Cambridge City Deal, but developments are requirement to contribute reflecting their transport impacts.

10.9 Cambridgeshire Active Travel Strategy (Cambridgeshire County Council) and Active Travel Toolkit. The Active Travel Strategy provides a comprehensive set of policies that will enable quality provision of active infrastructure and initiatives in Cambridgeshire. It has the ambition of achieving mode shift to more sustainable modes of travel, including through improvements to the transport network, improved connectivity, and ensuring a consistent standard of infrastructure provision for inclusive cycling and walking across the county. The Active Travel Toolkit aims to provide planning authorities, County Council and developers with comprehensive guidance throughout the planning process, ensuring prioritisation of active travel in new developments (of all sizes) and consistent quality of infrastructure provision.

10.10 Active Travel England are a statutory consultee on development applications comprising 150 homes or more, 7,500sqm of more in size, or 5ha or more in area. They provide a range of guidance and advice notes to both LPAs and applicants aimed at ensuring new infrastructure and developments are designed with active travel at the forefront. This includes providing provision for high quality cycling and walking networks, green spaces and green routes, and supporting facilities such as cycle parking.

10.11 Cambridgeshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) Reflecting the Government's ambition to increase walking and cycling, particularly to school, by 2025. It sits under the Active Travel Strategy and forms part of the long-term vision to improve the county's cycling and walking networks. It identifies cycling and walking improvements required at the local level, enabling a long-term approach to developing cycling and walking networks.

10.12 Neighbourhood Plans will often include policies and proposals for local transport improvements, including enhancements to walking and cycling routes.

Development types from which obligations will be sought

10.13 The Councils will expect the transport elements and impacts of development to be set out in a Transport Assessment or Statement in line with the NPPF and Cambridgeshire County Council's latest Transport Assessment Requirements document (January 2024). The later suggests that any form of development that produces 30 or more two-way vehicle trips in any peak hour

or generates approximately 150 person trips per day will need to be supported by a detailed transport assessment.

10.14 However, there is no overall minimum development threshold below which transport, or highways obligations will not be sought. Obligations will be sought where:

- there is a requirement to improve existing, or construct new, highway infrastructure in order to access development in a safe and appropriate manner, including for servicing, or to mitigate the effects of the development on the highway network.
- there are requirements to improve non-car accessibility infrastructure in order to access development in a safe and appropriate manner or to mitigate the effects of the development on the transport networks.
- there is a need generated for strategic transport improvements including measures to promote walking, cycling, public transport and highways traffic calming and capacity improvements.

10.15 Consequently, there is no development threshold below which an obligation for transport infrastructure may not be required and there are no types of development that would be exempt from transport infrastructure requirements. The need for, extent and nature of any obligations will be proportionate to the extent and nature of the impact of the development as evidenced through the Transport Assessment or Statement.

Types of obligations

10.16 Cambridgeshire County Council is the local Highway Authority for the Greater Cambridge area. National Highways are responsible for trunk roads. Cambridgeshire County Council and National Highways are consulted on planning proposals that affect the highway network.

10.17 A range of traffic and highway measures may be required as the result of individual development schemes. The County Council's Transport Team will normally advise on the requirements for individual applications, and/or such works will be identified in the submitted Transport Assessment/Statement, Traffic Management Plan, Construction Logistics Plan, or Low Emissions Strategy Statement. However, the main types of obligations are:

Travel plans

10.18 Travel Plan are a tailored package of practical measures to reduce car travel to and from a proposed site, and to promote and encourage more sustainable forms of transport by increasing the awareness of travel options, such as walking and cycling, and through the provision of facilities to support such options, such as shower facilities and secure cycle parking.

10.19 Travel Plans should identify specific required outcomes, targets, and measures, and set out clear future monitoring and management arrangements. Travel Planning must be considered as the principal mechanism to reduce the impact of any development on the transport network and must consider what additional measures may be required to offset unacceptable impacts if target mode shares and impacts are not met. Travel plans may include provision for financial penalties to fund the promotion or provision of sustainable transport until travel plan objectives are met.

Site-specific highways improvements

10.20 Highways improvements that may be necessary, directly as a result of a development, may include but are not limited to:

- Works required to secure safe access and egress from the development site to the adjoining highway network or to mitigate the direct impact of the development on the off-site road network, including for servicing.
- Provision of internal roads to an adoptable standard (NB: this does not infer an obligation to formally adopt a road).
- Traffic calming measures.
- Works required to secure safe pedestrian and cycle connections to existing off-site routes.
- Site-specific pedestrian and cycle/e-cycle facilities, including contributions to micro mobility (such as cycle and e-scooter hire schemes).
- Site-specific measures and contributions to improve public transport, community transport services, demand responsive or mobility as a service, and multi modal interchange facilities.
- The provision, removal or relocation of street furniture; dropped kerbs; crossovers; pedestrian and cycle crossings; traffic lights; streetlights; signage and wayfinding; or trees.
- The provision of on street parking controls, including loading and waiting restrictions.
- Contributions to monitor and enforce car free developments and developments subject to a vehicular trip budget (see further below).
- Contributions to electric car clubs.

- Provision and contributions to low emission vehicle infrastructure, including electric vehicle charging points and associated grid infrastructure.
- Contributions to digital infrastructure to reduce vehicle use and manage movement of people and vehicles.

Strategic transport interventions

10.21 There will be occasions where the transport demand created by a development may not be satisfactorily mitigated by the measures in a travel plan or through site-specific highways improvements. Where a particular site requires public transport services, or highway or traffic management/mitigation to the wider network, it will likely be required to secure:

- Measures to improve conditions for non-car modes to encourage the transfer of car trips onto active travel and public transport options.
- Contributions to known transport improvement schemes that will improve conditions for non-car modes to encourage the transfer of car trips onto active travel and public transport.
- Junction improvements and/or traffic management measures, including the potential introduction or extension of parking controls, subject to monitoring and consultation.

Vehicular trip budget

10.22 For development, subject to a vehicular trip budget, the means of monitoring the trips to and from the development will need to be agreed with the County Council's Highways Team. The obligation for monitoring is likely to extend from construction through to post- final occupation. Further obligations will also be sought to address exceedances of the agreed vehicular trip budget. Such obligations will include triggers and the actions required of the developer/landowner/occupier to bring trips back within the agreed vehicular trip budget. The triggers and measures will need to be agreed on a development-by-development basis, having regard to the Transport Assessment, the agreed mitigation measures, and the impact exceedances will have on the highway network.

Form in which obligations should be made

10.23 It is essential that travel plan, transport infrastructure and traffic management measures are provided in a timescale commensurate with the proposed

phasing of the development and the Councils will seek to approve trigger points through the appropriate legal agreements.

10.24 Onsite and offsite transport improvements within the vicinity of the development, including those contained within agreed travel plans, will be expected to be incorporated within the development proposal and delivered by the developer. In cases where the developer is required to undertake works on the public highway, a s278 Agreement will need to be entered into with the County's Highways Team for the site.

10.25 Where the County Council's Highways Team is engaged in negotiating and agreeing the technical details of highways improvements as part of a s278, or are required to undertake safety audits, or to review the effectiveness of travel plans and construction management plans, the County Council is likely to seek a fee to cover staff costs incurred. The fee will be assessed in respect of each individual application and calculated having regard to the nature of the development, the anticipated traffic generation and the level of monitoring required.

10.26 Where a financial contribution is sought towards strategic transport improvements, the amount payable will be determined on the basis of the cost of the transport infrastructure and the trips from the development that would use the transport infrastructure.

Exemptions

10.27 There is no development threshold below which a transport obligation may not be required and there are no types of development that would be exempt from transport infrastructure requirements.

Further guidance

10.27 Applicants for planning permission should contact the County Council via email TA.Officers@cambridgeshire.gov.uk to obtain pre-application advice in the transport implications for their development.

- Cambridgeshire County Council strategy and toolkit for Active Travel: Cambridgeshire Active Travel Strategy (Cambridgeshire County Council) and Active Travel Toolkit.
- Cambridgeshire County Council guidance on Transport Assessments and Travel Plans: Transport Assessment Requirements - January 2024

Other Sources

- Active Travel England guidance, advice notes and toolkit:
- Planning for Active Places
- Sustainable Development Advice Notes
- Planning Applications Assessment Toolkit

Chapter 11: Education

Introduction

11.1 New residential developments that generate child yield create additional demand for education services. S106 Agreements are used to secure funding to offset the impact of development, for example to build new schools or to improve existing ones.

Policy Context

Cambridge

11.2 Cambridge Local Plan 2018 Policy 74: Education Facilities establishes Education as 0-19 settings (including early years, primary, secondary, and further education) for all children and young people including those with special education needs (SEND). The Council will work with the County Council to provide high quality and convenient local education services in all parts of the district, but particularly in areas of population growth. Developers should engage with the Children's Services Authority at the earliest opportunity and work co-operatively to ensure the phasing of residential development and appropriate mitigation is identified in a timely manner to ensure appropriate education provision can be secured.

South Cambridgeshire

11.3 South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 Policy TI/8 Education Facilities include similar requirements.

Development types from which Obligations will be sought

11.4 All major residential developments, including mixed-use development resulting in a child yield will be required to make provision for education services.

11.5 Planning applications should set out the proposed housing numbers or development mix (including affordable housing tenure mix)

11.6 For outline schemes, the maximum number of dwellings proposed is required to assess child yield and education impact using Cambridgeshire County Council's approved Child Yield General Multipliers. For full planning

permission schemes, the development mix stating the number of bedrooms for each dwelling type and clearly identifying separately the social/affordable rent element of the affordable provision is used to assess child yield and education impact using Cambridgeshire County Council's approved Child Yield Detailed Multipliers. For hybrid schemes, a mix of both approaches is used. Indicative development mixes are used only in exceptional circumstances.

Form in which contributions should be made

11.7 Cambridgeshire County Council is the appointed Children's Authority for Cambridgeshire under the provisions of The Education Act 1996, to provide sufficient school places in state funded schools, whilst the Childcare Act 2005 and Education Act 2011 respectively introduced a duty to commission sufficient early years and post 16 provision. The Local Planning Authority and developers must liaise with the County Council to ensure any education impacts are adequately and reasonable mitigated.

11.8 The County Council will use its locally derived child yield multipliers to estimate child yield. These are adopted by the County Council's Children & Young People's Committee and reviewed periodically to ensure they remain up to date and reflective of demographic and development trends. Whilst national data (adjusted) is available, this is considered less specific and does not take precedent.

11.9 Once the child yield has been estimated, this will be assessed against the school catchment capacities (not school rolls), taking into account other planned developments, to determine whether there is sufficient capacity to accommodate children from the proposed development at all levels of statutory provision. If there is insufficient capacity a mitigation project will be required, which could include the provision of on-site facilities (land and contributions) to serve the development or contributions to new or expanded facilities off-site.

11.10 The current child yield multipliers used by Cambridgeshire County Council are shown in Appendix A, but these are subject to regular review and update.

11.11 The County Council will cost education projects – either an expansion or new school - based on educational needs, reflecting Building Bulletin103 and the strategic policy requirements of the County Council. Where a detailed, locally derived project cost is not available or feasible to produce (because of smaller developments or education projects, or an undefined project at that point in time) the County Council will use the relevant Department for Education (DfE) scorecard costs. Developments will provide for early years (usually at a

primary school setting), primary, secondary and SEND (either at a mainstream setting or a dedicated school).

11.12 Other contributions may be sought towards temporary accommodation or school travel. Such remedies will only be considered in exceptional and rare circumstances, and where the usual mitigations are not appropriate or possible. Such cases will be considered on their merits.

11.13 The County Council or DfE will usually deliver all education projects. Provision in kind by developers may be considered but only where it advantageous to do so, and in which case the s106 agreement will include an option for the developer to deliver the facilities in lieu of a financial contribution.

11.14 Where land is required to enable a new school project, this must be provided to the Council's specification in terms of size, shape, condition, and timescale. Land should be provided at nil cost. Site sizes required are based on Building Bulletin 103 adjusted for Cambridgeshire requirements and include buildings, circulation and servicing and playing fields. Further guidance on site size requirements is in the Planning Obligations Strategy.

11.15 All projects will be indexed using the BCIS index, to a specified date. Triggers will be agreed to ensure the timely transfer of land (where appropriate) and financial contributions to deliver the education infrastructure.

11.16 Securing Developer Contributions for Education (August 2023) provides non-statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) to help local authorities secure developer contributions for education infrastructure to mitigate the impact of development. The guidance promotes good practice on evidencing these impacts, engaging with local planning authorities, and delivering expanded or new facilities with funding from housing development.

11.17 The County Council may assist in facilitating, but will not itself provide, nursery provision that provides a broader range of childcare services, outside of the early years setting.

Exemptions

11.18 The following will be exempt from education contributions:

- Residential development for age restricted development (usually defined as aged over 55), or people living in care homes or assisted living
- Student accommodation
- Language schools

Further guidance

11.19 Applicants for planning permission should contact the County Council via email GrowthDevelopment@cambridgeshire.gov.uk to obtain pre-application advice in the education implications for their development

- Cambridgeshire County Council Draft Planning Obligations Strategy

Chapter 12: Public Art

Introduction

12.1 Both Councils place significant importance on the provision of public art and support best practice in its commissioning. Successful public art demonstrates ambition, innovation and is relevant to its context. It should genuinely engage people, including sections of the community that are hard-to-reach and contribute to local identity. The only constant element of public art is that it is artist-led and community or site specific.

12.2 A wide range of permanent, temporary and process-led works have been developed with communities and these have helped shape the public realm, played a role in integrating existing and new communities, contributing positively to quality of life and bringing social benefits. This has led to the creation of a rich and diverse portfolio of high-quality public art across Greater Cambridge with lasting legacies. Public art is supported as a key element of placemaking, through engaging with a diverse audience about issues directly relevant to their lives and ensuring equitable provision and access across all communities.

Policy Context

Cambridge

12.3 Cambridge Local Plan 2018 Policy 56 requires the design of new buildings, and the spaces around them, to embed public art as an integral part of the proposal. In this context, public art is considered a key component of successful placemaking. Policy 59 seeks the provision of a high-quality public realm both within and adjoining development sites that takes a coordinated approach to the design and siting of street furniture, boundary treatments, lighting, signage and public art. Policy 85 recognises that planning obligations can include cultural facilities, including public art.

12.4 Implementation of the public art policies of the Local Plan are further supplemented by guidance set out in the Cambridge City Council Public Art SPD 2010 that remains a material consideration. The SPD provides a comprehensive guide to enable the successful delivery of public art linked to development proposals, including a basis for calculating the value to be attributed to the delivery of a public art scheme and its maintenance (subject to viability and scale of proposal).

12.5 In March 2022, the City Council adopted a Manifesto for Public Art entitled 'The Cambridge Perspective: Art Artists Community Place Change (Art and Artists at the Heart of Community)'. This is a public declaration of the City's intentions for developing public art.

South Cambridgeshire

12.6 South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 Policy HQ/2 encourages the provision or commissioning of public art that is integrated into the design of development as a means of enhancing the quality of development proposals. Policies HQ/2 and SC/4 further require the provision of public art to involve the local community, suggesting it could also be community-led, and should have regard to the local circumstances of the site and/or local aspirations. The policies also clarify the approach to be taken where a scheme is unable to achieve suitable provision onsite and, where public art is provided, that a contribution or commuted sums will be required for ongoing maintenance and to cover the cost of decommissioning where appropriate.

12.7 The District Design Guide SPD (2010) paragraphs 6.54 – 6.61 provides guidance regarding the successful delivery of public art, reiterating the requirement for public art to be designed in parallel with the design of buildings and spaces. It advises that the artwork may be large or small, mobile or static, integral to a building or freestanding, fine art or functional and produced for external or internal public spaces. It further establishes the approach for determining the level of public art provision.

Development types from which Obligations will be sought

12.8 All forms of major development are required to make provision for public art.

12.9 For Outline planning permission, planning applications should provide a Public Art Strategy, including indicative budget. For Full Planning and Reserved Matters applications, these should be supported by a Public Art Delivery Plan.

Form in which contributions should be made

12.10 Where the 1% value of the estimated capital construction costs of a project is likely to exceed £100,000 i.e. where capital construction costs are estimated to exceed £10,000,000 a s106 obligation will be the vehicle to secure the delivery of a Public Art Strategy or Public Art Delivery Plan. Public art will be secured via planning condition where the 1% value is below this figure.

12.11 Where a s106 obligation is required, an attributable value equivalent to 1% of the capital construction costs should be the starting point for the development of a Public Art Strategy or Public Art Delivery Plan.

12.12 For major development on very large and complex sites, where the capital value reaches tens of millions of pounds, a 1% public art value may not be an appropriate measure for setting budgets. In such cases, budgets will be agreed through negotiation on a case-by-case basis, subject to meeting the policy objectives. These negotiations will be informed from thorough evaluation processes and the technical knowledge of public art expertise. In all cases, 1% (index linked) remains the starting point for any negotiations for public art, on any site.

12.13 Unless otherwise agreed, VAT and other taxes are not seen as being eligible costs. The public art budget does not include the preparation of materials and information required to be submitted as part of the planning application. Using the public art budget to fund capital items is not accepted except as an enhancement of the cost of the capital item and the added value of the contribution must be demonstrated.

Approach

12.14 Public art should be developed through a three-way partnership between the developer, an art consultant, and the Council and involve consultation with the local community. The s106 agreement should include an agreed and negotiated commuted sum based on the complexity and timelines as set out in each Public Art Delivery Plan or Strategy to cover the Council's requirement for its own public art expertise to support its delivery. This will ensure the facilitation, oversight, and monitoring of the development and delivery of public art, which, on large sites, can span years. As required by both Local Plans, the provision of the public art must be integrated into the design of a new development.

Cambridge City Council

12.15 As set out in section 5.7 of the Public Art SPD, art and art practice continually evolve. For example, digital and web-based projects may be as valid as physical projects for inclusion within public art proposals. Consequently, it is not appropriate to try to define what art forms and functions are suitable, whether delivered by s106 agreements or other means. Traditional, contemporary and experimental work should be supported, and the choice will depend on the context and purpose. One of the aims of the SPD is to provide

criteria and a framework for debate that can address a wide range of views. A critical requirement is that the commissioned work should be original, of high quality, designed for the community and produced or facilitated by an artist or craftsperson. In terms of delivery, projects may focus on the process as much as the product and be community based.

South Cambridgeshire District Council

12.16 As set out in the supporting text to policy SC/4 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, public art can encompass a wide range of approaches. It could include designing a development so that functional elements such as lighting, seating, fencing, landscape, fountains and water features, and signage are bespoke or it could be a landmark work such as a sculpture. Alternatively, it could include provision of space, facilities and/or to enable performing arts, and play a role in linking existing and new residents in a community and help bring existing and new residents together which can help build new communities.

Exemptions

12.17 The decision on the exemption of public art within new development will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis but will include consideration if it is not possible to achieve an appropriate publicly visible artwork on or close to the development site. In such circumstances, a financial contribution to support public art initiatives within the vicinity of the development may be sought, especially if the development is in an area deemed deficient in public art as demonstrated through the Council's public art audit.

Further guidance

- South Cambridgeshire Public Art Supplementary Planning Document (2009)
- South Cambridgeshire District Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2010)
- Public Art Supplementary Planning Document - Cambridge City Council (2010)

12.18 The Council provides a Youth Engagement Service (YES). It aims to ensure that children and young people, who are often under-represented groups in our society, have genuine input into a development proposal, including the design of buildings, play spaces, public realm and public art at the early stage of the planning process.

Other Sources

- Arts Council
- Public Art Online

Chapter 13: Burial Space

Introduction

13.1 The Local Government Act 1972 provides burial authorities (defined to include district councils of London boroughs and parish councils) with a general power to provide and maintain public cemeteries, but there is no statutory duty to provide burial space. Specific powers and duties of burial authorities are set out in the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977.

13.2 Cambridge City council provides details on its bereavement services website. The area is serviced by the Cambridge Crematorium, and a number of cemeteries. In South Cambridgeshire most villages have churchyards or cemeteries, with varying amounts of future capacity.

Policy Context

Cambridge

13.3 Cambridge Local Plan 2018 Policy 85: Infrastructure delivery, planning obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy, although provision for burials is not specifically listed.

South Cambridgeshire

13.4 South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 Policy SC/4 Meeting Community Needs states that all housing developments will include or contribute to the provision of the services and facilities necessary to meet the needs of the development. The community facilities and services to be provided include provision for burials. For large strategic developments this may require onsite provision. Policy SC/4 requires detailed assessments for sites over 200 dwellings.

Development types from which Obligations will be sought

13.5 Major residential developments within the administrative boundary of South Cambridgeshire District Council.

Form in which contributions should be made

13.6 Burials in South Cambridgeshire are provided in a variety of ways. New settlements have been required to deliver new burial space, for example at

Cambourne. Most burial space in villages is provided through churchyards, Parish Council owned facilities or through trusts. Many of these cemeteries are operating at or near capacity. Proponents of major residential developments (i.e. 10 dwellings or more) within South Cambridgeshire should seek early engagement with the Local Burial Authority concerning the availability or need for burial space.

13.7 Proposals for sites over 200 dwellings should be accompanied by assessments of need and strategies regarding how the need will be addressed.

13.8 Each hectare of a cemetery can accommodate around 3,000 burial plots (equivalent to around 3.33m2 per each plot).

13.9 Presently the ratio between cremations and burials is 80/20 (source: ONS Deaths Register & The Cremations Society for Great Britain) equating to a standard of around 0.1ha per 1,000 people.

13.10 For major developments, where it can be demonstrated that existing burial provision is insufficient to meet the needs of the development, a planning obligation will be sought towards the improvement of existing or provision of new burial space.

13.11 The cost of acquiring new land for burials is around £240,000 per hectare and the cost of preparing that land for burials is £100,000 per hectare equating to a cost of c.£34 per m2 of burial space.

Exemptions

13.12 No specific exemptions.

Chapter 14: Public Open Space

Introduction

14.1 Open space is an essential part of our places and is needed to provide for the outdoor recreation needs of residents as well as making a significant contribution to setting, character, amenity and biodiversity.

14.2 New development adds to the number of people using open spaces. The adopted Local Plans establish minimum standards for the provision of new open space that should be delivered on site where appropriate and, where not delivered onsite, a financial contribution should be made to enable delivery of new spaces or the improvement of existing spaces.

Policy Context

Cambridge

14.3 Cambridge Local Plan 2018 Policy 68: requires that all residential development proposals should contribute to the provision of open space and recreation sites/facilities on-site. Alternative off site provision may be acceptable if the proposed development is of insufficient size to make appropriate provision feasible within the site, or in exceptional circumstances, if taking into account the accessibility/capacity of existing open space sites/facilities and the circumstances of the surrounding area the open space needs of the proposed residential development can be met more appropriately by providing either new or enhanced provision off-site. Appendix I of the Local Plan provides detailed guidance on standards and how they should be applied.

South Cambridgeshire

14.4 South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 Policy SC/7 requires all housing developments to contribute towards open space to meet the needs generated and includes minimum standards. Where appropriate, provision will be on-site so that provision is integrated into the development and benefits to the health and wellbeing of new residents are maximised, guided by Figure 10. However, an appropriate contribution will be required for off-site provision of the types of space not provided on-site.

14.5 South Cambridgeshire Open Space in New Developments Supplementary Planning Document includes guidance on the design of open spaces. It is

important to note that parts of this SPD are superseded by this chapter, specifically: the tables in paragraphs 2.8, 2.14, and 2.28 are superseded by Tables 14-5 and 14-6 in this SPD.

14.6 Some site specific polices with in the local plans, and in Area Action Plans, provide guidance to open space issues in particular areas. Neighbourhood Plans also form part of the adopted development plan. A number of these plans contain specific policies and requirements in relation to open space within their area.

Development types from which Obligations will be sought

14.7 Residential development, and potentially other forms of commercial development.

14.8 Large scale commercial developments (above 5,000m2) will be required to consider how the needs of their workers and visitors will be met for social and leisure facilities. If the need cannot be met though existing provision on-site, within the surrounding, or through additional on-site provision, this could require an off-site contribution to be sought to address the impact.

14.9 Proposals that require the delivery of open space through new development should explain how the proposed on-site provision and off-site contributions comply with Local Plan policies and have taken into account local strategies and projects.

Form in which contributions should be made

14.10 The standards are applicable to all new residential units created as a result of development, including conversions. Requirements will also be applied to other forms of resident development, for example aparthotels. Requirements are calculated based on the anticipated number of new residents generated by the development.

14.11 In addition to the standards applying to residential development, the Councils may seek open space provision as part of business park, retail and large-scale commercial developments in order to meet the needs of staff and visitors but also to protect local facilities that could be put under undue pressure.

14.12 On individual sites negotiation may take place on the types of space provided on site, taking account of the needs and opportunities of the area, existing provision and any identified deficiencies in provision. When considering existing provision, educational establishments without a guaranteed level of public access and use for the foreseeable future will not be counted. Facilities

in educational ownership where community use is secured through written agreement can be included.

Outdoor Sports Facilities

14.13 Outdoor sport comprises facilities such as grass pitches for a range of sports, bowling greens, tennis courts, athletics tracks and multi-use games areas plus ancillary facilities such as lighting, car park, changing and storage.

14.14 The Cambridge Local Plan requires 1.2 hectares per 1,000 people of playing pitches, courts and greens. Appendix I states that this is an amalgamation of standards for different sports, based on team generation rates and current provision, and provides guidance regarding how this should be addressed.

14.15 The South Cambridgeshire Local Plan requires a minimum of 1.6 hectares per 1,000. Figure 10 of the Local Plan provides guidance on when different types of provision should be provided onsite, with onsite provision anticipated on sites above 200 dwellings.

14.16 The delivery of on-site outdoor playing pitches should be made with regard to the most recently adopted Greater Cambridge Playing Pitch Strategy. NB: An updated study is now underway to inform the Greater Cambridge Local Plan and should be published alongside the draft Plan in 2025. Developers of large windfall sites not accounted for in the study will be required to submit a sports strategy.

Provision for Children and Teenagers

14.17 Provision for children and teenagers needs to deliver attractive, safe and creative places where children and teenagers can enjoy physical activity, socialising and quiet contemplation.

14.18 The Cambridge Local Plan requires 0.3 hectares per 1,000 of equipped children's play areas and outdoor youth provision. Appendix I includes a play space typology, which establishes expectations regarding the quantity, quality and accessibility of a range of play space types. This should be considered when planning for on-site provision.

14.19 In South Cambridgeshire, the standard requires formal Children's Play Space 0.4ha. per 1,000 people comprising formal equipped play areas and provision for teenagers including wheeled sports parks and macadam kick-about areas, and Informal Children's Play Space 0.4ha. per 1,000 people for informal play,

including grass kick-about areas. Figure 10 of the Local Plan provides guidance on when different types of play space should be provided onsite.

Informal open space

14.20 The Cambridge Local Plan requires 2.2 hectares per 1,000 of Informal provision, including recreation grounds, parks, natural greenspaces and, in town centres or urban locations, usable, high quality, public hard surfaces. It will not always be possible to deliver this on-site on smaller developments, but amenity greenspace (informal play space used for kickabout and casual play space) should be considered on all developments of 25 dwellings and over. Provision may also be required on developments of less than 25 dwellings subject to design and context considerations. On larger developments, for example 100 dwellings or more, larger types of informal open space, such as urban parks and gardens and larger areas of natural green space, should be considered.

14.21 In South Cambridgeshire, the standard requires a minimum 0.4ha. per 1,000 people of informal space. Informal open spaces are used by people of all ages for informal unstructured recreation such as walking, relaxing, or a focal point, ranging from formal planted areas and meeting places to wilder, more natural spaces, including some green linkages.

Allotments and Community Orchards

14.22 Allotment and community orchards create multiple benefits for communities, supporting healthy lifestyles and healthy living whilst contributing to the environment and biodiversity. In addition to more traditional allotments, community orchards also provide opportunities linked to the heritage of Cambridgeshire. Other food growing opportunities can also be designed into developments such as roof gardens, raised beds, in schools or care homes, or in the form of temporary provision though meanwhile uses.

14.23 Cambridge Local Plan (in Appendix I) open space and recreation standards also sets a minimum standard of 0.4 hectares per 1,000 people for allotments. Cambridge Local plan paragraph I.12 identifies issues that should be considered as to whether provision is onsite, and I.9 advises that for many developments, particularly in the built-up area of Cambridge on site provision will be challenging.

14.24 South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Policy SC/7 requires a minimum of 0.4 hectares per 1,000 people of allotments and community orchards. The standard stated in the policy is equivalent to 32 allotments per 1,000

households. Figure 10 idented that provision on site will generally be sought above 200 dwellings. The South Cambridgeshire Local Plan specifically references allotments and Community orchards within this element of open space provision. The mix should take account of the opportunities in relation to a specific site.

Onsite Provision

14.25 If provision is made on site as part of the development developers must arrange for the future maintenance and management. For new developments, it is the developer's responsibility to ensure that the open space and facilities are available to the community in perpetuity and that satisfactory long-term levels of management and maintenance are guaranteed. Early consultation and resolution of these matters is recommended to avoid delays in the planning process. The Council will need to be satisfied that appropriate arrangements are in place before planning permission is granted.

14.26 In Cambridge, open space may be adopted by Cambridge City Council if it meets their thresholds and standards. It is advised to consult the City Services team. Cambridge City Council manages 103 play spaces across the City Council area. The Cambridge City Council Outdoor Play Spaces Investment Strategy (2024) sets out the Council's vision and strategic aims for the provision of outdoor play for children and young people from 2024. Proposals for new open spaces should be considered in consultation with the City Services team.

14.27 In South Cambridgeshire, new open spaces and facilities should be offered to the relevant Town / Parish Council to own and manage. Where this is not agreeable by the Town / Parish Council, then a local community organisation or trust that is properly constituted, represents the best interests of the whole community, and guarantees appropriate access by the community in perpetuity should be considered. The developer is expected to be able to show they have fully explored these options for each of the open space and facilities before proposing a management company.

14.28 In circumstances where the community asset is to be transferred to a management company, the Council will require appropriate conditions to:

- Guarantee ensure public access
- Ensure arrangements are in place if the management company becomes insolvent (a developer guarantee).
- Provide community input into the ongoing management of spaces via a management board that the local Town / Parish Council would be a part of.

14.29 Early delivery of provision will generally be required in order that the needs of residents are met.

14.30 If being delivered by the developer onsite provision will need to be of a suitable standard for adoption. The developer will be required to pay for the cost of inspection by a specialist to check that the area or facility is completed to an acceptable quality and is fit for purpose. Such specialists will come from organisations such as the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA), the Government's Application Programming Interfaces (API) standards, National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) and the Sports and Play Construction Association (SAPCA). If developers are providing additional off-site land to meet their obligations for formal sport or children's play space, this will also be provided with an appropriate capital sum to make the facility "fit for purpose" for the activity in question. For example, for pitches this will involve the cost to level, drain, seed and prepare for sporting use to a standard that is acceptable to the Governing Body of Sport for "club" use.

14.31 Allotments will need to be of a suitable standard for adoption and should consider issues including water supply (in particular opportunities for rainwater collection), security and fencing, storage (and potentially communal buildings), suitable soil quality, composting facilities, access and parking. Community orchards should be specifically designed and planted, to provide a suitable environment for effective management and ongoing maintenance as a community resource.

14.32 Developers will be responsible for maintaining open spaces and facilities until they have been formally transferred to the managing organisation. They will be required to provide maintenance plans to demonstrate how this will be done, for approval as part of reserved matters applications prior to development. Facilities and land will normally be transferred as freehold. They will also be required to contribute towards the initial burden of maintaining outdoor play space and open space created to meet the needs of the development. A 15-year indexed commuted maintenance fee will be required as well as a replacement cost, although there may be instances where the circumstances of a particular site require a contribution calculated on a longer period where there is sufficient justification.

Offsite Payments

14.33 Where onsite provision is not made, or only partially made, offsite contributions may be required to support the improvement of existing facilities

or spaces or delivery of new spaces or facilities to meet the needs generated by the development.

14.34 In Cambridge relevant projects will be identified in consultation with service providers. Many facilities provide city wide coverage, and projects may reflect that. In South Cambridgeshire this will be based on considerations within the village or adjoining area and will be determined in consultation with the Parish and Town Councils. Larger projects identified may require contributions from a number of developments to allow them to be implemented.

14.35 Developers will be required to contribute towards the initial burden of maintaining outdoor play space and open space created to meet the needs of the development. The Council will require a Commuted Maintenance Payment for open spaces provided by the new development. These Commuted Maintenance Payments are intended to fund a stream of index linked revenue payments which will pay for the maintenance of both on-site and off-site open space and facilities where they directly relate to the new community. They will be required to cover a 15-year period.

14.36 Open space costs have been reviewed by the Councils' Infrastructure Delivery Plan Consultants (Atkins and LUC). A land cost of £240,000 per hectare has been included.

Cambridge

14.37 In determining the appropriate off-site contribution to meet the need generated by the development, regard will be had to the Cambridge open space standards (Table 14-1) and to the updated costs of provision (Table 14-2) and maintenance (Table 14-3) for the different open space typologies.

Table 14-1: Summary of Cambridge open space standards

Open space type	Hectares per 1000 people	Square Metres per Person
Outdoor Sport	1.2	12
Provision for Children and Teenagers	0.3	3
Informal open space	2.2	22
Allotments	0.4	4

Table 14-2: Capital costs, excluding the cost of land

Costs	Cost per Square Meter (£)	Cost per person (£)
Outdoor Sport	30.23	362.70
Provision for Children and Teenagers	144.99	434.98
Informal open space	19.86	436.99
Allotments	12.82	51.29
Total per person	207.90	1285.96

Source of costs: Infrastructure Costing Review – Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations SPD July 2025

Table 14-3: Maintenance costs

Costs	Cost per Square Metre (£)	Cost per person (£)	Cost per person (15 years) (£)
Outdoor Sport	3.14	37.68	565.27
Provision for Children and Teenagers	10.15	30.45	456.73
Informal open space	0.66	14.47	217.08
Allotments	0.45	1.81	27.20
Total per person	14.40	81.79	1226.81

Source of costs: Infrastructure Costing Review – Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations SPD July 2025

South Cambridgeshire

14.38 As per the approach with Cambridge, where offsite contributions are required of new development within South Cambridgeshire, regard will be had to the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan open space standards (Table 14-4), and the updated costs for provision and maintenance as set out in Tables 14-5 & 14-6.

Table 14-4: Summary of South Cambridgeshire open space standards

Open space type	Hectares per 1000 people	Square Metres per Person
Outdoor Sport	1.6	16
Children's Play space (equipped / formal)	0.4	4
Children's Play space (unequipped / informal)	0.4	4
Informal open space	0.4	4
Allotments and Community Orchards	0.4	4
Total	3.2	32

Table 14-5: Capital costs, excluding the cost of land

Costs	Cost per Square Metre (£)	Cost per person (£)
Outdoor Sport	80.53	1288.47
Children's Play space (equipped / formal)	144.99	579.97
Children's Play space (unequipped / informal)	9.80	39.20
Informal open space	19.86	79.45
Allotments and Community Orchards	12.82	51.29
Total per person	268.01	2038.38

Source of costs: Infrastructure Costing Review – Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations SPD July 2025

Table 14-6: Maintenance costs

Costs	Cost per Square Metre (£)	Cost per person (£)	Cost per person (15 years) (£)
Outdoor Sport	2.87	45.59	683.82
Children's Play space (equipped / formal)	10.13	40.53	607.97
Children's Play space (unequipped / informal)	0.63	2.52	37.80
Informal open space	0.66	2.63	39.47
Allotments and Community Orchards	0.45	1.81	27.20
Total per person	14.72	93.08	1396.26

Exemptions

14.39 Exceptions are set out in Table I.3 of the Cambridge Local Plan, and within policy SC/7 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan.

Outdoor Sports

14.40 Cambridge: Not required from Nursing Homes (use class C2). Full provision will not be sought if the accommodation is directly linked to a college or university by a s106 Agreement and it can be shown that adequate provision of outdoor or indoor sports facilities is made by that college or university.

14.41 South Cambridgeshire: Not required from housing provision consisting of Sheltered housing, Extra Care housing, and residential and nursing homes.

Provision for Children and Teenagers

14.42 Cambridge: Not required from one bedroom units, retirement housing (C3 where there is an age restriction to over 55's, or C2 nursing homes), non-family student accommodation, student family housing if the development is on a college campus and it can be shown that adequate appropriate open space is provided by the college such that students are unlikely to make significant use of other informal open space.

14.43 South Cambridgeshire: Not required from one bedroom units, housing provision consisting of Sheltered housing, Extra Care housing, and residential and nursing homes.

Informal Open Space

14.44 Cambridge: Not required from non-family student accommodation or student family housing if the development is on a college campus and it can be shown that adequate appropriate open space is provided by the college such that students are unlikely to make significant use of other informal open space.

Allotments

14.45 Cambridge: Not required from non-family student accommodation or student family housing

Further guidance

Cambridge

- Cambridge Open Space and Recreation Strategy - Cambridge City Council (2011)
- Cambridge City Council Outdoor Play Spaces Investment Strategy (2024)

South Cambridgeshire

- South Cambridgeshire Open Space in New Developments Supplementary Planning Document (2009)
- South Cambridgeshire Recreation and open space study - South Cambridgeshire District Council (2013)
- Allotment toolkit - South Cambridgeshire District Council

Greater Cambridge (Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire)

- Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Playing Pitch Strategy 2015-2031 (2016)

Other Sources

- Community Orchards: How to Guide - Communities and Local Government (2011)

Chapter 15: Indoor Sports, including Swimming

Introduction

15.1 Sports and leisure facilities are important for the health and wellbeing of residents, and to help keep people physically active. New development places additional demand on facilities many of which are already at capacity, and therefore it is important that developers contribute to mitigate these impacts.

Policy Context

Cambridge

15.2 Cambridge Local Plan 2018 Policy 68 Open space and recreation provision through new development requires that all residential developments should contribute to the provision of recreation sites/facilities in accordance with the council's Open Space and Recreation Standards. Appendix I includes a standard of one swimming pool for every 50,000 people and one sports hall for every 13,000 people. Policy 73 Community, sports and leisure facilities provides requirements and guidance for provision as part of new developments.

South Cambridgeshire

15.3 South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 Policy SC/4 Meeting Community Needs require all housing developments to include or contribute to the provision of the services and facilities necessary to meet the needs of the development, including sports facilities.

Development types from which Obligations will be sought

15.4 All residential development, and potentially some forms of commercial development.

15.5 Large scale commercial developments (above 5,000m2) will be required to consider how the needs of their workers and visitors will be met for social and leisure facilities. If the need cannot be met though existing facilities on-site, within the surround area, or through the provision of additional on-site facilities, an off-site contribution is likely to be sought to address the impact.

Form in which contributions should be made

15.6 The Indoor Sports Facility Strategy 2015-2031 acts as a guide for the future provision of indoor sports halls, swimming pools and outdoor cycling facilities to serve existing and new communities in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. The strategy assesses existing facilities, the future need for sport and active recreation facilities, and opportunities for new provision. The Indoor Sports Facility Strategy 2015-2031 will be kept up to date and provision should take account of the most up-to-date version of this strategy.

15.7 While there are many sports halls in both the City and District, many are on school sites can limit public access, or are ageing and are in need to investment to retain their appeal to users. Need has also been identified for some specific sports like indoor handball indoor tennis, as well as for increased accessibility to facilities.

15.8 Swimming remains a popular sporting activity, with current levels of swimming visits at over 600,000 within all city pools, and still increasing year on year, going against a national trend for a decline in swimming visits around the country. If the City pools are to keep up with the local demand and future growth in the district, and are to remain facilities enjoyed by local residents, capital investment will be required to keep them serviceable, modern, and appealing, and therefore require the investment of existing and future s106 developer swimming and sporting contributions. In addition, new swimming pools are needed in South Cambridgeshire where provision is particularly low.

Onsite Provision

15.9 Due to the scale and nature of facilities new provision on site is only likely to be required in the largest forms of development, such as urban extensions and new settlements. Onsite provision will need to consider the scale and range of this provision appropriate to the level of need generated by the development, its relationship with the wider area and Council strategies.

15.10 The Indoor Sports Facility Strategy takes into account planned growth to 2031. Where large windfall sites come forward, which have not been accounted for in the strategies, applicants should provide a sports strategy (also known as a facilities development plan) setting out the details of specific facilities to be developed, the rationale and need for these. An update of the study is being undertaken to inform the Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

Offsite Contributions

15.11 Where onsite provision is not made, or only partially made, offsite contributions may be required to support the improvement of existing facilities or spaces or delivery of new spaces or facilities to meet the needs generated by the development.

15.12 Projects will be identified in consultation with service providers. Facilities, in particular swimming pools, can serve large catchments. Larger projects identified may require contributions from a number of developments to allow them to be implemented.

15.13 The costs of contributions will be guided by the Sport England Facilities Calculator. This estimates how much demand any given population would generate and the cost of providing that infrastructure.

15.14 At the time of publication, the Sport England Facilities Calculator requires £236 for swimming pool provision and £223 for indoor sports hall provision from each new person in Cambridge.

15.15 In South Cambridgeshire £225 per person is required for swimming pool provision and £185 for indoor sports hall provision for each new person

.

15.16 It should be noted that the above costs of contributions are guided by the Sport England Facilities calculator and may be updated by Sports England to reflect inflation. Applicants should utilise the online version of Sport England's Facilities calculator to ensure they have the most up-to-date costs.

Exemptions

15.17 Cambridge: The Cambridge Local Plan 2018 states that full provision will not be sought if the accommodation is directly linked to a college or university by a s106 Agreement and it can be shown that adequate provision of outdoor or indoor sports facilities is made by that college or university.

Further guidance

Cambridge

- Cambridge City Council Swimming Pool Investment Strategy 2018

Greater Cambridge (Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire)

- Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council Indoor Sports Facility Strategy 2015-2031 (June 2016)

- Cambridge Playing Pitch and Indoor Sports Strategies Update (October 2019 Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee)

Others:

- Sport England Sports Facility Calculator

Chapter 16: Public Realm

Introduction

16.1 Public realm relates to all those parts of the built environment where the public has free access. It encompasses streets, squares, and other rights of way, whether predominantly in residential, commercial or community/civic uses; the open spaces and parks; and the 'public/private' spaces where public access is unrestricted (at least during daylight hours). It includes the interfaces with key internal and private spaces to which the public normally has free access.

Policy Context

Cambridge

16.2 Cambridge Local Plan 2018 includes a range of policies which seek to protect and enhance the public realm. Policy 10: The City Centre requires development in the city centre to contribute to the Council's aim of improving the capacity and quality of the public realm throughout the city centre. The Local Plan also identifies a range of Areas of Major Change and Opportunity Areas where a comprehensive approach to development and a high-quality public realm is sought. A number of these sites have their own Supplementary Planning Documents.

16.3 Policy 56 in Cambridge City Council's Local Plan explains how development will be supported if it is designed to be attractive, high-quality, accessible, inclusive and safe. In part i) of the policy it states that proposals should create and improve public realm, open space and landscaped areas that respond to their context and development as a whole and are designed as an integral part of the scheme. Policy 59 Designing landscape and the public realm states that high quality public realm must be designed as an integral part of new development and co-ordinated with adjacent sites and phases.

South Cambridgeshire

16.4 The South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Policy HQ1 Design Principles requires delivery of high-quality landscaping and public spaces, and the delivery of high-quality public realm. The District Design Guide SPD (2010) provide further details. A number of adopted Neighbourhood Plans across both Councils also provide policies and guidance on issues in particular areas.

Development types from which Obligations will be sought

16.5 Any development that requires alterations to the public realm to provide or improve access, servicing, and amenity. Consequently, there is no trigger below which a public realm obligation may not be required and there are no types of development that would be exempt.

Form in which contributions should be made

16.6 To a large extent the delivery of public realm through new developments will be through the design of new developments and through direct delivery of new places. Much of this will be achieved through planning conditions.

16.7 S106 could be used for a variety of on-site or off-site public realm improvements such as improving footways, street furniture, lighting or removal of street clutter. Where area wide public realm improvement schemes are sought, contributions may be required towards such improvement from multiple developments though planning obligations. Each case will be considered on its individual merits.

16.8 Applications should detail how they will address the requirements of policies related to public realm improvements, including as part of their design and access statement.

16.9 Applicants will need to demonstrate public realm measures are suitably managed in perpetuity. S106 obligation will put in place measures to agree the management and maintenance of any unadopted areas. If they are proposed for adoption, they will need to be of a suitable standard. Upon transfer, a commuted maintenance payment will be required to cover the initial costs of maintaining the Public Realm (usually 15 years).

Exemptions

16.10 No specific exceptions.

Chapter 17: Waste and Recycling

Introduction

17.1 Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council are designated Waste Collection Authorities responsible for collecting household waste. They are also responsible for the management of bring sites. Waste collection services are provided by the Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service (GCSWS) serving over 127,000 homes in both South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City, covering approximately 500 square miles each week. All household recycling and waste operations are based at the Waterbeach Depot seven miles north of Cambridge and operate four days a week domestically and seven days a week serving thousands of local businesses and schools, colleges and other non-domestic premises.

17.2 Planning obligations will be required to address the impact of development on waste provision and services.

Policy Context

Cambridge

17.3 Cambridge Local Plan 2018 Policy 28: Carbon reduction, community energy networks, sustainable design and construction, and water use includes the requirement to address waste management. Waste Management is also listed as a potential requirement in Policy 85: Infrastructure delivery, planning obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy.

South Cambridgeshire

17.4 South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 Policy HQ1: Design Principles requires facilities for waste management and recycling. Waste Management is also listed as a potential requirement in Policy TI/8: Infrastructure and New Developments.

RECAP waste partnership

17.5 The RECAP waste partnership is made up of all local authorities in Cambridgeshire including the County Council and the unitary authority of Peterborough and has been in existence since 1999. The partnership works

collaboratively to deliver a strategic approach for collecting, managing and disposing of waste within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Greater Cambridge (Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire)

17.6 Cambridgeshire County Council is the Waste Disposal Authority and is responsible for waste planning and disposal and in partnership with Peterborough City Council, has prepared and adopted the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

17.7 Policy 14 Waste Management Needs Arising from Residential and Commercial Development requires relevant residential and commercial planning applications to be accompanied by a completed Waste Management Guide Toolkit, which forms part of the latest RECAP Waste Management Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (or similar superseding document). Where appropriate, and as determined through an assessment of the Toolkit submission, such new development may be required to contribute to the provision of bring sites and/or the Household Recycling Centre service.

17.8 The RECAP Waste Management Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document has been prepared and adopted jointly by Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council in partnership with the district councils in the County.

Development types from which Obligations will be sought

17.9 All development.

Form in which contributions should be made

17.10 The following requirements will be applied to new developments.

Household Waste Bins

17.11 A set of bins to include 23 litre external and 5 litre internal food waste caddies will be issued to all new houses and flats as standard. The size and quantity of bins issued to flats will be as per the agreement at the planning consultation stage.

17.12 Approach to Contributions:

- The cost to provide bin sets to new properties is a one-off charge of £100.

- The cost to provide communal waste bins to new properties is a one off charge of £380.

- These fees are reviewed annually and therefore subject to change.

Underground Bins

17.13 GCSWS actively welcomes proposals from developers for alternative waste management solutions. GCWS request that developers of high-density housing consider installing underground bin systems as their first option before looking towards conventional wheelie bin systems.

17.14 Where underground bins are agreed as the best option developers will pay for and install the infrastructure as required, in close collaboration with GCSWS and with reference to the Waste Storage and Collection Guidance for Developers. Developers should contact GCSWS as early in the planning stages as possible to discuss plans.

Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCV)

17.15 GCSWS deploys one Refuse Collection Vehicle (RCV) to cover all three waste streams (recycling, organic, residual) from 3,000 dwellings on a fortnightly collection pattern.

17.16 Both Councils have made formal commitments for the GCSWS to decarbonise their fleet of vehicles, including RCVs refuse collection vehicles, which contribute a significant proportion to the Councils' Greenhouse Gas emissions. In line with this commitment, GCSWS are expanding their electric fleet and around half of all new RCVs. GCSWS operates two types of RCV's– renewable diesel alternative (HVO) RCVs and electric operated RCV's.

17.17 The cost of an electric RCV is about £453,000, equivalent to £151 per dwelling. The cost of a diesel RCV is about £244,000, equivalent to £83 per dwelling.

17.18 Developers will be required to pay the average cost of an electric vehicle and a diesel vehicle which is £116 per dwelling.

Bring Sites

17.19 Developers are required to provide hard standing within public realm areas where the Councils can place above ground banks working roughly on the ratio of one set of banks for every 800 dwellings (as per the RECAP Design Guide). The proximity of existing Household Waste Recycling Centre will also be considered in determining number of recycling banks required.

Household Recycling Centres

17.20 Household Recycling Centres are provided by the Waste Disposal Authority where members of the public can deliver items of household waste for disposal. Recycling facilities may also be provided at these sites.

17.21 National legislation and policy seeks to ensure the diversion of waste disposal from landfill through waste minimisation, re-use, recycling and treatment. As a Waste Disposal Authority Cambridgeshire County Council is required by the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to provide facilities at which residents may deposit their household waste.

17.22 Planned housing growth in Cambridgeshire places further pressures on existing facilities and will require a combination of new or improved facilities to meet future demand. Contributions may be sought to deal with the cumulative impact of a series of both small and large developments.

17.23 Cambridgeshire County Council will assess the demands that the proposed development would have on existing facilities. Where the County Council concludes that a site currently has sufficient capacity to accommodate the proposed development, no contribution will be sought. However, where the proposed development is likely to result in a facility being unable to accommodate additional waste, contributions will be sought towards the provision of additional capacity.

17.24 Cambridgeshire County Council operates two Household Recycling Centres (HRC) in the Greater Cambridge area, at Milton and Thriplow. The County Council is bringing forward plans to redevelop the Milton HRC, to replace the current facility which must close by 2026 under its existing planning consent. The St Neots HRC and Bluntisham HRC, both in Huntingdonshire, have catchment areas that serve some parishes in South Cambridgeshire.

17.25 Where necessary, and as a consequence of the County Council assessment, residential developments in Greater Cambridgeshire will be required to make appropriate contributions towards the improvement of these facilities within their respective catchment areas.

Exemptions

17.26 No specific exceptions.

Further guidance

- Applicants for planning permission should contact the County Council via email at GrowthDevelopment@cambridgeshire.gov.uk to obtain pre-application advice in the County Council waste implications for their development.
- RECAP Waste Management Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document
- Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service Waste and Recycling guide for developers.

Chapter 18: Emergency Services

Introduction

Cambridgeshire Constabulary

18.1 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a duty on local authorities to reduce crime and disorder within the community.

18.2 Police Services in the Greater Cambridge area are provided by Cambridgeshire Constabulary (CC), operating from bases at Cambridge Parkside Police Station, Milton Police Station (under construction replacing Parkside in 2026) a proposed new Cambridge City Centre Police Station, Cambourne Police Station and Sawston Police Station. Its HQ Offices are located at Brampton Road, Huntingdon.

Fire and Rescue Services

18.3 The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 sets out the four key responsibilities for Fire and Rescue Authorities; extinguishing fires in their area, protecting life and property in the event of fires in their area, rescuing and protecting people in the event of a road traffic collision, and rescuing and protecting people in the event of other emergencies.

18.4 Fire and Rescue Services in the Greater Cambridge area are provided by Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service (CFRS), operating from fire stations at Cambridge (Parkside Place), Cottenham (High Street), Linton (Balsham Road), Sawston (Mill Lane), Cambourne (Back Lane) and Gamlingay (Stocks Lane). Its HQ Offices are located at Hinchingbrooke Cottage, Brampton Road, Huntingdon.

Ambulance Services

18.5 Ambulance Services in the Greater Cambridge area are provided by the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EEAST), operating from the Ambulance Hub at Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (CUHFT) Hills Road, Cambridge, the Cambridge Response Post at Jedburgh Close, Cambridge, and the HQ and Hazardous Area Response Team (Hart) office at Melbourn. In addition, there are several ambulance stations outside the administrative boundaries that support residents of the Greater Cambridge

area. These include those at St Neots, St Ives, Huntingdon, Newmarket, Royston, Saffron Walden and Haverhill, along with a Response Post at Sandy.

18.6 All of the above emergency services have confirmed that they are currently operating at capacity. As a result, the growth planned for Greater Cambridge will place additional demand on all emergency services through an increase in the prevention, protection and response activities, including the increased number of incidents, increased attendance times and changes in the incident risk profile arising.

18.7 The additional demand placed on service capacity would require new infrastructure and facilities to be provided, to ensure that the impacts can be appropriately mitigated and managed.

Policy Context

Cambridge

18.8 Cambridge Local Plan 2018 Policy 85: Infrastructure delivery, planning obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy states that where infrastructure (incorporating emergency services) will be placed under strain, improvements to existing infrastructure or compensatory provision should be made, so that an appropriate level of infrastructure is maintained.

South Cambridgeshire

18.9 South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 Policy TI/8: Infrastructure and New Developments states that planning permission will only be granted for proposals that have made suitable arrangements for the improvement or provision of infrastructure (incorporating emergency services) necessary to make the scheme acceptable in planning terms.

Development types from which Obligations will be sought

18.10 All development types where the individual emergency service determines that additional demands would arise that would require mitigation.

Form in which contributions should be made

18.11 Mitigations for emergency service will depend on the size, scale, and location of a proposal.

18.12 For larger strategic scale developments this could require on-site provision in the form of operational touchdown space with staff welfare facilities, dedicated parking and EV charging facilities. In addition:

- For police service – an interview suite for vulnerable victims.

- For the fire and rescue service – specialist plant and equipment, such as hydrants and pumps.

18.13 On-site requirements should be considered in a detailed assessment prepared by the developers in consultation with service providers.

18.14 For all other forms of development, off-site contributions may be sought as part of the planning process on a site-by-site basis where the impact mitigation is necessary. This will be agreed in consultation with the relevant emergency services and may include a proportionate contribution towards:

- Additional or enhanced police station floor space & facilities, custody facilities, police vehicles, equipment, staff resourcing, including the recruitment, training, equipping and tasking of Police Community Support Officers.

- Additional or enhanced fire station floor space & facilities, fire service plant and equipment, fire and rescue vehicles, and additional resources including the recruitment, training, equipping & tasking of Community Safety, Community Wellbeing & Fire Safety Officers, & recruitment, training & equipping of Firefighters.

- Upgrading/refurbishment of ambulance hubs, stations, and response posts, the provision of new ambulances and equipment, and resources including the recruitment, training, equipping & tasking of Community First Responders.

Exemptions

18.15 No specific exceptions.

Chapter 19: Planning Obligations to support local employment and skills

Introduction

19.1 While many areas of Greater Cambridge are comparatively affluent, there continue to be concentrations of poverty and deprivation in particular communities in Cambridge. The Cambridge City Council Community Wealth Building Strategy 2024 includes the strategic objective of increasing skill levels and social mobility. Employers can contribute directly to improved outcomes for local residents through adopting positive business practices such as providing local employment, apprenticeships and skills and training programmes.

19.2 While there are currently no specific policies within the current 2018 Local Plans that require new development to provide opportunities for meeting local employment and training needs, developers may seek to offer such opportunities as a community benefit of their proposal. In such circumstances it is appropriate that the Councils include within this SPD guidance to developers about the scale of development that would warrant preparation of an Employment and Skills Plan, its preferred content, and what form of obligation this may take.

Policy Context

Cambridge

19.3 The Cambridge Local Plan 2018 includes a strategic objective to assist the creation and maintenance of inclusive, environmentally sustainable communities. This includes ensuring that new development helps to address local inequalities, fosters inclusive growth, and contributes towards the skills and training Cambridge needs to support its economic growth.

South Cambridgeshire

19.4 The South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 seeks to ensure that all new development provides or has access to a range of services and facilities that support healthy lifestyles and well-being for everyone. This includes access to local employment opportunities.

Greater Cambridgeshire & Peterborough

19.5 The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) have published their Growth Plan. This is a statutory plan required to set out how the CPCA will achieve economic growth objectives. The Growth Plan sets out ambitions for improving employment and skills. This SPD proposes how new employment, skills and training opportunities could be secured to support this aspiration where development seeks to bring this forward.

Development types from which Obligations will be sought

19.5 An indicative scale of development for when an Employment and Skills Plan would be appropriate is set out in paragraph 19.7 below.

Form in which obligations should be made

19.6 Major developments in Greater Cambridge offer the opportunity to contribute towards the provision of local employment, skill and training, as well as supporting localsupply chains that would significantly benefit local residents and businesses, aiding local economic resilience. Where offered, these should be set out in the form of an Employment and Skills Plan.

19.7 The Employment and Skills Plan should seek to exploit opportunities that could be made available during both the construction and operational phases of a development. The construction phase provides opportunities for local employment and pre-employment support, apprenticeships and training, and school, college and community engagement. Once a development is complete the occupiers of commercial and large-scale residential developments can also bring skills and employment opportunities for local people. In addition, during both construction and operational phases developments can generate opportunities for local businesses to become part of the contractor and occupiers' supply chains.

When will a skills plan be sought?

19.8 An Employment and Skills Plan would be most suited to larger developments. The following sets out guidance for consideration by developers. .

Table 19-1: When a skills plan may be appropriate

Use Class	Development	Threshold	Construction stage	Occupation stage

C3	Residential	50 or more dwellings	✓	-
E	Commercial, business and service	Building(s) of 10,000m² or more	✓	✓
B2	General industrial	Building(s) of 10,000m² or more	✓	✓
B8	Storage and distribution	Building(s) of 10,000m² or more	✓	✓
C1	Hotel(s)	Building(s) of 10,000m² or more	✓	✓
F1	Learning and non-residential institutions	Building(s) of 10,000m² or more	✓	✓
F2	Local community	Building(s) of 10,000m² or more	✓	✓
Sui generis	Several Infrastructure types	Building(s) of 10,000m² or more	✓	✓

19.9 There may be occasions when commercial uses are developed jointly as part of one application. If the cumulative floorspace of these uses exceeds 10,000m2, it would be appropriate for the development consider skills and employment and supply chain opportunities.

19.10 These thresholds are intended to be indicative, where there is likely to be scope to provide the opportunity to deliver on site employment skills and training. Nevertheless, this should not put off applicants of smaller schemes to work with the councils to realise employment and skills opportunities.

Skills and Employment Plans in s106 Agreements

19.11 If an Employment and Skills Plan is to be prepared and implemented, the provisions and requirements would be included within a s106 Agreement. This would typically include:

- A requirement for the developer and council, and where known, the end user or occupier, to meet to discuss the development of a Skills and Employment Plan for the development prior to the implementation of the planning permission.

- The submission of a Skills and Employment Plan for the construction phase of the development for agreement with the Local Planning Authority (through the Economic Development Team) prior to the implementation of the planning permission.
- For phased developments the submission of an updated plan for each stage prior to commencement.
- The appointment of a Skills and Employment Plan co-ordinator
- A commitment not to implement the Planning Permission until the Employment and Skills Plan has been agreed with the Local Planning Authority.
- A commitment to comply with the Employment and Skills Plan during the development.

Content of Skills and Employment Plans

19.12 If a developer is offeringan Employment and Skills Plan, they should outline how the development will create skills, training and supply chain opportunities and how they will be realised locally. Ideally it should:

- Outline the overall approach to be taken by the developer and/or main contractor and how this will address the economic needs of local residents and businesses.
- Detail the measures that will be implemented to achieve the approach proposed, how they will be delivered and a timetable for implementation. This should include how they will be tailored to ensure that they will benefit local residents and businesses.
- Explain how opportunities will be made available to local residents who have difficulty accessing the labour market, for example but not limited to, NEETS (not in education, employment or training), armed services leavers, refugees and asylum seekers, care leavers, people in long-term unemployment, those with a disability, sickness, or caring responsibilities.
- Explain how opportunities will be made available to those who have not traditionally accessed the career paths available through the development, for example, women in construction.
- Explaining how they will look to support and develop SME’s and local social businesses through their supply chain linked to community wealth building.
- Explain how they will look to encourage enterprise and skills development through the use of meanwhile space and onsite requirements - such as catering.
- Establish specific measurable outputs for each individual measure (see below).

- Outline how the project, and each measure, will be managed and resourced. Identify keys stakeholders and relevant existing or future city, district or sub-region wide skills and employment initiatives and how the development will engage with them.
- Include a commitment that the outputs for the development will be written into any contracts with contractors, sub-contractors and new occupiers.

19.13 A recommended template for an Employment and Skills Plan has been developed in collaboration with the Combined Authority and will be provided on the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service website.

19.14 The developer will be responsible for the delivery of the Employment and Skills Plan. They should use reasonable endeavours to meet their employment and skills obligations on-site.

19.15 During the construction phase, it is anticipated that the developers will include the requirement to meet the agreed Employment and Skills Plan targets in their contracts with contractors and sub-contractors. For commercial developments, the occupation phase will require developers to use reasonable endeavours to agree internal protocols/agreements with new occupier(s) that cover the targets, measures and monitoring proposed within the plan.

Outputs

19.16 It is preferred that outputs in an Employment and Skills Plan are generated using an industry approved model such as by the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), although other formats would be acceptable.

19.17 Employment and skills measures would likely include as many of the following as are practically achievable:

- Recruitment of local residents through job brokerage, job centres and other local organisations (the Councils' economic development teams may be able to assist with guidance on such opportunities).
- Creation of new apprenticeship opportunities. Indicative targets for placements could be: 1 construction training placement per: 20 residential units; 20 student/ hotel/ hostel bedrooms; 1,000 sqm (GEA) commercial and employment floorspace (additional and/or replacement). The Councils would strongly advocate that all apprentices should be paid at least the real Living Wage.
- Accredited training, for example, CSCS cards (Construction Skills Certification Scheme).

- Pre-employment support, for example, mentoring, work trials and interview experience.
- Work experience and work placement opportunities designed to support education and learning (14-16 years, 16-19 years and 19+ years).
- Training and employment opportunities in areas such as green sector skills or retrofitting buildings to help reduce carbon emissions associated with energy use.
- Some larger development may require site-based facilities to implement the plan. These could be used for on-site training, accommodating school visits, on-site assessment inductions, skills audits, etc.

19.18 All of the measures above are intended to work towards achieving greater:

- Participation in education initiatives linking with local schools and colleges, supporting the transition between school and work, for example, through school talks and careers advice.
- Working with the voluntary and community groups locally to support disadvantaged people.
- Participation in local forums created to promote sector development, sharing good practice to stimulate improvement.

19.19 The above list is not exhaustive and applicants are encouraged to engage with the Councils' Economic Development teams as well as potential local employment and skills delivery partners early on in the planning application process.

19.20 As part of their supply chains offers, developers should consider:

- Working with the councils to promote and advertise tender opportunities and to achieve the procurement of construction contracts and goods and services from companies and organisations based in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire.
- Briefing sub-contractors on the requirements for local procurement and ensure that cooperation is agreed as a prerequisite to accepting sub-contract tenders and include a written statement in contracts with sub-contractors encouraging them to work with local businesses.

19.21 Developers are also encouraged to engage with new skills and employment initiatives active in the local area for the duration of the s106 obligation commitments on skills and employment.

Monitoring

19.22 Monitoring the performance and process of Employment and Skills plans will significantly aid in quantifying the benefits realised. The developer will be encourage to:

- During the construction phase, submit a report at the end of each development phase detailing the outcomes achieved.
- During the occupation phase, provide regular reports detailing outputs achieved.

19.23 Exemptions

No specific exemptions.

Further guidance

- Cambridge City Council Community Wealth Building Strategy

Chapter 20: Planning Obligations to support affordable workspace

Introduction

20.1 The successful economy of the Cambridge area means that rents for employment space are high. This makes it difficult for some types of businesses, such as micro business or social enterprises, which are important for creating successful places. Rather like affordable housing, there is potential for large new commercial developments to make provision for this type of space, where suitable units are let at below market rates.

20.2 The Cambridge Community Wealth Building Strategy highlights the importance of supporting a vibrant local economy and facilitating partnership action to tackle inequalities.

20.3 In the London Plan, affordable workspace is defined as: "...workspace that is provided at rents maintained below the market rate for that space for a specific social, cultural, or economic development purpose." Affordable workspace provision offers the opportunity make economic, cultural and social impacts. For example, the floorspace could provide start-up space within Greater Cambridge's key economic sectors, creative space for local arts companies, local community workspace for home-workers and organisations or affordable space for local charities and third sector organisations.

20.4 The adopted Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Local Plans do not include policies requiring affordable workspace provision. The potential for a requirement is being explored through the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

20.5 However, the provision of affordable workspace within new commercial developments is encouraged. This section of the SPD sets out how it will be applied and managed if developers make provision within a scheme.

20.6 In September 2024 the Greater Cambridge Growth Sectors Study: Life science and ICT locational, land and accommodation needs was published. The study involved significant engagement with stakeholders, businesses and other organisations. In exploring the needs of these sectors. It identified that in order to support the future needs of these sectors a range of premises in terms of scale, particularly for life science businesses, ensuring that smaller start-ups and scale-ups are provided for. Opportunities for start-up space could also be delivered as affordable employment.

Policy Context

Cambridge

20.7 The Cambridge Local Plan 2018 includes a strategic objective to assist the creation and maintenance of inclusive, environmentally sustainable communities.

South Cambridgeshire

20.8 The South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 seeks to ensure that all new development provides or has access to a range of services and facilities that support healthy lifestyles and well-being for everyone.

Greater Cambridge

20.9 There is no formal requirement for the provision of affordable workspace. Affordable workspace provision is encouraged. This section sets out the approach to how affordable workspace should be delivered, where it is proposed by a developer.

20.10 The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) have published their Growth Plan. This is a statutory plan required to set out how the CPCA will achieve economic growth objectives. The Growth Plan sets out ambitions for the provision of affordable workspace. This SPD sets out how affordable workspace should be secured to support this aspiration where it comes forward.

Development types from which Obligations will be sought

20.11 New major commercial developments, including mixed use schemes, are encouraged to make provision for affordable employment space. The provision of an element of affordable employment space will be most suited to large commercial schemes, e.g. proposals over 10,000m2, in use classes E(g), B2 and B8, with 10% as the suggested amount of floorspace to be given over to affordable use.

20.12 If provision is to be made, developers should submit the details of the affordable employments space with their proposal.

Form in which an obligation will be secured

20.13 Onsite provision

20.14 . The format and delivery of the affordable workspace will be agreed on a case-by-case basis. A developer valuation, to be agreed with the LPA, will determine the local market rent and be used to agree a percentage of market price considered to be affordable.

20.15 It is expected that on-site affordable workspace will be managed by a recognised affordable workspace provider. Where a developer wishes to manage the affordable workspace, they will need to provide information on how this would work.

20.16 It is considered best practice that affordable workspace should remain for at least 15 years, and ideally in perpetuity, from the date of first occupation and be subject to an agreed Management Plan that should outline:

- The selected affordable workspace provider.
- The sector focus for the accommodation and target tenants.
- Units sizes, configuration of spaces, fit-out plans and the flexibility of layouts.
- Lease arrangements, rents and services charges.
- Shared facilities available to occupants.
- Support services to be offered to occupants including relationships with business support providers.
- Where appropriate, move-on mechanisms to be used, for example stepped rents.

20.17 Developers would usually provide annual reports to the LPA detailing the outputs and outcomes from the space(s) for the duration of the affordable workspace provision. Any significant changes to the provisions or management of the workspace during its lifetime should be agreed in writing with the LPA. The arrangements may be reviewed or ended where the LPA is satisfied that the developer/owner has been unable, having made reasonable attempts, to lease the affordable workspace to an approved affordable workspace provider, or directly to an approved charitable/ not for profit-end-user.

Further guidance

- Greater Cambridge Growth Sectors Study: Life science and ICT locational, land and accommodation needs

Chapter 21: Public Rights of Way

Introduction

21.1 New housing and commercial developments may create a need for publicly accessible routes on-site or to move in and out of the development and link with existing pedestrian and cycle routes and the wider rights of way network. Such links are important in securing active travel as well as meeting recreation and leisure needs.

Policy Context

Cambridge

21.2 Cambridge Local Plan 2018 Policy 5 Sustainable transport and infrastructure requires development proposals to contribute to delivery of transport strategies with particular emphasis on securing modal shift and the greater use of more sustainable forms of transport. Policy 80 supports development that prioritises walking, cycling and public transport and is accessible for all. Policy 81 sets out requirements regarding the mitigation of the transport impacts of development, which can include investment in infrastructure. A range of area specific policies within the Cambridge local plan seek provision of countryside access/rights of way. This will contribute toward the regional network of public rights of way for vulnerable traffic (walkers, cyclists, horse riders and carriage drivers).

South Cambridgeshire

21.3 South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 Policy HQ/1 requires developments to achieve a permeable development with ease of movement and access for all users and abilities, with user friendly and conveniently accessible streets and other routes both within the development and linking with its surroundings and existing and proposed facilities and services, focusing on delivering attractive and safe opportunities for walking, cycling, public transport and, where appropriate, horse riding. Policy TI/2: Planning for Sustainable Travel states that planning permission will only be granted for development likely to give rise to increased travel demands, where the site has (or will attain) sufficient integration and accessibility by walking, cycling or public and community transport.

Development types from which Obligations will be sought

21.4 Developments that may trigger a need for publicly accessible routes on-site or to move in and out of the development and link with existing pedestrian and cycle routes and the wider rights of way network.

Form in which contributions should be made

21.5 Planning Obligations may be sought on-site as part of the development works to secure new rights of way over the proposed development site, and/or for the upgrade of existing routes, and/or to address existing gaps in the public rights of way network. Such obligations may include requirements for maintenance of newly created or existing rights of way. Financial contributions may be appropriate where necessary to establish better links/connections between new and existing routes on site, and that of the existing wider network. The level of any financial contribution will be based on the cost of the works required to establish the link between on and off-site network connections.

21.6 NB: Developers/landowners may be eligible to access Government grants under the 'Environmental Land Management Schemes' (ELMs) where they provide permissive access within new development to new footpaths and bridleways which are provided for a minimum period of 5 years.

Exemptions

21.7 No specific exemptions.

Further guidance

- Cambridgeshire's Active Travel Strategy (Cambridgeshire County Council)
- Cambridgeshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan (Cambridgeshire County Council)
- Cambridgeshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (Cambridgeshire County Council)
- Cambridgeshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority)
- Development and Public Rights of Way: Guidance for Planners and Developers (Cambridgeshire County Council)
- Cambridgeshire County Council Change of Surface of PROW Authorisation (Cambridgeshire County Council)

Chapter 22: Healthcare

Introduction

22.1 Health provision is an integral component of sustainable development – access to essential healthcare services promotes good health outcomes and supports the overall social and economic wellbeing of an area. The Council will work with the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Integrated Care System (ICS) to assess the need for additional health infrastructure and ensure that all residents have easy access to the care they need when they need it.

22.2 The delivery of new and improved health infrastructure is resource intensive. The majority of existing health infrastructure is at or nearing capacity, particularly primary care infrastructure, and the level of housing growth planned for Greater Cambridge will place additional pressure on existing health and social care provision. To cope with the additional demand generated by new development, health infrastructure will require improvement, and in some cases the provision of new infrastructure will be required.

22.3 Where the assessment of impact on local health provision identifies there is insufficient health infrastructure capacity to meet the needs generated by a development proposal, planning obligations will be required to mitigate the impact of the development and secure the required additional health infrastructure provision.

Policy Context

Cambridge

22.4 Cambridge Local Plan 2018 Policy 75 Healthcare facilities identify health infrastructure as necessary to support new development, and that the Council will work with the relevant health organisations to provide high quality and convenient local health services in all parts of Cambridge, but particularly in areas of population growth. Policy 85: Infrastructure delivery, planning obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy includes healthcare amongst its requirements.

South Cambridgeshire

22.5 South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (Policy SC/4) requires all housing developments to include or contribute to the provision of the services and facilities necessary to meet the needs of the development, including health infrastructure

22.6 In addition to these district wide policies, both Local Plans include a range of site-specific policies. Where site specific policies have requirements for health facilities these will need to be considered by individual development proposals.

Development types from which Obligations will be sought

22.7 Residential development (self-contained and non-self-contained) of all tenures.

22.8 Assessment of impact on local health infrastructure, prepared in consultation with Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Integrated Care System (ICS) and other health stakeholders as appropriate.

Form in which contributions should be made

Health Infrastructure in the Greater Cambridge Area

22.9 Integrated Care Systems (ICS), established in 2022, introduced a new structure to enable closer working between organisations in the health and care system. ICSs cover the whole of England and bring together different partners including NHS providers, commissioners, local authorities, and the voluntary and community sector. The boundary of each ICS is covered by an Integrated Care Board who are responsible for commissioning the primary and secondary health services required to meet the requirement of the population registered with a GP in their area. ICBs have replaced Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and there are now 42 ICBs across England.

22.10 From 1*st* April 2026, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ICB will merge with Milton Keynes, Luton, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire ICBs as part of a larger national NHS transformation initiative. The new ICB will be known from this point as the Central East ICB and will become the new health commissioning body for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area.

22.11 The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough ICS (C&P ICS) covers a geographical area with a population of around 1.3 million. The ICS has formed two place-based care partnerships that bring together key partner organisations

delivering health and care services in those places: North Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (focusing on Peterborough, Fenland and Huntingdonshire) and Cambridgeshire South (focusing on East and South Cambridgeshire, Royston and Cambridge City). Greater Cambridgeshire falls within the South Care Partnership, which has a population of around 475,000 and includes a range of NHS service providers, Local Authorities and VCS partners:

- 39 GP practices organised into nine Primary Care Networks (PCNs) – Cambridge Northern Villages PCN, Cambridge City PCN, Cambridge City 4 PCN, Cam Medical PCN, Granta PCN, Merdian PCN, Cantab PCN, Ely North PCN and Ely South PCN[1]
- Three hospitals (Addenbrooke's Hospital, the Rosie Maternity Hospital, Royal Papworth Hospital)
- Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust (community provider)
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust (community and mental health provider)
- East of England Ambulance Service Trust

It should be noted that there are two surgeries within the Greater Cambridgeshire boundary that do not fall within the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough ICS:

- Bassingbourn Surgery – branch surgery of the Ashwell Surgery which falls under Hertfordshire and West Essex ICS.
- Gamlingay Surgery – branch surgery of Greensand Medical Practice which falls under Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes ICS.
- Both of these practices are in the new Central East ICB geography.

22.12 The integrated neighbourhood teams comprise a range of staff alongside medical professionals, including community services, social care and the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector. There are also local Medical, Dental, Pharmaceutical and Optical Committees, and at the ICS level a Children's and Maternity Partnership Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Autism Partnership.

22.13 At a national scale, the shape of the NHS is changing, with a strong focus on directly delivering care at the community level. In line with the NHS 10-Year Plan (2025), this is planned to be achieved by investing in integrated neighbourhood provision ('Neighbourhood Health Centres'). At the time of

[1] For clarity, some PCNs expand beyond defined local authority boundaries. In this case, Ely North PCN and Ely South PCN fall within the overall South Care Partnership, but both fall outside the Greater Cambridgeshire local authority boundary – further advice on this matter can be provided on a site-specific basis.

preparation of this SPD, the specific principles and requirements for the delivery of Neighbourhood Health Centres are still yet to be determined.

22.14 At the neighbourhood level, the development of PCNs is a key aspect of the NHS Long Term Plan in providing primary care services and delivering a set of service requirements specific to the needs for a defined patient population (a PCN will generally have a population of between 30,000 – 50,000 people). This model of care is based on providing extra resource in general practice so people can easily see the best primary care professional for their need or concern. The introduction of PCNs has set a new way of working within GP practices, enabling them to more effectively coordinate primary care services for populations at the PCN level.

22.15 This is a significant shift away from GP practices' previous way of working independently and having limited service offerings. Expanded multidisciplinary teams in PCNs comprise a range of staff in addition to GPs, including speciality and associate specialist doctors, pharmacists, district nurses, community geriatricians, dementia workers and allied health professionals such as physiotherapists and podiatrists/ chiropodists. To address the pressure acute services are under, there is a focus on moving some intermediate health care services (for example, screening and testing) out of hospitals and into primary care facilities.

22.16 Because PCNs are made up of a group of GP practices which are closely working together and are aligned to other health and social care staff and organisations, this enables the closer integration of existing local services. Members of the PCN may also include other organisations such as community pharmacies, community service providers, mental health providers and voluntary sector organisations. This allows PCNs to collaboratively plan and organise the delivery of health and care services in each of their distinct geographical areas and means people can access the full range of primary care services that they need closer to home.

22.17 As identified in the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough ICS Joint Forward Plan (2024), a key issue for meeting the health needs of the existing and future population is the condition of the primary care estate. It is identified as being or is soon to become no longer fit for purpose and will not have the capacity to absorb additional patients in light of the identified pressures from a growing and aging population. Over recent years, the population has steadily increased and has already caused many GP practices to reach capacity, with a few facing difficulties in accepting additional patients and closing their lists to new patients.

22.18 Ensuring that everyone has access to the care they need when they need it means providing care in the right buildings, with the right staff and resources. The projected growth within the Greater Cambridgeshire area will further increase pressure upon existing facilities. In addition to significant housing growth, the increase in population will not be evenly distributed across the local area. This will also need to be factored into determining future primary care infrastructure needs to ensure healthcare inequalities are addressed and prevented.

22.19 From an estate perspective, delivering the NHS Long Term Plan means a shift away from smaller GP premises to larger scale, modernised integrated primary and community care hubs that accommodate a wider range of healthcare services built around the needs of the local population. The need to support a wider range of services in one location places pressure on healthcare infrastructure designed to accommodate traditional models of general practice. Successfully transforming the way services are delivered, and redesigning patient care requires making more efficient use of the existing estate alongside ensuring that any new health infrastructure provided supports this new model of primary care provision.

Requirements for Assessing Impact on Local Health Infrastructure

22.20 New residential development will be required to mitigate its impact on health infrastructure. The type of provision and associated financial contribution(s) required will be determined based on the needs generated by the development and the existing capacity of impacted health infrastructure. Where a need is identified planning obligations may be sought including:

- Financial contributions towards improvement/expansion of existing health facilities.
- Financial contributions toward construction of a new health facility.
- Provision of land and a financial contribution for construction of a new health facility.
- On-site health facility delivered by the developer.
- Financial contributions towards costs related to any interim/temporary provision that may be required prior to the completion of new permanent facilities.
- New facility required to compensate for the loss of an existing facility caused by the development.

22.21 All major residential developments will be required to assess their impact on primary health infrastructure within the healthcare catchment of the proposed development following the process set out in the table below. For strategic-scale proposals, there may be additional requirements for health infrastructure

related to acute, mental health, and/or community health provision. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis through the master planning process for the individual development.

22.22 Pre-application engagement with the ICS is encouraged for all scales of schemes and expected for sites that propose 200 or more residential units. Early and on-going engagement with the ICS and other relevant health stakeholders is particularly important for schemes with the potential for on-site health provision, such as those within areas of major change/new settlements and large residential-led site allocations.

22.23 To properly determine planning obligation requirements, it is important that needs assessments reflect the most up-to-date ICS standards of health infrastructure provision for planning purposes as set out in this SPD. The NHS are the only authority responsible for determining required health infrastructure across the county, and the ICS is responsible for commissioning the range of health services that local people rely on. Approaches to assessing impacts on health infrastructure that do not accord with ICS strategies and standards will not be accepted.

Submission Requirements and Standard S106 Provisions

22.24 Where a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is required, the assessment of impact on local health infrastructure should normally be included in the HIA with appropriate planning obligations summarised in the Planning Statement. Where an HIA is not required, the assessment can be provided as an appendix to the Planning Statement.

22.25 Where a planning obligation is likely to be required, the applicant should indicate this in any draft s106 Heads of Teams proposed. For applications where financial contributions towards primary care are required, the following standard wording will generally be used:

‘Health Contribution: means the sum of £x (index linked) to be applied by the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Integrated Care Board (ICB) or subsequent successor body towards the provision of additional primary care led capacity through the extension and/or remodelling of [insert name of facility], or through the extension or remodelling of other facilities within the local primary care networks (PCNs) – or subsequent successor - in which the development is located, or through the extension and/or remodelling of other facilities that would specifically provide services to serve the development.’

22.26 Expenditure of planning obligations related to primary care facilities will normally be area- based on facilities within the local PCN(s) serving the

development. In limited circumstances expenditure may be directed at a wider scale where this is deemed necessary to support service delivery objectives.'

22.27 For smaller schemes, to enable the required additional capacity to be in place in a timely manner the financial contribution will be due prior to commencement of the development. On larger, phased schemes trigger points for payment will be agreed in consultation with the ICS.

22.28 For proposals where other forms of contributions are required – for example, delivery of on- site facilities or contributions towards other forms of health infrastructure (acute, mental health) – the detailed wording of the s106 obligation will need to be agreed in consultation with the ICS. All financial contributions to health infrastructure will be indexed linked to the Build Cost Information Service (BCIS) All-In Tender Price Index.

22.29 Where facilities are delivered on-site, measures to ensure that they are fit for purpose and affordable will be applied including consideration of input from the District Valuer. Given the long timescales and uncertainties involved in large developments, the requirement for an in- kind on-site facility may change over time. In these circumstances, the s106 agreement will include a cascade mechanism to secure a financial contribution in-lieu of the on-site provision where the facility is not required or able to be delivered. The s106 financial obligation will be used to contribute towards alternative provision in the area to mitigate the site-specific impact of the development.

Methodology for Calculating Primary Care Infrastructure Need

22.30 New housing developments increase the total number of patients that need primary care in a localised area. From a service planning perspective, to adequately provide for the needs of the population within the area the ICS must consider the total population that will live in the newly built homes and how services within the impacted Primary Care Network(s) (PCN) can be best provided to serve this additional population.

22.31 If the baseline position is that the existing primary care infrastructure does not have capacity to accommodation the additional population growth caused by the development, a contribution will be required. To determine if a planning obligation is required and the appropriate form of contribution, a four-step process will be followed as set out in the table below.

Overview of Methodology for Calculating Primary Care Infrastructure Needs

Step 1: Assess level of primary care infrastructure need proposal generates

- Average household size applied to total number of residential units
- ICS floorspace requirement for growth 150sqm GIA per 1,750 patients

Step 2: Review capacity of existing primary care infrastructure

- Existing practices likely to be impacted identified by ICS
- ICS benchmark for existing capacity 120sqm NIA per 1,750 patients

Step 3: Consider appropriate additional capacity solutions and approaches

- Potential for expansion of existing facilities or new provision

Step 4: Identify appropriate form of developer contributions

- ICS 2024 build cost benchmarks (will be updated annually) of:
- £5,179/sqm (South Cambridgeshire) and £5,324/sqm (Cambridge) for mitigation in the form of refurbishment/extension
- £6,700/sqm (South Cambridgeshire) and £6,893/sqm (Cambridge) for mitigation in the form of new build

Example calculation for 250 unit scheme mitigated by expansion of existing facilities

- [(250 residential units x 2.4 persons/house)/1,750 patients]*150sqm = 51sqm floorspace requirement
- (51sqm primary care floorspace)*(£X,XXX/sqm ICS build cost benchmark) = £XXX,XXXX

Impact of development on Registered Patient Population

22.32 The residential population generated by the proposed development is used to estimate the direct impact on local primary care services by providing the number of GP registrations linked to the additional population.

- For self-contained (C3) dwellings the average household size of 2.4 as identified by 2021 Census will be used applied to all units.
- For non-self-contained dwellings such as student accommodation or purpose-built HMOs the standard assumption will be one person per bedspace.
- For older people's housing the most appropriate approach to determining population gain will need to be agreed on a case-by-case basis with the Council.

22.33 Alternate household size assumptions will only be considered by the ICS if justified by the applicant and agreed by the Council.

Primary Care Infrastructure Needs Arising from Development

22.34 Department of Health best practice guidance for primary care facilities is provided in Health Building Note 11:01: Facilities for Primary and Community Care (HBN 11-01). Health Building Notes provide guidance on the design and planning of new healthcare buildings, as well as the refurbishment and extension of existing facilities. HBN11-01 describes the way to quantify the types of spaces needed for primary and community care facilities to support the briefing and design processes for individual projects in the NHS building programme.

22.35 For planning purposes, the ICS uses a standard floorspace requirement of 150sqm Gross Internal Area (GIA) per 1,750 patients which is aligned to HBN11-01 guidance. This provides an appropriate benchmark for the early-stage planning of new facilities, to identify the scale of additional infrastructure required to provide primary care services to a modern standard of care for residents of new housing in efficient, flexible, and user-friendly environments. This floorspace standard is kept under review by the ICS to ensure it reflects the most up-to-date best practice guidance and may be revised accordingly.

Capacity of Existing Primary Care Infrastructure

22.36 The ICS will identify the individual primary care premises likely to be impacted by new development based on existing GP catchments, predominant patterns of patient access in the local area and ICB objectives relating to primary care accessibility. This means that not all practices whose catchments cover the development site will necessarily be included in the assessment of existing capacity – for example while some GPs have very large catchments, the ICS does not consider it appropriate to expect patients to travel significant distances to access primary care facilities when there are closer options.

22.37 Early engagement with the ICS will ensure that baseline capacity assessment includes the correct premises. The ICS uses a standard floorspace requirement of 120sqm Net Internal Area (NIA) per 1,750 patients to assess the capacity of existing premises, aligned to HBN11-01. Where available, weighted patient list size should be used for the assessment. This results in a more accurate understanding of current infrastructure capacity because weighting for patient demographics reflects that certain types of patients place a higher demand on practices than others (e.g. older patients, very young patients).

22.38 In limited circumstances there may be existing capacity within the estate, or funded primary care estates projects with certainty around delivery that will deliver additional capacity in future. In such cases, it will be necessary to determine if the capacity will still be available at the time the proposed development is occupied – for example, improvement projects may have been identified in response to population growth associated with housing development that has already been approved but not yet implemented.

Additional Capacity Solutions and Approaches

22.39 Developer contributions towards health infrastructure should contribute to the delivery of effective and efficient primary care services that meet the strategic needs of the impacted PCN(s) and the ICS. The ICB will identify capacity solutions to deliver the required additional floorspace based on either:

- Refurbishment and/or extension of existing premises – this will depend on if existing premises are in the right location, have the potential for refurbishment, reconfiguration and/or extension, and alignment with ICS Infrastructure Strategy.
- New build health facilities – this may be either on-site or off-site depending on the scale/location of the development and alignment with ICS Infrastructure Strategy.

22.40 In context of the significant transformation taking place within primary care, the most effective means of expanding primary care to serve the needs of a specific new development may not be focusing investment on the facility closest to the development site. Planning obligations will be linked to delivering additional capacity within the relevant PCN area(s). This flexibility is necessary to enable the ICS to deliver the required additional capacity in the location that most effectively serves residents of the new development at the time it comes forward, which may differ from the preferred mitigation project(s) identified at the time of permission.

22.41 At the masterplanning stage, development proposals in growth locations and areas of major change will generally need to provide flexibility to accommodate necessary health facilities on site. As a benchmark this will typically apply to developments over 1500 dwellings, but a number of factors will be considered when determining whether a particular development (including below that size) should include on-site provision of a primary care facility including:

- The ability of local facilities to expand sufficiently and impact of a new facility on them.
- Cumulative impact with other residential development proposals and the needs of the existing community.
- The viability of the development and the cost of a new primary care facility against other potential solutions.
- The viability of a new facility, particularly in the early years of a large, phased scheme.
- How the location and configuration of the development, including co-location with other services, would align with wider system objectives relating to service delivery.
- Where floorspace requirements from a single development are not large enough the ICS may seek to work with developer to agree delivery of a larger facility.

Form of Developer Contribution

22.42 Once the appropriate form of mitigation has been identified by the ICS, the capital cost of creating the additional primary care floorspace to the required standard will be determined based on the relevant build cost benchmark. The 2024 benchmark costs to be used in the calculation of the required contribution amount are:

- £5,179/sqm (South Cambridgeshire) and £5,324/sqm (Cambridge) for mitigation in the form of refurbishment/extension
- £6,700/sqm (South Cambridgeshire) and £6,893/sqm (Cambridge) for mitigation in the form of new build

22.43 ICS build cost benchmarks for primary care facilities are prepared by independent quantity surveyors with a healthcare specialism to ensure accordance with HBN11-01. The capital costs of additional provision, whether for upgrades to existing facilities or construction of new facilities, are based on providing spaces that specified to be ready for occupation, as opposed to shell and core condition. This reflects the full costs of delivering health infrastructure projects and therefore incorporate a range of allowances including (but not limited to) fit out, professional fees, externals and contingency. However, they do not include the cost of land acquisition.

22.44 Build cost benchmarks will be updated annually by the ICS to reflect current market conditions in the locality. Updated benchmarks will be published on the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service website. In cases where the ICS has identified potential priority projects in the locality of the development, for

example in their Infrastructure Strategy, as part of developing the contribution requests these projects may be explored in more detail to refine the request.

22.45 Where the scale of the proposals requires on-site provision of a new facility, mitigation will take the form of either:

- In-kind provision by the developer in the form of a turnkey, fully fitted out facility transferred to the NHS at no cost; or
- The provision of a service plot of land at no cost, and a financial contribution to equivalent to the full capital cost of a new build facility of the required size.

22.46 The final design of the health facility should meet the most up to date model of health care provision standards. This will be secured in the s106 agreement by a requirement for the health facility specification to be agreed by the ICS and (if relevant) healthcare provider(s). The s106 will also include mechanisms to ensure that the delivery of any in-kind facility is financially and operationally viable for the needed services, for example lease terms.

Guidance for New Primary Care Facilities

22.47 The condition of the estate has a direct impact on patient care. A core ambition of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough ICS is to support a primary care estate that is fit for the future and supports primary care teams to provide effective services that patients can easily access. This means providing place-based healthcare solutions that meet patient needs at the same time as supporting health professionals to effectively deliver services.

22.48 Where new primary care-led facilities are provided as part of new developments, these need to be designed to meet ICS health floorspace requirements as well as wider ICS objectives relating to the sustainability and operational viability of health infrastructure. The following requirements should be fulfilled when new on-site health facilities are proposed:

- On-site provision should be within a single building with a planned mix of compatible uses in proximity. Provision split across multiple sites does not accord with the ICS strategy of development of integrated hubs.
- The location of the facility should be easily accessible by public transport, easily visible from a public highway, have accessible parking for those with mobility issues and have easy access for emergency vehicles
- The site must be sized to incorporate the building as well as operational requirements related to parking, servicing and access. Where feasible,

space should also be provided to allow for provision of mobile diagnostic services.

- The site should be flat and free from any ground contamination or constraints, fully serviced, and free of any abnormal development costs or restrictions
- There should be provision for soft landscaped areas around the health centre to provide areas for wellbeing and to deliver opportunities for social prescribing.
- Building design must ensure natural light is provided to consultation rooms, bookable space and multi-use spaces.
- Adherence to Delivering a Net Zero NHS requirements

22.49 Co-location of front-line staff from primary, community, social and VCSE sector providers all caring for the same local people around a defined neighbourhood geography including Family Hubs, is embedded within ICS priorities to support an increase in delivering more care closer to home and a reduction in inequalities. Where there is potential for co-location of the primary care services required by a new development with other complementary services, this will need to be explored early in the master planning process to make sure that the specific clinical design requirements or primary care can be satisfied.

Exemptions

22.50 No specific exemptions.

Further guidance

- Health & Wellbeing Integrated Care Strategy | CPICS Website (Cambridge & Peterborough ICS - Health and Wellbeing Integrated Care Strategy (2022)).
- Estates Strategy | CPICS Website (Cambridge & Peterborough ICS - Estates Strategy Summary 2023-2033 (The full version of which will be made available)). This includes clarification of PCN and Place areas.
- Health Impact Assessment SPD - South Cambs District Council (scambs.gov.uk) (South Cambridgeshire - Health Impact Assessment SPD (2011)). NB – This SPD is proposed to be replaced by a new Health Impact Assessment SPD for Greater Cambridge in 2025.
- Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Insight – Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) – Published Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk) (Healthy Places Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough 2024)

Any subsequent guidance documents which will be published.

Chapter 23: Historic Environment

Introduction

23.1 Greater Cambridge boasts a rich and diverse historic environment, formed of both designated and non-designated assets. This includes a significant number of statutory listed buildings, conservation areas, registered parks and gardens, scheduled monuments, and other heritage assets of local importance. However, there is sustained pressure across Greater Cambridge for rapid growth which may threaten the very features that make this part of England so unique and special. It is important that development appropriately mitigates for any harm to the historic environment.

Policy Context

Cambridge

23.2 Cambridge City Local Plan Policy 61 Conservation and enhancement of Cambridge's historic environment, Policy 62 Local heritage assets, and Policy 63 Works to a heritage asset to address climate change, require development proposals to preserve or enhance the significance of the heritage assets of the city, their setting and the wider townscape, including views into, within and out of conservation areas. Where a proposal would lead to harm or substantial harm to a heritage asset, mitigation measure should be secured that reduce the harm and/or secure the public benefit justifying the harm. For relevant planning applications, construction and post-construction monitoring are likely to be required

South Cambridgeshire

23.3 South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Policy NH/14 Heritage Assets requires development proposals to sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets, including their settings, as appropriate to their significance and in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Development types from which Obligations will be sought

23.4 Development proposals that include, or may impact, an identified heritage asset or its setting.

Form in which contributions should be made

23.5 Where appropriate, and informed by the Heritage Impact Assessment, the range of matters that could be included as part of a s106 agreement in relation to heritage assets include:

- The repair, restoration or maintenance of a heritage asset(s) and their setting;
- Increased public access and improved signage to and from heritage assets;
- Interpretation panels/ historical information and public open days;
- Production and implementation of a Conservation Management Plans;
- Measures for preservation or investigation and recovery of archaeological remains and sites;
- Display of archaeological sites; dissemination of historic environment information for public/school education and research; and
- Sustainability improvements for historic buildings.

Form of Developer Contribution

23.6 It is essential that heritage works are provided in a timescale commensurate with the proposed phasing of the development and the Council will seek to approve trigger points through the s106 agreement.

23.7 The obligation will be secured through developer provision of the identified works. Where appropriate, the obligation may include provision for ongoing monitoring and for the long-term maintenance of the heritage asset.

23.8 Where the proposal involves enabling development to secure the repair, restoration and maintenance of the heritage asset, the Council will require any identified funds raised through provision of the enabling development to be held in a escrow account, and appropriate arrangement put in place to manage the spending of such funds.

Exemptions

No specific exemptions

Further guidance

- Conservation area appraisals and management plans for Greater Cambridge, that includes the appraisals and maps for both Cambridge City and South Cambridge
- Conservation Areas Guide South Cambridgeshire District Council
- Latest Advice and Guidance Historic England

Chapter 24: Other Potential Development Specific Requirements

Chapters 4 to 22 may not represent all possible planning obligations requirements that may be applicable to any individual development. The precise circumstances of each development will be different and therefore there may be additional development specific requirements, such as mitigation measures, that may be needed to address the impact of individual developments. Such requirements by reason of their nature will need to be assessed on a site-by-site basis.

The list below sets out some additional potential planning obligations that may be applicable, depending on the individual circumstances and constraints of the development site and the nature of the proposed development. This list is not exhaustive.

- Where granting planning permission leads to the loss of community, sports or leisure or open space facilities, planning obligations may be used to secure alternative provision (Cambridge Local Plan Policy 67, Policy 73 South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Policy SC/8);

- Pollution, Air Quality, Noise, Odour mitigation measures (Cambridge Local Plan Policy 36, South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Policy SC/12, SC/14, Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD);

- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) or flood mitigation (Cambridge Local Plan Policy 31, Policy 32, South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Policy CC/7, CC/8, CC/9, Cambridgeshire Flood & Water SPD, and Cambridgeshire County Councils Surface Water Planning Guidance).

- Sustainable Show Homes (South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Policy CC/5), Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD);

- Digital Infrastructure (Cambridge Local Plan Policy 42, South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Policy TI/10).

Appendix A: Children and Occupancy Yields

Table A-1: General children yield multipliers (number of children per 100 dwellings of unknown size)

Age Group	Pupils
0 to 3	20-30
4 to 10 Cambridge and fringe	20-30
4 to 10 Rest of the county	30-40
11 to 15	18-25

Table A-2: Detailed children yield multipliers (number of children per 100 market dwellings of given size) Developments in South Cambridgeshire.

Age Group & Bedrooms per Dwelling	1	2	3	4+
0-3	0	10	20	35
4 to 10	0	15	20	45
11 to 15	0	5	15	30

Table A-3: Detailed Children yield multipliers (number of children per 100 affordable dwellings of given size) Developments in South Cambridgeshire.

Age Group & Bedrooms per Dwelling	1	2	3	4+
0-3	0	40	60	70
4 to 10	0	60	80	120
11 to 15	0	15	60	90

Table A-4: Detailed multipliers (number of children per 100 market dwellings of given size) Developments in Cambridge and Cambridge Fringe.

Age Group & Bedrooms per Dwelling	1	2	3	4+
0-3	0	10	20	35
4 to 10	0	8	20	45
11 to 15	0	5	15	30

Table A-5 Detailed multipliers (number of children per 100 affordable dwellings of given size) Developments in Cambridge and Cambridge Fringe.

Age Group & Bedrooms per Dwelling	1	2	3	4+
0-3	0	40	60	70
4 to 10	0	30	60	100
11 to 15	0	15	60	90

Unless otherwise stated in the SPD the level of contribution sought will be calculated according to the net increase of occupants that will result from a residential development according to the table below. These figures are based on Census 2021 data for Cambourne and are considered to represent an appropriate occupancy rate for new development. For student housing and houses in multiple occupation, the number of people to be accommodated will be used.

Table A-6: Detailed multipliers (SEND Provision) for school aged children on the development.

SEND is 2.17% of all school aged children on the development. This is calculated as:

Number of SEND children = (Number of Primary aged children X 2.17%) + (Number of Secondary aged children X 2.17%)

Table A-7: Standard occupancy rate

Size of Dwelling	Number of Occupants
1 Bedroom	1.23
2 Bedroom	2.06
3 Bedroom	2.83
4 Bedroom +	3.26

Source: Census 2021, Table RM136 - Tenure by household size by number of bedrooms.

Appendix B: Schedule of Inputs Required for Viability Appraisal

Costs

1. Base build costs

- Description: Building costs for each specific type of building exclusive of abnormal costs. Contingency information if applicable.
- Preferred source: Quantity Surveyors Cost Plan for proposals.

2. Abnormal costs

- Description: Costs over and above the normal associated base build costs.
- Preferred source: Quantity Surveyors Cost Plan for proposals and relevant specialists report.

3. Infrastructure costs

- Description: Costs of associated infrastructure/service to be provided to enable the development.
- Preferred source: Quantity Surveyors Cost Plan for proposals and relevant specialists report.

4. Professional fees

- Description: Planning, Engineers, Design, other consultant fees.
- Preferred source: Industry norms or otherwise as set out within developer budget.

5. Finance

- Description: Interest rates, arrangement fees, land holding costs.
- Preferred source: Evidence from funder or otherwise industry norm.

6. Planning Obligations

- Description: Expected cost of contributions to Council or other bodies etc.
- Preferred source: Confirmed with Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service.

7. Acquisition costs

- Description: Legal fees, stamp duty, agent's fees etc.
- Preferred source: Contract information or HMRC.

8. Marketing costs

- Description: Costs associated with marketing and sales of private sale units.
- Preferred source: Developer budget or industry norms.

9. Developer return

- Description: Developer profit assumed on residential and commercial aspects of proposals.
- Preferred source: Developer budget or industry norms.

Values

10. Residential values

- Description: Sales value of each different unit type on a unit and £m2 basis.
- Preferred source: RICS local valuer.

11. Commercial values

- Description: Capital value of any commercial provision with yield and rental information.
- Preferred source: RICS local valuer.

12. Affordable housing values

- Description: Details of assumptions in relation to rents and shared ownership housing. Offers from preferred local Registered Providers should be sough prior to submission. Assumptions in relation to any grant bid should also be set out.
- Preferred source: Registered Provided and Council's Housing Strategy Team.

13. Ground rents

- Description: Capital value of ground rent investment on leasehold properties proposed.
- Preferred source: RICS local valuer, industry norms.

Benchmark land value

14. Existing or alternative use land value

- Description: Value of land in its existing use or permitted alternative use (without hope value).
- Preferred source: RICS valuer.

15. Acquisition price

- Description: Price paid for the land, if already purchased or local comparable examples.
- Preferred source: Land Registry.

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REPORT TITLE: Climate Change Strategy (2026-2031)

To: Cllr Rosy Moore, Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Environment

Committee 24th March 2026

Report by: Jemma Little, Head of Economy, Energy and Climate and David Wright, Inclusive Economy and Climate Manager

Tel: 07720 145018 Email: jemma.little@cambridge.gov.uk

Wards affected: All

Director Approval: Director Lynne Miles confirms that the report author has sought the advice of all appropriate colleagues and given due regard to that advice; that the equalities impacts and other implications of the recommended decisions have been assessed and accurately presented in the report; and that they are content for the report to be put to the Cabinet/Cabinet Member for decision.

1 Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Notes progress made in carbon reduction and the high international ranking of the Council and the City for work to address Climate Change
2. Notes the outcome of the public engagement and feedback of the Services, Climate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
3. Approves the new Climate Change Strategy (2026-2031)

2 Purpose and reason for the report

The current Climate Change Strategy (2021-2026) ends in March 2026, and an updated Climate Change Strategy is required from April 2026 to continue to direct the Council's work on addressing climate change and working towards the Council's net zero target.

The purpose of this report is to set out how the new Climate Change Strategy

I. builds upon the previous strategy and progress to date, and takes account of changes

in national policy and context

II. sets out how we plan to work towards our net zero vision for the city and net zero target for the Council by 2030; and to deliver the associated benefits of improved health, wellbeing, and livelihoods for current and future generations.

III. takes account of feedback from the Services, Climate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

IV. reflects the views, needs and priorities of residents, businesses and key stakeholders shared via public engagement

A decision is required for approval of the new Climate Change Strategy.

3 Alternative options considered

The alternative options considered were:

i) Let the current Climate Change Strategy end after March 2026. This option was rejected as it would mean the de-prioritisation of efforts to tackle climate change, isolated and fragmented project delivery, risk slower progress in carbon reduction, and decrease the Council's ability to achieve net zero by 2030.

ii) Extend the current Climate Change Strategy for a year to cover the period up to the elections in April/May 2027 for the new Unitary Council under Local Government Reorganisation. This option was rejected as there are important new issues to be considered in the next year, South Cambridgeshire District Council has also been developing a new Strategy in parallel, and a longer time horizon is needed to plan for and deliver the Council's major decarbonisation projects in development such as the Civic Quarter and District Heat Network.

iii) Develop a Climate Change Strategy for Greater Cambridge in partnership with South Cambridgeshire District Council. This was rejected in favour of working together on a co-ordinated approach to the development of both Councils' strategies that enable residents, stakeholders and businesses in both Council areas to participate in the engagements, be clear on the decisions being taken by each Council, understand how our shared services are involved in the delivery and enable alignment in the future as part of Local Government Reorganisation

implementation.

4 Background and key issues

Background

The Climate Change Act 2008 established the world's first legally binding national framework to reduce emissions. It introduced carbon budgets to systematically reduce emissions by 2050.

The UK has committed to reaching Net Zero by 2050: to reduce all greenhouse gas emissions by at least 68% by 2030 and at least 81% by 2035 (compared to 1990 levels) announced in 2024 as its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to the Paris Agreement.

The Council has been taking action to address climate change since the launch of the first Cambridge Climate Change Charter in 2007 and our first Climate Change Strategy in 2008. The Council declared a Climate Emergency and a Biodiversity Emergency in 2019, and the Council's current Climate Change Strategy 2021-2026 shared a vision for the city of Cambridge to be net zero by 2030. The strategy also set a target to reduce the Council's own direct carbon emissions from its operational and administrative buildings, fleet vehicles and business travel to net zero by 2030, as detailed in the Council's Carbon Management Plan 2021-26.

Progress to Date

Real progress has been made to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions across the city, and by the Council in reducing our own emissions:

- City-wide Emissions: Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Cambridge reduced by 47.3% between 2005 and 2023. Per capita emissions dropped from 8.4 tCO2e to 3.5 tCO2e in the same period.
- Council Emissions: Operational emissions were 51.9% lower in 2024/25 than the 2014/15 baseline. In the last year alone (2023/24 to 2024/25), emissions fell by 8.1% despite the carbon intensity of grid electricity increasing that year, highlighting the

direct impact of our work. It is also notable that the Council's emissions have fallen more quickly than those of the city overall.

- External Recognition: Cambridge has consistently been ranked as one of the UK's most sustainable cities. The Council has maintained a place on the Carbon Disclosure Project's 'A' list for the third consecutive year.

The Case for Action

Local action remains critical as Cambridge faces increased risks of extreme summer temperatures, water shortages and more frequent flood events. While the decarbonisation, or 'greening' of the national grid has driven much of the progress to date, future reductions will increasingly depend on behaviour change and local decisions regarding housing (specifically heating of homes), transport, and energy.

Our economy is also playing an important role in delivering the national government UK Industrial Strategy and Economic Growth Mission. Alongside our own policies, work on a new joint Greater Cambridge Local Plan is currently underway to meet the need for increased homes and jobs within the area. The new Climate Change Strategy has incorporated the principles and policies of the new Local Plan relating to climate change and biodiversity which aim to deliver significant carbon emissions reductions and a high degree of climate resilience, helping Greater Cambridge transition to net zero carbon by 2050. The Local Plan will do this by ensuring that development is: sited in places that help to reduce carbon emissions; designed to the highest achievable standards for energy and water use, adapts to and mitigates against climate change; and resilient to current and future climate risks, including flooding.

Affordability

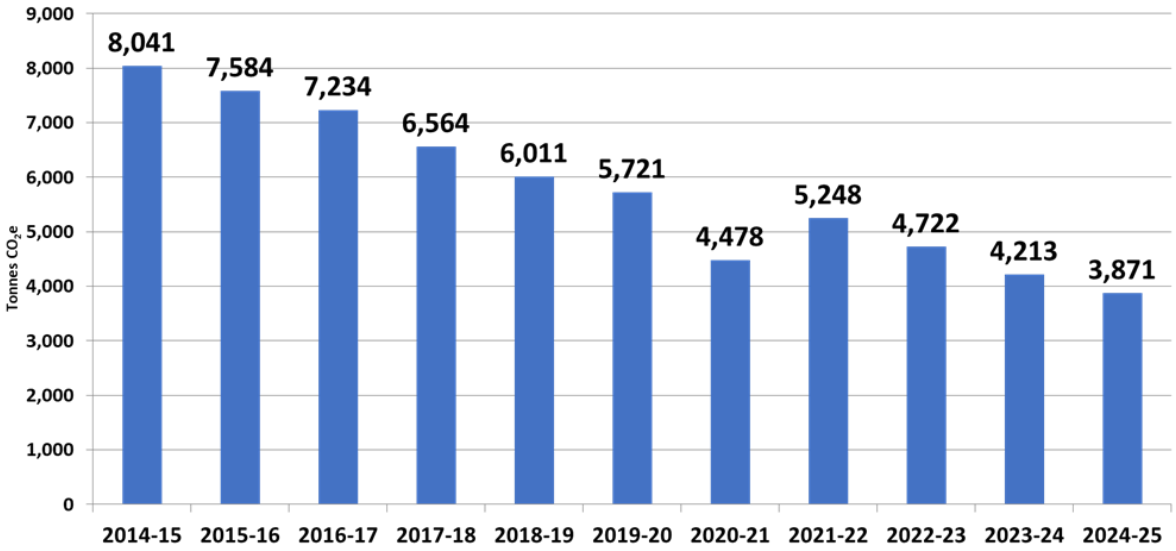
The strategy has been developed to set the direction of travel and highlight the work we plan to do or are developing. As we get closer to 2030 and to help lay the foundations for work to create the new Unitary Council, a greater focus is required on understanding the more challenging aspects of reducing the Council's emissions such as how to deal with unavoidable residual emissions, understanding the potential cost of reaching net zero and securing grant funding or finance to deliver our most ambitious projects such as the City Centre Heat Network.

Inclusion in the Strategy does not mean a project is agreed, funded or guaranteed for delivery. Projects arising from the Strategy are either covered by existing budgets or will be subject to detailed business cases and Council decisions. Managers will also need to keep resources and staff capacity under review for actions that are being delivered via existing staff resources.

Carbon Performance and Trends

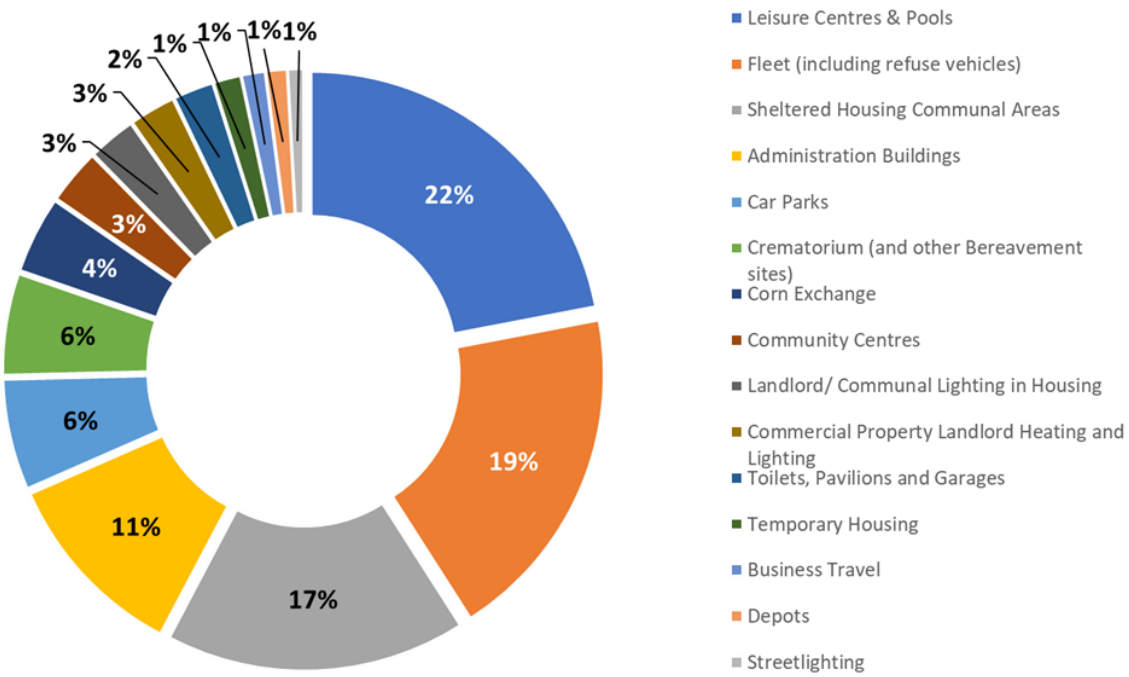
The Council has tracked its carbon emissions since a 2014/15 baseline. Total gross greenhouse gas emissions for 2024/25 were 3,871 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO2e), representing an 8.1% reduction from the previous year and a 51.9% reduction since 2014/15. The Council's operational footprint is now only 0.7% of the total city emissions.

Figure 1: Cambridge City Council's Carbon Emissions Trend (2014-2025)



This graph illustrates the steady decline in operational emissions over the last decade from 8,041 tCO_2e in 2014/15 to 3,871 tCO_2e in 2024/25.

Figure 2: Sources of Council Carbon Emissions (2024/25)



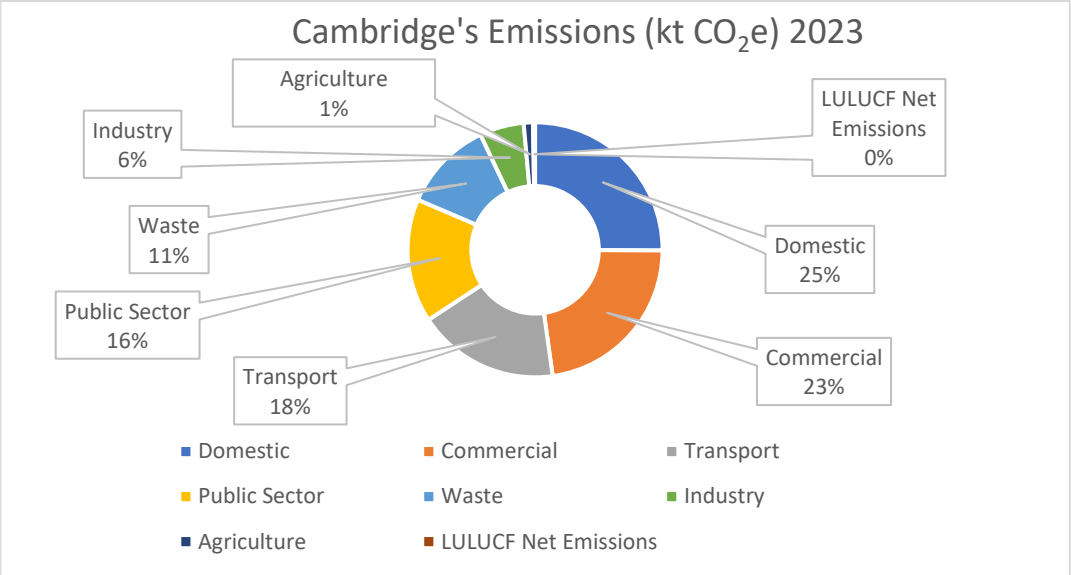
The Council's footprint is concentrated in a few high-impact areas, primarily sites with significant gas consumption and the service fleet, including refuse vehicles:

- **Leisure Centres & Pools:** 22%
- **Fleet (including refuse vehicles):** 19%
- **Sheltered Housing Communal Areas:** 17%
- **Administration Buildings:** 11%
- **Other:** (including Car Parks - 6%, Crematorium - 6%, and Corn Exchange - 4%). Total 31%

Emissions from council homes are not included as the Council do not pay the energy bill (except in communal areas) and have no direct control over how energy is consumed (though we try to use our influence).

While the Council is directly responsible for only 0.7% of the city's total emissions, it plays a leadership role in influencing the broader community and also contributes to carbon reduction and adaptation in the city particularly where we have direct control over development, infrastructure, through our role as a residential and commercial landlord and developer, the services we deliver and our formal partnerships.

Figure 3: Sources of Cambridge's Total Greenhouse Gas Emissions (2023)



City-wide emissions have reduced by 47.3% since 2005, with average per capita emissions dropping from 8.4 tCO_2e to 3.5 tCO_2e per resident.

- **Domestic:** 25% (The highest proportion, common in urban areas)
- **Commercial:** 23% (Significantly higher than the UK average of 8%)
- **Transport:** 18% (Lower than the UK average of 32% due to high cycling rates)
- **Public Sector:** 16% (High due to universities and hospitals)

The Strategy (2026 – 2031)

The Strategy is in Appendix A however a summary is outlined below

The Strategy sets out our continued and renewed drive to build on the achievements to date and sets out how we will work towards achieving a vision for Cambridge to be net zero carbon by 2030 and our target to reduce our own emissions to net zero by 2030.

It builds on the City Council's previous strategy (2021–2026) and brings in three new areas of focus.

New Focus Areas:

- **Integrated Adaptation:** Climate adaptation actions are now integrated throughout the strategy rather than treated as a standalone objective.
- **Supply Chain and Procurement:** A new objective focuses on reducing emissions and delivering social value through procurement and the Council's supply chain.
- **Community Support and Engagement:** Increased emphasis on engaging and empowering residents to adopt low-carbon lifestyles, reflecting that one-third of needed UK emissions reductions depend on household decisions.

The strategy is structured around three levels of Council influence:

a. **Sustainable City Council (High Control):** Reducing the Council's direct operational emissions (buildings, fleet, travel) and increasing resilience.

b. **Sustainable City (Medium Influence):** Working with residents and businesses to support the reduction of energy consumption and associated carbon emissions across the whole city, not only from our own estate but also through our services, such as housing provision, role as a developer and landlord and planning powers, to work towards achieving net zero carbon emissions in Cambridge.

c. **Working Together (Influence/ Facilitation):** Working with key partners in the community and with business to learn from each other and explore city-wide approaches to reducing emissions and work towards a net zero city.

The strategy covers the following **thematic areas and outcomes**.

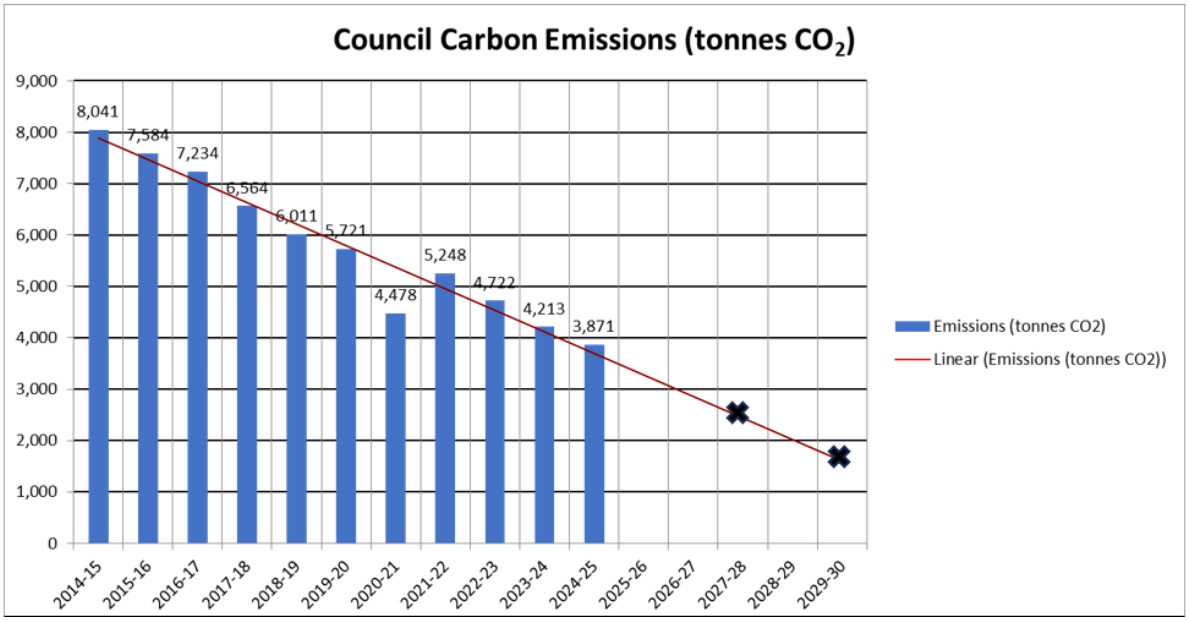
Energy and retrofit	Improving energy efficiency and climate resilience of homes and buildings across Cambridge.
Nature and water	Enhancing nature and safeguarding water to support Cambridge to adapt to the impacts of climate change.
Transport	Reducing the need for fossil fuel-powered travel and encouraging the use of low and zero carbon modes of transport to reduce emissions.

Waste minimisation	Reducing waste and supporting a circular economy
Sustainable food	Increasing access to local, low impact, seasonal food and reducing food waste.
Supply chain and procurement	Reducing emissions and maximising social and environmental value of procurement and partnerships across Cambridge.
Community support and engagement	Ensuring a just transition: providing accessible and inclusive support to communities and residents to empower and enable them in shifting towards more sustainable habits
Collaboration	Working together for a sustainable Cambridge - deepening relationships with and between key partners in the community and with business, innovation and anchor institutions in the city as part of a city-wide approach.

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and 2028 Interim Target

The strategy acts as a bridge towards the anticipated creation of a new Unitary Council in 2028.

Interim Target: To maintain momentum, the strategy proposes an interim target for March 2028 for the Council's emissions. Current trends suggest emissions could be reduced to 2,500 tCO_2e by March 2028 and 1,500 tCO_2e by March 2030 if progress through delivery of carbon reduction projects is maintained and the decarbonisation of grid electricity continues.



The target assumes a reduction of approximately 500 tCO_2e per annum, driven by both Council projects and the ongoing 'greening' of the national electricity grid. As our planned projects come forward and start to achieve carbon reductions the actual figures will be captured and included in our annual greenhouse gas monitoring report.

Carbon Offsetting Approach: Influenced by public engagement, our approach follows a strict mitigation hierarchy and a watch and wait approach due to the immaturity of the market. We will continue to prioritise direct reductions, reserving offsetting only for unavoidable residual emissions in March 2030 and for consideration post LGR. Public feedback showed a strong preference for local offsetting projects (e.g. local nature restoration), that provide tangible social and environmental benefits to Cambridge residents, rather than international schemes.

Action Plan

As part of the development of the Strategy, there has been considerable internal engagement within the Council and partner agencies to ensure that the strategy is realistic and deliverable. This has included:

- Cambridge City Council Leadership Team
- Cambridge City Council Net Zero Programme Board

- Cambridge City Council Environment Policy & Projects Group
- South Cambridgeshire District Council
- Cambridgeshire County Council
- Cambridge City Leaders Climate Change Group
- Cambridge Local Climate Change Forum

We have developed a detailed action plan with input across Groups in the council and Shared Services. This reflects current service plans, highlights the resource/budget position of each action and will be used as a programme management tool for co-ordination, reporting and communications throughout the strategy's implementation.

See Appendix B for Climate Change Strategy Action Plan

Monitoring and Reporting

Progress will be monitored by the Council's internal Net Zero Board, and through the Council's Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny functions. We will continue to publish an annual report detailing greenhouse gas emissions from our estate and operations and an update on the Climate Change Strategy action plan delivery.

Services, Climate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Members raised a series of questions and observations.

In summation, the Chair noted the following points on behalf of the Committee:

I. Concern on the deliverability of the strategy if major projects such as the City Centre Heat Network and Civic Quarter did not progress as planned.

   This is recognised in the risk assessment

II. Support for the focus on innovation, efforts to tackle water scarcity and the principle of offsetting only as a last resort.

This has been reflected in the Strategy.

III. Recognition that there was a balance moving forward between a focus on the Council's direct emissions (only accounting for 0.7% of overall city emissions) and the value of investing more in wider city reduction including business, commercial and private sector emissions.

This is recognised in the Strategy with an increased focus on city-wide collaboration and work with businesses, citizens and stakeholders on reducing emissions.

5 Corporate plan

Mitigating climate change through decarbonisation and sustainability is embedded in the council's work. It is the first priority in the Corporate Plan: *Leading Cambridge's response to the climate and biodiversity emergencies and creating a net zero council by 2030* and is a core part of the Council's Vision: *Decarbonisation and sustainability are central to prosperity. Cambridge is a net zero carbon city, where people and nature enjoy a clean river, clean air, and biodiverse green spaces.*

6 Engagement and communication

Feedback from Public Engagement

A joint public engagement exercise was carried out in autumn 2025 with South Cambridgeshire District Council based on an outline of the proposed strategy. The engagement received 486 responses for Cambridge and revealed:

Strong Support: High levels of backing for the strategy's objectives, particularly nature and water protection.

Cost Barriers: High upfront costs were cited as the primary barrier to personal climate action for residents, (255 mentions).

Education and Information: Respondents requested more practical advice, grant information and visual communications on aspects such as home retrofit.

Concerns: Concerns were raised regarding the impact of rapid growth on biodiversity and the ethics of carbon offsetting.

The full report of the engagement is enclosed as Appendix C.

The findings from this exercise have informed both content and emphasis within the new Climate Change Strategy for 2026-2031, as illustrated by the following examples.

Prioritising Actions: The engagement exercise helped us to prioritise areas of work to take forward in the implementation of the strategy. For example, there was very strong support for one of the Strategy's new focus areas: supporting and applying research and innovation on climate change, so we will prioritise this within the implementation of the strategy.

Council Responsibilities: Some of the feedback suggested that recipients were confused about what different councils were responsible for, (e.g. suggesting that Cambridge City Council repaired potholes, when this is a County Council responsibility). We therefore identified a need to show clearly what the City Council is directly responsible for and therefore where we can have the most impact. In parallel, we also need to highlight the areas where we are not the lead organisation and do not have control over. We have created a diagram to help explain our direct areas of responsibility and we will also work with public sector, business and community organisations to help share what is happening across the city via the strategy's increased emphasis on collaboration.

New Projects: We received some helpful suggestions of ideas the Council could explore. Some of these are already included in our action plan so it helps us to understand that we are aligned with our residents and reinforces the need to implement these. We will also look to explore the feasibility of some of the additional ideas suggested such as more visual communications and engagement, and annual environment events.

Guidance and Information: A number of respondents requested guidance or a resource of information to help individuals take action on climate change. In some instances, we already produced guidance such as the Retrofit Guide and a Council approved list of retrofit

contractors. This highlighted the need for us to share these more widely, more frequently as part of our communications and engagement with residents. We will also use these ideas to create more resources such as best practice case studies.

Growth: There was some concern about the rapid growth in Cambridge potentially damaging biodiversity and undermining climate goals. This reinforced the need for the new Local Plan to include strong climate change mitigation and adaptation measures to ensure that new development is required to consider climate change and biodiversity, and to show within the Strategy how the Climate Change Strategy is aligned with the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service's work.

Impact of Climate Change: Responses reflected a need and appetite for further and continued training and awareness raising, both within the council and for the public, on the impacts of climate change and the solutions to build resilience. This is something the Council already provides for both staff and residents so reinforced the need to continue this education offering, raise awareness of it and explore the feasibility of increasing it in the future.

Offsetting: Concern was raised about the principle of using of offsetting. This reinforced the Council's stance that we need to continue to prioritise carbon reduction over offsetting wherever possible and explore how councils might compensate for unavoidable residual emissions to meet net zero targets in the future.

7 Anticipated outcomes, benefits or impact

Anticipated outcomes from the Strategy include a substantial reduction in carbon emissions through the decarbonisation of council buildings and fleets, alongside a rise in urban climate resilience achieved by increasing the tree canopy to 20% and improving water management.

Residents are expected to benefit from lower energy bills through extensive housing retrofits, enhanced public health from improved air quality and a just transition that ensures vulnerable communities are supported.

Ultimately, the strategy aims to foster a sustainable local economy and a ‘nature-rich’ city where cleaner air, greener spaces and resilient infrastructure safeguard the quality of life for future generations.

8 Implications

Relevant risks

Risks	Mitigation
That the reduction in carbon emissions resulting from the ongoing decarbonisation/ greening of the national grid does not continue at a similar pace as over the last ten years.	Monitor trends closely and escalate to senior management and/ or Cabinet as appropriate.
That a change in government or national policies/ legislation reduce the level of political and financial support for climate adaptation and the reduction of carbon emissions, (e.g. current consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework is proposing to limit Planning Authority’s powers to set climate change and adaptation policies).	Monitor closely and escalate to senior management and/ or Cabinet as appropriate, with a view to participating in relevant consultations and lobbying government if deemed necessary.
That specific projects arising from the strategy prove to be unaffordable or undeliverable due to cost inflation or failure to secure additional funding/finance.	Monitor closely and consider alternative projects and funding routes if necessary.
That projects fail to deliver the carbon or financial savings anticipated.	Monitor closely and escalate to senior management and/ or Cabinet as appropriate.

That we fail to get the buy-in and support from key partners to progress specific projects.	Consider alternative partners, if appropriate and escalate to senior management and/ or Cabinet as appropriate.
That the transition towards Local Government Reorganisation delays or curtails progress on implementing the Climate Change Strategy.	Continue to monitor staff capacity and work with other councils for better alignment in advance of the new unitary formation and monitor closely, escalating to senior management and/ or Cabinet as appropriate.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications given that this decision is approval of the strategy.

Inclusion in the strategy does not mean a project is agreed, funded or guaranteed for delivery. However, the Strategy is underpinned by service delivery plans and an action plan programme which will be used to help co-ordinate delivery across the council and to report progress.

Projects arising from the Strategy are either covered by existing budgets or will be subject to detailed business cases and Council decisions.

For our strategic projects, long lead in times are required with phased decision-making points from outline to full business case and will be dependent on may factors including access to finance and external funding in addition to council resources.

Managers will also need to keep staff capacity under review as part of the implementation of the strategy.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications relating to the public engagement however the strategy

considers legal requirements such as Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) regulations.

Equalities and socio-economic Implications

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) focussed on the Strategy has been completed and attached as an appendix to this report.

The actions that the Council plans to take to reduce its own emissions will not have equalities impacts for residents. Many of the external actions, impacting the City, will have positive impacts in that some groups, as detailed in the EqIA, are likely to be more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, and therefore likely to benefit disproportionately from measures to support residents to be more resilient to a changing climate (increased risk of and severity of extreme weather) and the co-benefits associated with a transition to net zero carbon emissions, such as health benefits from reduced retrofitted insultation reducing fuel poverty and increasing health and wellbeing.

As part of the delivery of the Strategy and its actions, a communications plan will be developed, which will need to ensure all groups have access, are engaged, and any negative impacts of actions mitigated, using networks and tools available.

Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental implications

The Climate Change Strategy will have a high positive impact on the net zero, climate change and the environment by setting out a planned approach to: reducing the Council's carbon emissions; setting high standards for residents, businesses and organisations to reduce their carbon emissions and manage climate risks; and working in partnership with, influencing and learning from other organisations to address the causes and effects of climate change.

Procurement Implications

There are no procurement implications

Community Safety Implications

There are no community safety implications.

9 Background documents

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Cambridge City Council Climate Change Strategy 2021-2026
Climate Change Strategy - Cambridge City Council
Annual Climate Change Strategy and Carbon Management plan Update 2023/24
Climate Change Strategy Update Committee Report September 2024.pdf
Cabinet – Climate Change Strategy Development Report 26th Sept 2025
Item 8 Climate Change Strategy Development Final.pdf
Services, Climate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Climate Change Strategy Update Report 3rd Feb 2026
Final Report to Scrutiny Committee - Climate Change Strategy - 3 Feb 26.pdf

Appendices

Appendix A: Climate Change Strategy
Appendix B: Climate Change Strategy Action Plan
Appendix C: Public Engagement Report
Appendix D: Equalities Impact Assessment

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact: Jemma Little, Head of Economy, Energy and Climate tel: 07720 145018 email: jemma.little@cambridge.gov.uk or David Wright Inclusive Economy and Climate Manager david.wright@cambridge.gov.uk

NB The strategy document is now in design – the final version will have images and graphics to enhance readability and will be published following the Cabinet decision

Climate Change Strategy 2026-2031

Reducing the Council's carbon emissions to net zero and increasing Cambridge's resilience to the impacts of climate change

Publication date: March 2026
Review date: by March 2031

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2.0 Executive summary
3.0 The need for action
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5.0 Sustainable City Council and local government reorganisation
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7.0 Goals 2026-2031
- 7.1 Energy and retrofit
- 7.2 Nature and water
- 7.3 Transport
- 7.4 Waste minimisation
- 7.5 Sustainable food
- 7.6 Supply chain and procurement
- 7.7 Community support and engagement

8.0 Working together for a sustainable Cambridge

Appendix A – Glossary of terms (to follow)
Appendix B – Action Plan

1.0 Foreword

Over 10 years ago, we set our first targets for Cambridge City Council's greenhouse gas reductions.

A decade on, the world looks very different. Renewables have overtaken coal's share in the global energy mix[i]. One in five cars sold globally is now electric[ii]. The UK's 'net zero economy' expanded 10% in 2024[iii] - outpacing the rest of the economy three-fold. Scientific evidence is pointing to a peak or near peak in global greenhouse gas emissions, but it is the strength and consistency of future policies and local goals that will move them to a sustained decline.

Our 2026-31 sustainability goals for the organisation and city are the result of a thoughtful and rigorous process - grounded in strategy, collaboration and shared city-wide commitment. We developed these goals through a structured approach that combined insights from our 2021-2026 strategy performance, feedback from our community and businesses, as well as a view of the opportunities and challenges ahead.

We must continue to navigate budget constraints, however investing in climate priorities, will create long-term value both in terms of savings on fuel and energy costs and the wider social and economic benefits.

We have introduced a near-term 2028 goal for our organisation's emissions, reflecting that local government reorganisation is happening then. This 2028 goal takes us to the end of the period that Cambridge City Council is likely to have the same responsibilities for policies and services as it does now. Beyond that, it is likely that a new organisation will be established and new targets will emerge.

We want to be certain that Cambridge's net zero vision remains a permanent structural component of operations and policy in the future.

To amplify carbon savings and progress to a sustainable Cambridge, we are keen to deepen collaborations with key partners in the community and business. Working side -by-side, we can scale city-wide actions and achieve the vision for a sustainable city. Whilst this is something that we already do, the goal in the 2026-2031 strategy is to accelerate this.

I am looking forward to working together, bringing the action plan to life and scaling the positive impact that we know we can achieve for Cambridge.

Cllr Rosy Moore
Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Environment

Part One

2.0 Executive summary

Our vision

The Council's overall mission is to create "One Cambridge Fair for All" and lead a united city, in which a dynamic economy and prosperity are combined with social justice and equality.
The effects of climate change are already being felt in Cambridge. Mitigating climate change through decarbonisation and sustainability is embedded in the council's work. It is the first priority in the Corporate Plan < https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/corporate-plan-2022-27-our-priorities-for-cambridge#A1 >: Leading Cambridge's response to the climate and biodiversity emergencies and creating a net zero council by 2030 and is a core part of the Council's Vision. < https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/our-vision >

Decarbonisation and sustainability are central to prosperity.
Cambridge is a net zero carbon city, where people and nature enjoy a clean river, clean air, and biodiverse green spaces.
Strong nature networks are co-ordinated between relevant bodies to combat the impacts of social and climate injustice.

The Strategy sets out our continued and renewed drive to build on the achievements to date, respond to changes in policy and develop the next steps to achieving our net zero vision for the city and net zero target for the City Council.

Photo: if space

Our areas of focus

Our focus in 2026-31 is to:
Circular graphic device to illustrate:

1. Continue to reduce the City Council's own emissions and increase organisational climate resilience.
2. Provide support to reduce Cambridge city's emissions - mitigating and adapting to climate change - to increase its climate resilience.
3. Protect and enhance nature, biodiversity and the urban forest.
4. Achieve better outcomes for people's daily lives through lower energy bills, cleaner air, more comfortable homes, greener neighbourhoods, with new job opportunities and a stronger local economy.
5. Ensure that our climate change strategy is fair and inclusive, delivering a just transition, so that those most affected by climate change are not left behind and the benefits of addressing climate change - improved health, wellbeing and livelihoods, for current and future generations - are shared widely and felt by all.

Detailed objectives

The strategy sets out detailed objectives that underpin the Council's approach:

- Continue to reduce the Council's direct emissions to work towards net zero and increase our resilience to the impacts of climate change.
- Continue to support residents and businesses to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to climate change through the provision of services and as a housing provider
- Use our policy and financial powers to create systemic change.
- Convene and collaborate with local partners, businesses, organisations and residents to act.
- Influence Government, industry and regulators to make the necessary changes and investments needed to enable the city to achieve net zero.

Sustainable City Council

Net Zero City Council by 2030: Reduce the Council's direct carbon emissions from our corporate buildings (including swimming pools, office buildings, car parks, sheltered housing schemes, community centres, arts venues and the crematorium) our fleet vehicles (including vans, trucks and refuse vehicles) and business travel to net zero carbon emissions by 2030. **Our near-term goal is to reduce emissions by 69% by March 2028 (from 2014/15 baseline).**

Sustainable Cambridge

Net Zero City Vision for 2030: One of Cambridge City Council's missions is to support the reduction of energy consumption and its associated carbon emissions across the whole city, not only from our own estate but also through our services, housing provision and planning powers, to work towards achieving net zero carbon emissions in Cambridge.

Working together for a sustainable Cambridge

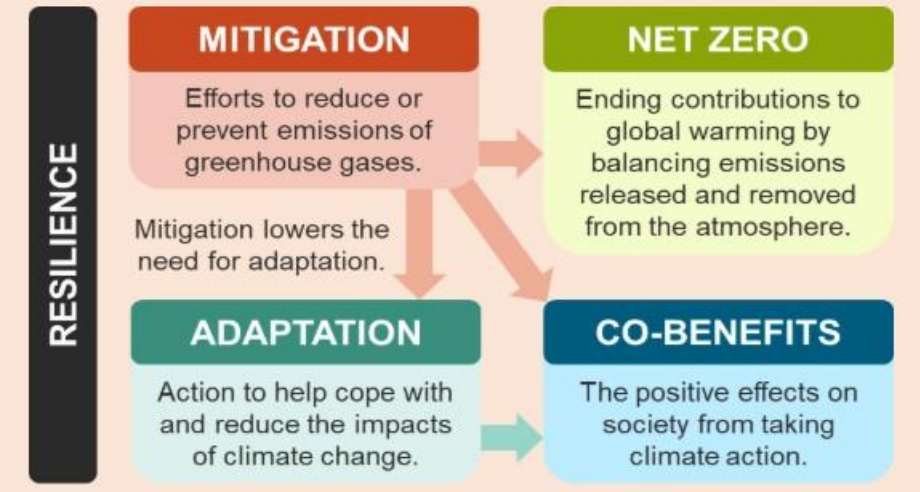
Our 2026-2031 strategy aims to deepen relationships with key partners in the community and with business. Together, we can scale city-wide actions to avoid emissions, learn from each other and continue to work towards achieving the vision for a net zero city by 2030.

Integrating adaptation throughout

This Climate Change Strategy builds on the City Council's previous strategy (2021–2026) and we have worked together with neighbouring South Cambridgeshire District Council to ensure the goals of both are aligned. This reflects our integrated approach across shared services, such as planning and waste. It also anticipates the potential future changes into a unitary, as part of local government reorganisation.

The updated strategy integrates climate adaptation actions throughout, rather than treating adaptation as a separate objective as we have done previously. This reflects our commitment to mitigation and adaptation to climate change in a coordinated way.

Figure # to be adapted from



Accreditation: Adapted from Met Office / DEFRA (2024).

Our goals 2026-2031

We have introduced two new standalone goals. One is focused on supply chain and procurement, recognising the growing importance of working to reduce emissions from our suppliers and delivering wider social and environmental value. These “Scope 3” emissions occur at sources the Council does not own or control.

The other new goal focuses on community support and engagement, giving greater prominence to the Council’s role in supporting, empowering and motivating individuals and communities, particularly those most vulnerable to climate impacts, to adopt low-carbon lifestyles.

We have also set a near-term goal for 2028 for the council’s emissions reduction to inform any future decisions that may be needed by the City Council, or the newly formed unitary council, to achieve net zero by 2030.

Energy and retrofit

Improving energy efficiency and climate resilience of homes and buildings across Cambridge.

Nature and water

Enhancing nature and safeguarding water to support Cambridge to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Transport

Reducing the need for fossil fuel-powered travel and encouraging the use of low and zero carbon modes of transport to reduce emissions.

Waste minimisation

Reducing waste and supporting a circular economy.

Sustainable food

Increasing access to local, low impact, seasonal food and reducing food waste.

Supply chain and procurement

Reducing emissions and maximising social and environmental value of procurement and partnerships across Cambridge.

Community support and engagement

Ensuring a just transition: providing accessible and inclusive support to communities and residents to empower and enable them in shifting toward more sustainable habits.

Collaboration

Working together for a sustainable Cambridge - deepening relationships with and between key partners in the community and with business, innovation and anchor institutions in the city as part of a city-wide approach to climate change and inclusive innovation.

The co-benefits of climate action in Cambridge

Cambridge will take a strategic, collaborative, place-based approach to both mitigating and adapting to climate change, alongside socially inclusive economic growth.

The co-benefits of climate action are the additional positive outcomes beyond reduced greenhouse gas emissions, such as:

- Health gains from cleaner air and transport
- Economic rewards via innovation and green jobs
- Nature enhancement for biodiversity and water quality
- Increased resilience to the impacts of extreme weather such as shading, urban cooling, flood mitigation
- Public support strengthened by broader social value

Major bodies like the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Health Organisation (WHO) and World Resources Institute have released data confirming that the immediate co-benefits, specifically in health and economic stability, often outweigh the costs of implementation.

The **FLIP** framework describes the co-benefits of climate action.
Free: A net positive return on investment when all societal costs (e.g., healthcare, energy bills) are considered.
Local: Benefits, such as cleaner air, job creation and urban greening, are tangible and felt by residents.
Immediate: Advantages are realised soon after action is taken - as distinct from global, long-term climate impacts associated with reductions in GHGs.
Persuasive: Climate action creates benefits that align with core local priorities unrelated to climate, such as promoting economic growth, protecting public health and reducing inequality.

Progress so far

The City Council has been tackling climate change since the launch of the Cambridge Climate Change Charter in 2007 and our first Climate Change Strategy in 2008. In 2019 the Council declared a climate emergency, recognising the urgency of the action needed to limit global warming to 1.5°C and avoid severe and irreversible consequences for people and ecosystems.

Real progress has been made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions both within the city, and by the City Council. Cambridge's emissions have reduced by almost half (47.3%) since 2005 and the City Council's own emissions have reduced by 51.9% since 2014/15. This reduction was partly achieved by the decarbonisations of the national grid and other government policies, and partly through the Council investing in carbon reduction projects for its buildings and fleet.

Cambridge was named an 'A' list city by the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) in 2025, for the third year in a row, one of only 120 'A' list cities worldwide, and the City Council is also a top performing council in Climate Emergency UK's Council Climate Actions Scorecards - both of which recognise our leadership in addressing climate change.



In 2024/25, the City Council reduced its emissions by 51.9% from the 2014/15 baseline against which it measures its emissions reductions.
In 2023 (the last complete year for which data is available), Cambridge's greenhouse gas emissions have reduced by 47.3% since 2005. Per capita emissions have reduced over the same period, from 8.4 t CO2e per person, to 3.5 t CO2e.

2007–2008 **Setting the foundations**	Kickstarted local climate action by launching the Cambridge Climate Change Charter, our first Strategy and a dedicated internal Climate Change Fund.
2011–2012 **Boosting energy efficiency**	Upgraded energy efficiency across council homes, four major swimming pools and helped 500 households install insulation.
2014-2015 **Greener streets and homes**	Added 600 new bike parking spaces to encourage cycling, installed solar panels at community centres and published the Greening Your Home guide.
2016 **Switch to green electricity**	Moved council buildings to 100% renewable electricity, reduced energy use by 50% in two car parks with LEDs and Cambridge achieved Bronze Sustainable Food City status.
2017–2018 **Pioneering standards**	Became the first council to mandate low-emission taxis, required new developments to cut carbon emissions by

	19% and helped to fund the World's Biggest Repair Café to fight throwaway culture.
2019–2020 **Emergency declaration**	Officially declared Climate and Biodiversity Emergencies, installed solar panels on key civic buildings and launched the Cambridge Canopy Project and planted 500 trees.
2021–2022 **Electrification and investment**	Rolled out electric refuse trucks, distributed £150,000 in Green Business Grants and invested £1.7 million of grant funding to reduce emissions at local swimming pools.
2023 **Major clean energy investments**	Funding secured for £6.1 million solar project (Waterbeach Renewable Energy Network), continued installing EV charging points and brought conservation grazing to East Barnwell to improve local biodiversity.
2024–2025 **Going for gold**	Cambridge Sustainable Food Partnership achieved the Gold Sustainable Food Places Award, Cambridge Folk Festival earned an 'Outstanding' green certification, adopted a new air quality strategy, committed to a herbicide-free approach, successful delivery of £5 million project to upgrade 48 council homes to net zero carbon standards, the contract to build the Waterbeach Renewable Energy Network started (2025) with construction commencing in 2026, and the Council was recognised by Carbon Disclosure Project as an 'A' list city for the third year running for our work to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Key opportunities and key challenges

Much of the city's carbon reduction so far has come from a greener national grid and more efficient technology. The UK's Climate Change Committee estimates that around one-third of the UK's required emissions cuts by 2040 will rely on household decisions and locally delivered action, especially in housing, transport, waste, energy and land use.

As we get closer to achieving our 2030 vision, a greater focus will be required on the more challenging aspects of reducing emissions such as investing in heritage buildings, local infrastructure and enabling behaviour change.

We also recognise that as a fast-growing hub for UK research and innovation including in climate solutions, we must decouple economic expansion and new housing development from carbon emissions, using our plan making powers to ensure that new developments in Greater Cambridge mitigate rather than compound climate risks.

We also could apply our city's renowned climate research and innovation to solve local problems and enable local people to access quality employment in climate related roles.

Cambridge City Council continues to plan with ambition.

We are developing specific proposals for the Civic Quarter project which could deliver significant carbon reductions for the Guildhall, Corn Exchange and Market Square (subject to approval and funding).

Building on our successful council house programme with over 1,000 new homes delivered to date, the council aspires to deliver 1,300 new council homes by 2036 with a significant proportion delivered by 2030, subject to Homes England Funding.

Our council homes are designed to meet the Sustainable Housing Design Guide which is currently the Cam Standard – a low energy performance standard[iv]. Post-2030, new homes will target a net zero standard.

The city's proposed City Centre Heat Network could play a significant role in decarbonising heating for our city centre. We have already put in place studies to define the specific requirements and investment required for decarbonising the council's commercial vehicle fleet and the council owned corporate, community and commercial premises that have not yet been addressed.

Businesses and other public organisations in the city are taking significant action to reduce their emissions, but more is needed, if Cambridge is to become net zero carbon.

Amongst others, the council works with Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority, Cambridgeshire County Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, the Greater Cambridge Partnership and with city institutions such as the University of Cambridge, Anglia Ruskin University, as well as businesses both large and small, and community organisations to meet the challenges.

Continued action by communities and individuals is central to tackling climate change, and the Council aims to support and empower people to protect nature and reduce emissions.

Your views included

Our 2026–2031 sustainability goals and strategy integrate direct feedback from local businesses and residents and build on the learning from the monitoring of previous strategies.

Engagement with residents and businesses helps us to prioritise areas of work to take forward in the implementation of the strategy. Some of these are already included in our action plan and help us to understand that we are aligned with our residents and those responses reinforce our strategy.

We received strong support for the new strategy outline with 86.4% of respondents supporting or strongly supporting the strategy vision.

From the November 2025 engagement, we identified:

1. A need to show clearly what the City Council is directly responsible for and therefore where we can have the most impact. In parallel, we also need to highlight the areas where we are not the lead authority and therefore have less control. The diagram on page x shows our direct areas of responsibility and impact.
2. Strong support for one of the Strategy's new focus areas: supporting and applying research and innovation on climate change, so we will prioritise this within the implementation of the strategy.
3. Some additional ideas for the strategy, such as renewable energy development, group purchasing schemes, wildflower planting on public land led by residents, more visual communication and engagement and annual environment events.
4. A request for guidance or resources to help individuals act on climate change. In some instances, we already have a lot of guidance - such as home improvement guides and a Council approved list of retrofit contractors. We will share these more widely and more frequently with residents.
5. Strong concern about the rapid growth in Cambridge potentially damaging biodiversity and undermining climate goals. Policies in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan will aim to ensure that new development is required to consider climate change and biodiversity and the Climate Change Strategy is aligned with the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service.
6. A need for further education on the impacts of climate change and the solutions to build resilience. This is something the Council already provides to staff, councillors and residents so this feedback has reinforced the need to continue this, raise awareness of it and explore the feasibility of increasing it in the future.
7. Concerns about the use of offsetting. It was helpful to understand that many residents shared the same concerns as us about offsetting and so, we will continue to prioritise carbon reduction over offsetting and explore how councils might compensate for unavoidable residual emissions to meet net zero targets in the future – see page xx (section 5.0) for further explanation.

3.0 The need for action

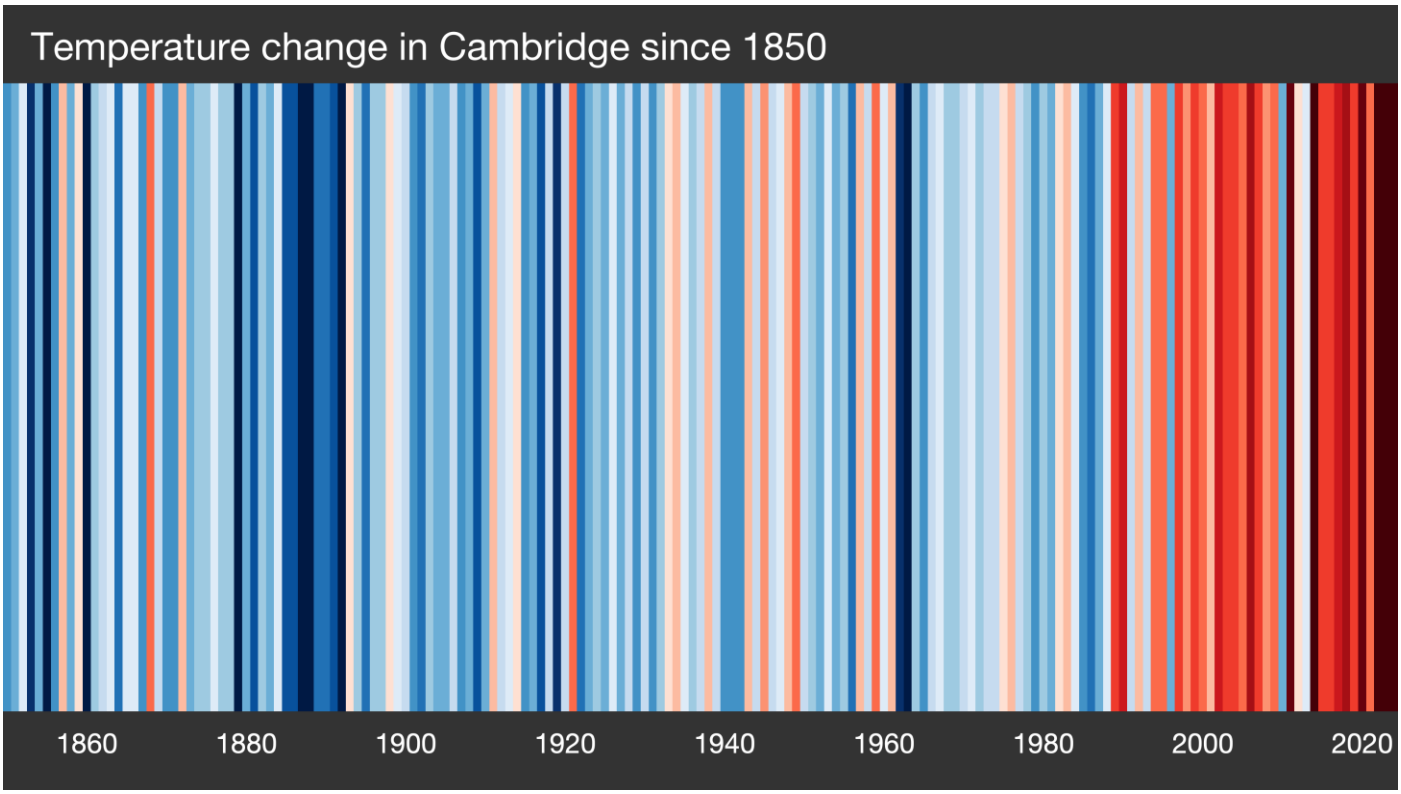
Climate risks in Cambridge

Climate change increases the risk and frequency of extreme weather such as increased summer temperatures, water shortages and droughts and more frequent flood events. The effects of climate change are already being felt in Cambridge.

This series of vertical-coloured bars shows the progressive heating of our planet in a single, striking image. Each stripe represents the average temperature for a single year, relative to the average temperature over the period from 1961 to 2010. They show clearly and vividly how global average temperatures have risen over nearly two centuries.

Shades of blue indicate cooler-than-average years, while red shows years that were hotter than average. The stark band of deep red stripes on the right-hand side of the graphic shows the rapid heating of our planet in recent decades.

Figure # Temperature change in Cambridge since 1850 to 2024



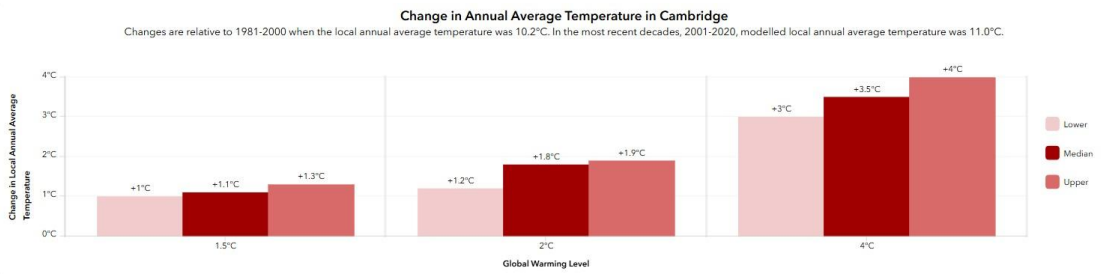
Attribution: Professor Ed Hawkins (University of Reading)
< https://showyourstripes.info/s/europe/unitedkingdom/cambridge >

Overheating

Hotter urban temperatures: Urban areas such as Cambridge are particularly vulnerable to increased temperatures due to the heat island effect. This is where cities experience hotter temperatures in comparison to surrounding suburban or rural areas. Man-made surfaces absorb the sun's heat and radiate it back to be trapped within dense urban areas. Record-breaking temperatures in Cambridge in recent years (38.7 C in 2019, which was the highest recorded temperature in the UK, at the time, and 39.9°C was reached in 2022) highlight the increasing frequency of extreme weather events in the UK, increasing drought and intense summer rainfall risks – a key driver for surface water flooding. By 2050, Cambridge's average

summer is projected to be around 2.2°C warmer than it was on average between 1981 and 2000 and around 3% drier.

Figure # Change in annual average temperature in Cambridge



Description: Projections of local changes (°C) in annual in the average of the daily mean temperature for three future Global Warming Levels. Changes are relative to a 1981-2000 baseline when global warming was 0.6°C above the pre-industrial period.

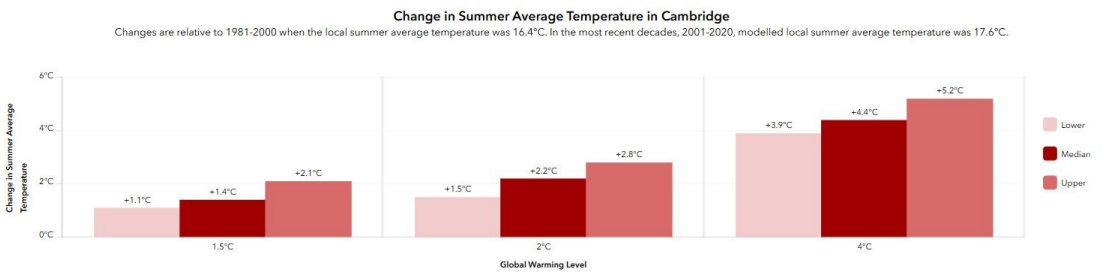
This dataset can be viewed on the Climate Data Portal – Annual Average Temperature Change.

Information on global warming levels and lower/median/upper estimates can be found in the Scientific Detail.

Water scarcity

Drier and hotter summers: The east receives only two thirds of average national rainfall, making it the driest region in the UK making it vulnerable to water shortages. Greater Cambridge is one of the driest areas in the UK, and Cambridge Water's supply zone is classified as an area of 'serious water stress' by the Environment Agency. The combination of low rainfall and high temperatures, population growth, and environmental requirements has increased the strain on groundwater sources resulting in water scarcity.

Figure # Change in summer average temperature in Cambridge

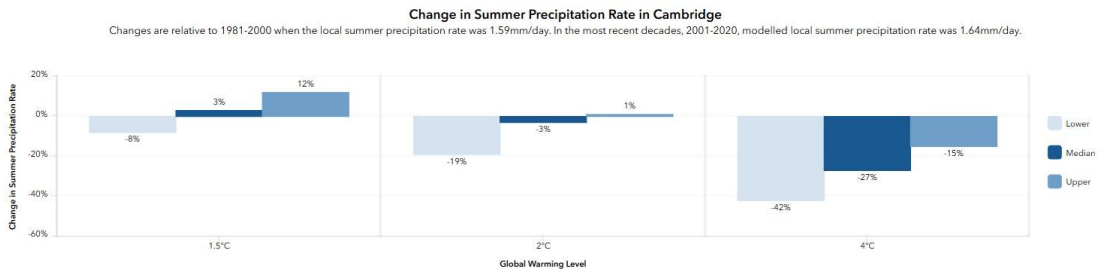


Description: Projections of local changes (°C) in summer in the average of the daily mean temperature for three future Global Warming Levels. Changes are relative to a 1981-2000 baseline when global warming was 0.6°C above the pre-industrial period. summer: June, July, August.

This dataset can be viewed on the Climate Data Portal – Summer Average Temperature Change.

Information on global warming levels and lower/median/upper estimates can be found in the Scientific Detail.

Figure # Change in summer precipitation rate in Cambridge



Description: Projections of local changes (% change) in summer in the precipitation rate for three future Global Warming Levels. Changes are relative to a 1981-2000 baseline when global warming was 0.6°C above the pre-industrial period. summer: June, July, August.

This dataset can be viewed on the Climate Data Portal – Summer Precipitation Rate Change.

Information on global warming levels and lower/median/upper estimates can be found in the Scientific Detail.

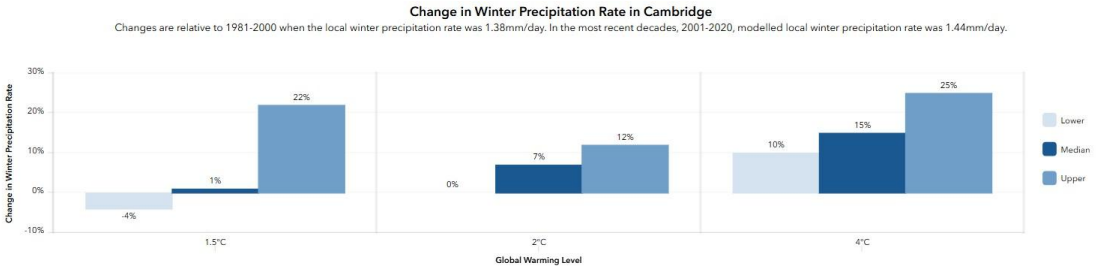
Flooding

Warmer and wetter winters: Winters in the UK will on average be both warmer and wetter than the recent past. By 2050, Cambridge's average winter is projected to be around 1.3°C warmer than it was on average over 1981 to 2000 and around 7% wetter[1]. An increase in both

[1] Local Authority Climate Explorer [Beta, V1.0], Met Office Climate Data Portal

the intensity of winter rainfall and the number of wet days is expected, driving up winter river and surface water flood risks.

Figure # Change in winter precipitation rate in Cambridge



Description: Projections of local changes (% change) in winter in the precipitation rate for three future Global Warming Levels. Changes are relative to a 1981-2000 baseline when global warming was 0.6°C above the pre-industrial period. winter: December, January, February.

This dataset can be viewed on the Climate Data Portal – Winter Precipitation Rate Change.

Information on global warming levels and lower/median/upper estimates can be found in the Scientific Detail.

Summary of Cambridge City Council and city emissions

Cambridge City Council

Cambridge's energy profile is dominated by the commercial and public sectors, reflecting the city's concentration of high-value commercial activity, as well as its globally recognised research and public service institutions.

As an organisation, Cambridge City Council was only directly responsible for 0.7% of total carbon emissions in the city in 2023. This is compared to the UK national average where local authorities are responsible for between two and five percent[v].

Cambridge City Council's total gross greenhouse gas emissions[vi] for 2024/25 were 3,871 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO_2e). Emissions were 8.1% lower in 2024/25 than in 2023/24 (4,213 tCO_2e) and 51.9% lower than the 2014/15 baseline when emissions were 8,041 tCO_2e.

Figure # Cambridge City Council's Carbon Emissions 2014/15 - 2024/25 (tCO_2e)

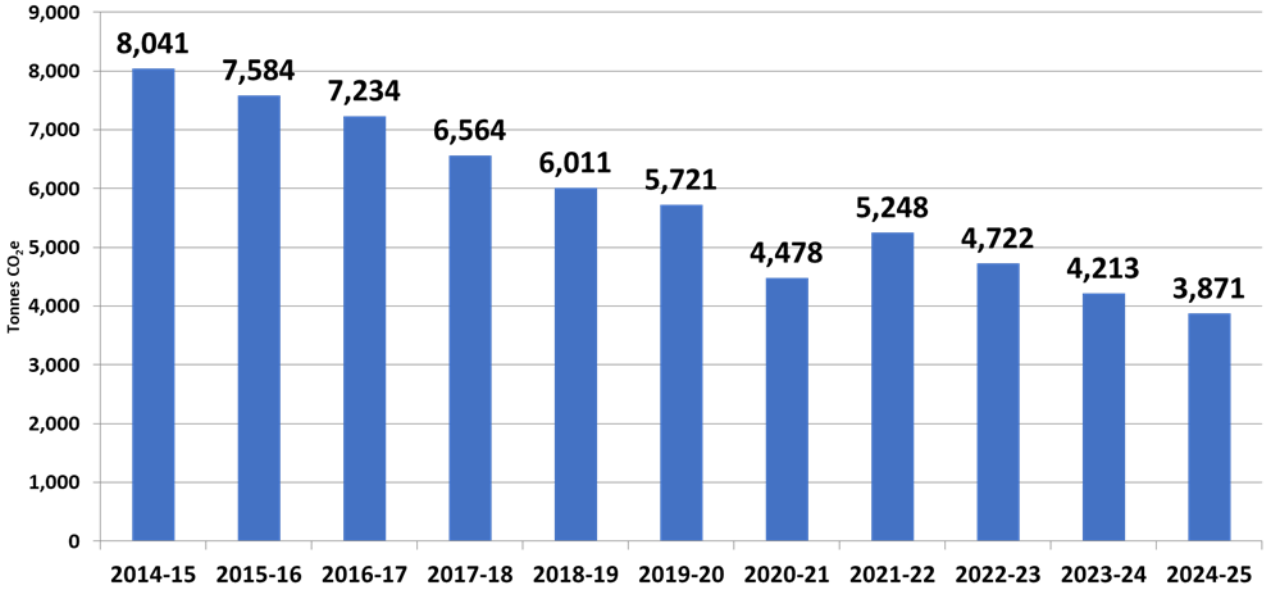
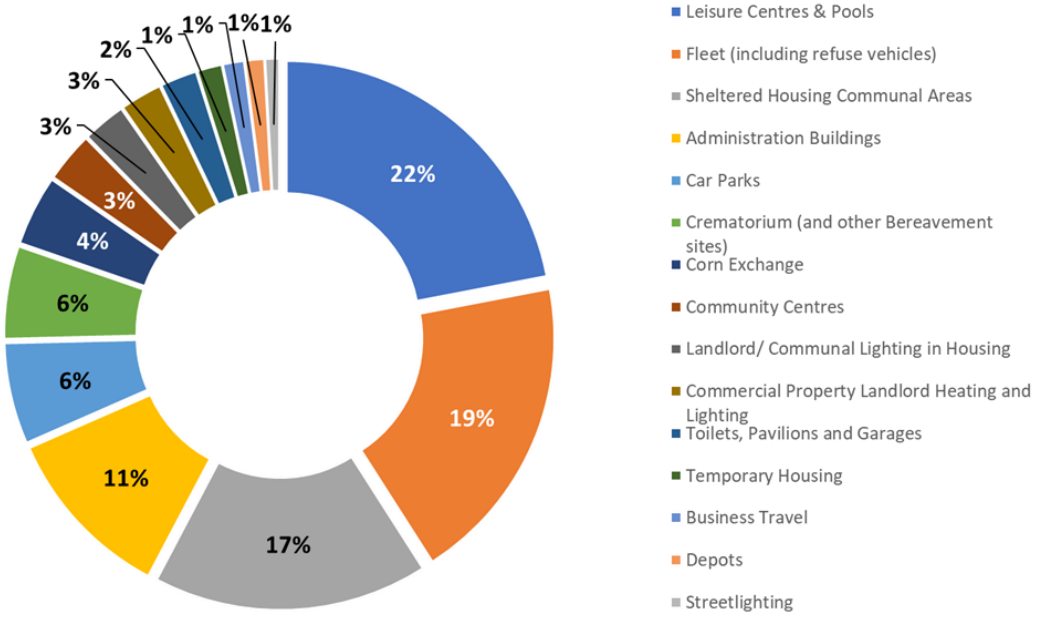


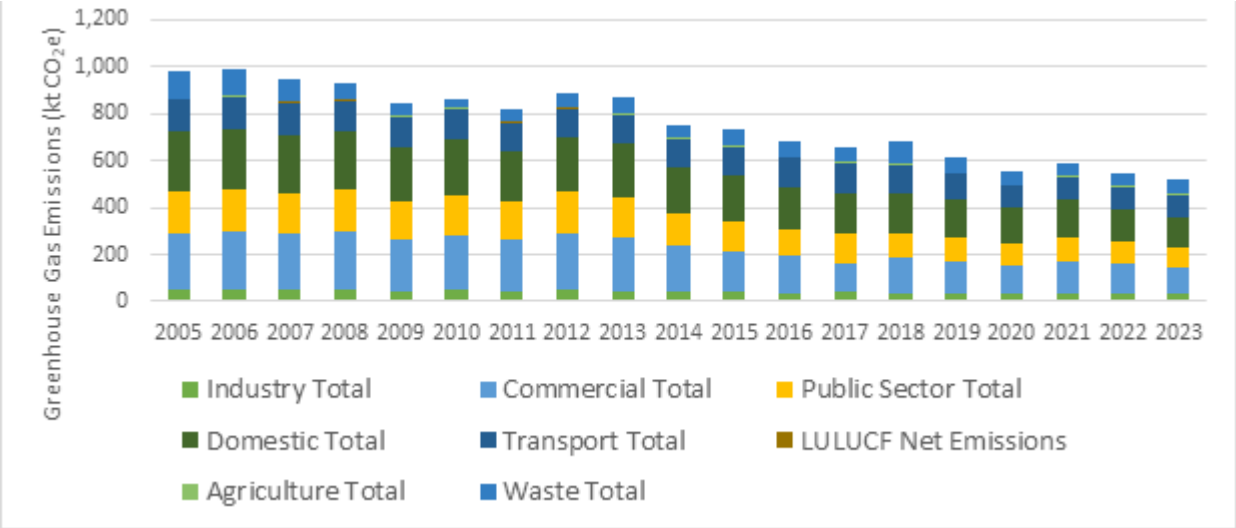
Figure # Sources of Cambridge City Council's Carbon Emissions 2024/25 (tCO_2e)



Cambridge

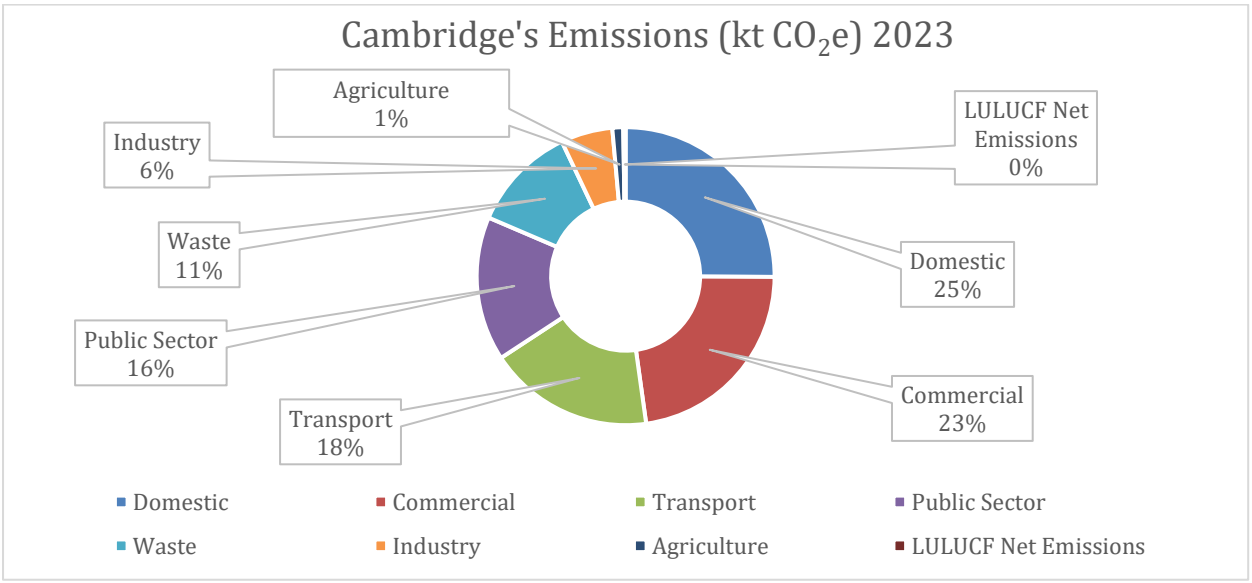
Cambridge's greenhouse gas emissions have reduced by 47.3% since 2005, a reduction of 465.8 kt CO2e, from 985.1 kt CO2e in 2005 to 519.3 kt CO2e in 20236. Per capita emissions have reduced over the same period, from 8.4 t CO2e per person, to 3.5 t CO2e.

Figure # Cambridge Greenhouse Gas Emissions 2023 ($ktCO_2e$)



Accreditation: UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions statistics: 2005-2023, Department for Energy Security & Net Zero, www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-statistics

Figure # Sources of Cambridge's Greenhouse Gas Emissions 2023 ($ktCO_2e$)



Accreditation: UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions statistics: 2005-2023, Department for Energy Security & Net Zero, www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-statistics

Figure note: LULUCF (Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry) includes emissions and removals of greenhouse gases resulting from direct human-induced land use, land-use change and forestry activities.

Policy contexts

National context

While the Council is committed to taking ambitious local action on climate change, decarbonisation across the city, requires supportive and enabling national policies:

1. Climate Change Act 2008 < https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/contents > established the world's first legally binding carbon reduction target. It introduced carbon budgets to systematically reduce emissions by 2050.
2. Net Zero by 2050: < https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9888/#:~:text=Documents%20to%20download&text=Download%20full%20report-,The%20UK%20is%20committed%20to%20reaching%20net%20zero%20by%202050,Zero%20Growth%20Plan%20(2023 >. The UK has committed to reaching net zero by 2050 and to reduce all greenhouse gas emissions by at least 68% by 2030 and at least 81% by 2035 < https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uks-2035-nationally-determined-contribution-ndc-emissions-reduction-target-under-the-paris-agreement >(compared to 1990 levels) announced in 2024 as its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to the Paris Agreement.
3. Clean Power 2030 < https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-power-2030-action-plan > and action plan.

The UK Climate Change Committee has estimated that over 30% of the emissions reductions needed to meet the Sixth Carbon Budget rely on action delivered at the local level, particularly in key areas such as housing, transport, waste, energy, and land use. However, the UK Climate Change Committee has also highlighted that local authorities are currently constrained by limited powers, fragmented short-term funding, and unclear mandates, all of which reduce their ability to act at scale and pace[vii].

To overcome these challenges, Cambridge City Council will continue to work closely with partners across Greater Cambridge and with networks such as UK100, APSE Energy and the Local Government Association, to influence national policy and advocate for the powers and resources local government needs to drive the transition to a zero carbon and climate-resilient future.

We will use our voice to call for:

- Statutory duties on climate action for local authorities to clarify expectations and strengthen accountability.
- Long-term, devolved funding to replace the current patchwork of competitive grants.
- Policy reforms that support local delivery of low-carbon housing retrofit, sustainable transport, renewable energy, and nature recovery.
- Greater local control over planning and energy systems, including the ability to enforce higher environmental standards and lead Local Area Energy Plans.

Local context

Mitigating climate change through decarbonisation and sustainability is embedded in the council's work.

It is the first priority in the Corporate Plan < https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/corporate-plan-2022-27-our-priorities-for-cambridge#A1 >: *Leading Cambridge's response to the climate and biodiversity emergencies and creating a net zero council by 2030.*

It is a core part of the Council's Vision < https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/our-vision >: *Decarbonisation and sustainability are central to prosperity. Cambridge is a net zero carbon city, where people and nature enjoy a clean, green, safe air, and biodiverse green spaces.*

Land use policy

The emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan < https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/local-plan >makes provision for at least 48,000 new homes in Greater Cambridge by 2045. In its Local Government Reorganisation proposal < https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation >, the City Council estimated that these new homes could lead to the Greater Cambridge population growing by 75,000 people by 2040 (from 325,000 to 400,000).

Through the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service < https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/ >, the Council has a role to play in managing the impact of growth on carbon emissions in Cambridge, to ensure that growth is sustainable and doesn't undermine progress on climate change and nature. The emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan plays a significant part in this.

The draft Local Plan shows where new homes and workplaces could be built over the next 20 years and sets out the proposed development in and around Cambridge.

Two of the key themes that went out to consultation for the draft Local Plan include climate change and biodiversity and green spaces. The proposed policies that fall under these themes, such as net zero carbon new buildings policy, renewable energy, water efficiency, ensure that climate change mitigation and adaptation are incorporated into new homes and buildings and they are designed for a changing climate for example. Proposals include:

- **Building to net zero**: new-build homes must be built to be energy efficient and use onsite renewable energy generation to meet their remaining energy needs, thus requiring new development to achieve net zero operational emissions.
- **Supporting and encouraging proposals for renewable and low carbon energy** generation schemes, including domestic schemes.
- **Water efficiency**: new development will have a requirement to reduce water use. Developments of 100+ dwellings required to meet 80 litres/person/day, smaller schemes required to meet 90–100 litres/person/day.
- **Circular economy**: policy now includes a presumption in favour of reuse and refurbishment of existing buildings over demolition.

National Planning Policy Framework

The government has consulted on changes to the National Planning Policy Framework which could result in considerable change to national planning policy. The proposed changes seek to widen presumption in favour of development in certain locations. It also proposes to restrict the ability of Local Planning Authorities to set standards in local plans on matters covered by other regulatory regimes, particularly building regulations. This could impact on the ability of the Council in future to set building standards related to climate change.

Spatial Development Strategies

The government has also introduced a new tier of development plans called Spatial Development Strategies, which in the case of Cambridgeshire would be prepared by the Combined Authority. These will address certain strategic planning matters such as the quantity of growth and its broad location. Local Plans would then have to take these into account. The Combined Authority anticipate that the first Spatial Development Strategy would be adopted in 2028.

Vision for the city: A net zero carbon city by 2030.
Cambridge City Council: Reducing the Council's direct carbon emissions from its operational and administrative buildings, fleet vehicles and business travel to net zero by 2030.
Strategies for biodiversity and the urban forest that will preserve and increase biodiversity net gain and tree canopy cover, as well as playing an integral part in adaptation measures such as flood management by reducing run-off and provide shading during hot weather.

4.0 Our sphere of influence

The Climate Change Strategy has been developed to ensure that Cambridge takes a strategic, collaborative, place-based approach to both mitigating and adapting to climate change alongside socially inclusive economic growth. There are areas where Cambridge City Council has direct responsibility and others where we have less direct influence and we will work with others to achieve outcomes.

The Council's sphere of influence

1. Council estate, fleet and services

The Council has direct control over its buildings, land and assets, vehicle fleet and the services that it provides and how these are delivered and managed.

2. Procured goods and services

When it procures new services from private contractors (e.g. leisure management contract), the Council can require its contractors to take to steps to mitigate climate impacts.

3. Grant-funded activity

The Council sets the overall priorities for grant funding that it provides, such as the Community Grants and Sustainable City Grants. Voluntary and community organisations submit applications for specific activities.

4. Council-owned properties

The Council improves the energy performance, climate resilience and thermal comfort in its properties where others are responsible for the energy consumption and bills (e.g. in Council homes, commercial property).

5. Policies and regulatory powers

The Council can use its regulatory powers, such as its planning policies, to help build climate resilience (e.g. Local Plan and planning policy, taxi licensing).

6. Collaboration and partnership working

The Council can support and empower local residents, voluntary and community groups to identify community-owned and community-led solutions (e.g. convening city-wide climate change and sustainability partnerships with community and business groups, and we work in partnership with County Council, Greater Cambridge Partnership and Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority.

7. Communities

The Council can inform and influence the actions, decisions and choices of businesses, organisations and individual residents and it can work collaboratively with them to develop whole-system solutions but it has no direct control over their decisions or activities.

8. Influencing policy and funding by Government and other agencies

The Council can influence Government policy but has no direct control.

9. International agreements and the global economy

The Council has no direct influence over international climate change agreements or the impact of a globalised economy on the climate.

Diagram to be added -Figure # outlines the specific focus of this strategy and the Council's spheres of influence

Centre: The Council's sphere of influence
Ring texts

1. Council estate, fleet and services
2. Procured goods and services
3. Grant-funded activity
4. Council-owned properties
5. Policies and regulatory powers
6. Collaboration and partnership working
7. Communities
8. Influencing policy and funding
9. International agreements and the global economy

Our Climate Change Strategy 2026-31 focuses on Cambridge City Council's actions to reduce emissions and build climate resilience within its direct influence, while working in partnership to drive wider city-wide change. It is in this way that we will deliver change at scale.

Figure # Working in partnership to drive wider city-wide change – Who does what

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority

Strategic powers in areas such as transport and economic policy with a directly elected mayor. Includes the two-tier county and district/city councils of Cambridgeshire and the unitary council of Peterborough. The councils within a combined authority remain separate entities delivering their existing council functions but may carry out new activities collectively across their region.</td><td rowspan="4">Greater Cambridge Partnership

Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, University of Cambridge, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority Business Board

The Partnership is delivering the city deal for economic development, including housing and skills, and supporting growth with an integrated transport plan.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Cambridgeshire County Council</td><td>Responsible for services such as transport, highways, waste disposal, public health, children’s services and adult social care.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Cambridge City Council</td><td>Responsible for place-related services such as housing, waste collection, planning and licensing. Unlike the rural parts of Cambridgeshire, there are no parish councils in Cambridge City, so services often provided by them are provided by the City Council in Cambridge, such as allotments, local neighbourhood facilities such as community buildings, parks, playgrounds and public toilets.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Greater Cambridge Shared Services</td><td>A partnership between Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council to deliver the Planning Service and the Waste Service for their areas together.</td></tr>
</table>

5.0 Sustainable City Council and local government reorganisation

Reduce our direct carbon emissions towards achieving our net zero target
Increasing our organisation's climate resilience
Enhancing the sustainability of our organisation

Setting a near-term goal for 2028

Whilst the Council's net-zero target for 2030 has not changed, in light of Local Government Reorganisation, which aims to create a single unitary council system by April 2028, we have also set a near term target for the Council's emissions.

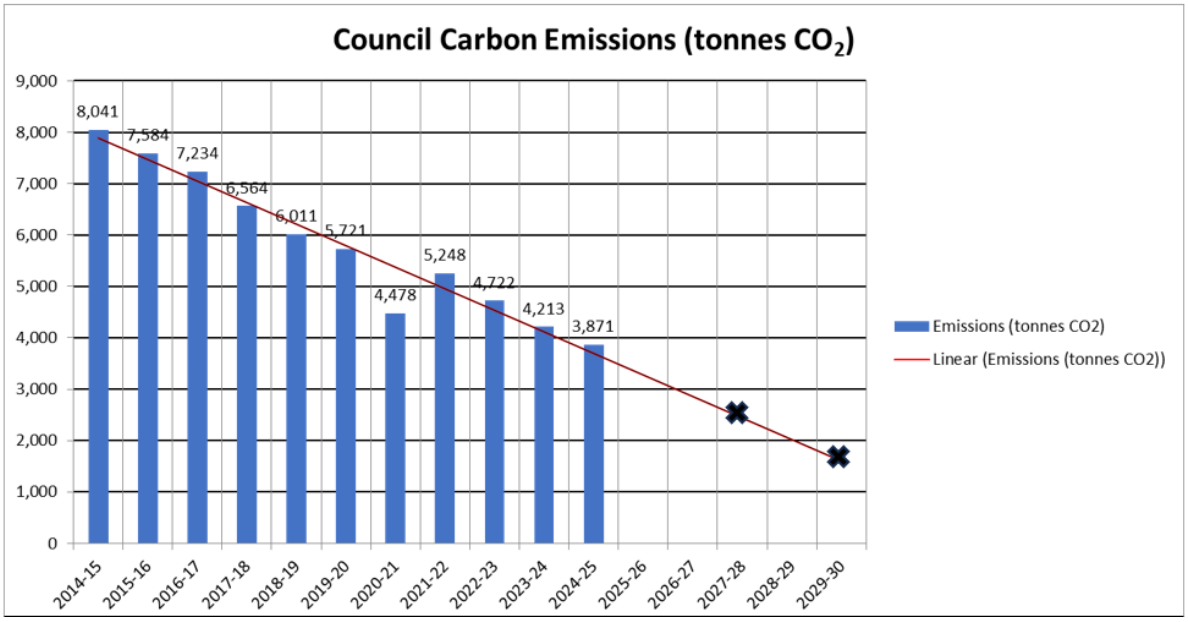
Net zero target: Reduce the Council's direct carbon emissions from our corporate buildings (including swimming pools, office buildings, car parks, sheltered housing schemes, community centres, arts venues and the crematorium), our fleet vehicles (including vans, trucks and refuse vehicles), and business travel to net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

Work has been carried out to estimate the City Council's emissions by the end of 2027/28 (and 2029/30), based on the planned projects and the increase in the amount of renewable energy powering the electricity grid (also known as the 'greening of the grid'). It is estimated based on the last 10 years of data, that the council's total emissions could be approximately 2,500 tCO_2e by March 2028 and 1,500 tCO_2e by March 2030.

Our near-term goal is to reduce emissions by 69% by March 2028 (from 2014/15 baseline).

We will explore **how councils might compensate for unavoidable residual emissions to meet net zero targets**. This will inform any future decisions that may be needed by the Council, to achieve net zero by 2030. We will look at how offsetting programmes local to Cambridgeshire could be supported to deliver credible, high quality local emissions reductions and benefits.

Figure # Cambridge City Council carbon emissions (tonnes CO_2)



Measuring and monitoring progress: Goals, KPI's and co-benefits

Progress will be **transparently tracked through our annual Greenhouse Gas (GHG) report** which details the Council's greenhouse gas emissions and is the measure by which the progress towards the net zero target will be measured.

The GHG report sets out the total gross greenhouse gas emissions from our own estate and operations. It currently includes emissions from the following scopes:

- Scope 1 emissions, which are those released as a direct result of an activity, such as the use of gas in heating boilers and fuel burned in the Council-owned fleet vehicles.
- Scope 2 emissions are those released as an indirect consumption of an energy commodity such as purchased grid electricity used in the Council's operations (buildings and for charging Electric Vehicles (EV)).
- Scope 3 emissions are all other indirect emissions other than electricity. The City Council's Green House Gas report includes the following Scope 3 emissions from sources it currently has processes for but does not directly control or has outsourced to another provider to deliver, such as the Council's leisure sites. Our Scope 3 emissions therefore include:
    a. Business travel (by means not owned or controlled by the authority): Staff and Councillor mileage, rail journeys, flights.
    b. Outsourced activities: Leisure sites gas and electricity consumption, hotel stays, transmission and distribution losses from Scope 2 (council electricity consumption) and outsourced activities electricity consumption (leisure sites).

Measuring emissions from our suppliers

To further reduce emissions, the City Council will **undertake work to understand, manage and reduce emissions from our suppliers**. These are emissions that occur indirectly because of the Council's operations but occur at sources which the Council does not own or control. These are sometimes known as Scope 3 emissions. We recognise that usually Scope 3 emissions represent 70-80% of a local authority's total emissions[viii]. For example, Cambridgeshire County Council estimate that 99% of its greenhouse gas emissions fall under Scope 3[ix]. Reporting on emissions from suppliers and setting targets to reduce them can be difficult in terms of gathering the necessary information but is recommended by the UK's Climate Change Committee who advise organisations to 'measure and report Scopes 1 and 2 as a minimum, define and report on Scope 3 as actively as possible'[x].
Beyond the GHG data, we recognise the tangible co-benefits of this transition: upgraded assets, reduced energy bills, cleaner air and improved health outcomes for our staff and community through energy efficient buildings, active travel and fleet electrification.

6.0 Governance and deliverability

Strong governance keeps our ambition grounded and real

As a democratically elected body, we **report regularly on the goals, our performance and our progress**. Each year, we produce an annual Greenhouse Gas (GHG) report that summarises our achievements, detailing the total gross greenhouse gas emissions from our own properties and operations.

Transparency in our reporting and long-term thinking makes sure our sustainability goals for the organisation and city are the result of **a thoughtful and rigorous process, grounded in strategy, collaboration and shared city-wide commitment**.

To ensure that the **impacts on climate and nature from actions and projects undertaken by the Council** are considered, we use the following mechanisms:

- Committee reporting
  As part of our committee reporting procedures, all reports **must consider any likely impacts on climate change and the Council's net zero target**.
- Budget Setting
  All new revenue and capital **budget proposals require a climate rating**
- Procurement
  Considerations for climate change and nature must be **made through the procurement process under our social value framework**.

Part Two

7.0 Our strategic approach 2026-2031

7.1 Energy and retrofit - Improving energy efficiency and climate resilience of homes and buildings across Cambridge.

Transition to low-carbon infrastructure
Housing improvements through retrofit support
Sustainability standards for new developments

Background

Our city faces several challenges to reduce energy consumption and achieve net zero across the entire city, some of which are unique to Cambridge.

Research by the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership found that the UK, and indeed Cambridge, has some of the oldest and least energy-efficient housing in Western Europe, which are predominantly heated by gas. These need to be retrofitted with better insulation and electric heating technologies for the UK to meet both its medium and long-term greenhouse gas reduction targets.

Retrofit is defined as a process of making improvements to a home or building to make it more energy efficient. Measures can include improvements to insulation of walls, floors, lofts, windows and doors alongside appropriate ventilation to maintain good indoor air quality. Retrofits may also include solar photovoltaic (PV) installation and upgrades to heating, hot water and lighting, or measures to reduce water use. A whole-house approach is essential to ensure homes are healthy, comfortable and resilient to both cold winters and increasingly hotter summers.

The process of retrofitting brings a number of co-benefits: reduced energy consumption resulting in lower energy bills and a more comfortable home which is cooler in summer and warmer in winter, bringing benefits to health and wellbeing. Retrofitting can help to tackle fuel poverty when targeted at low-income households and vulnerable households, to support a just transition. Retrofitting also can improve air quality of the city, increase resilience to extreme weather, provide local jobs and skills, and provide a more resilient energy system for Cambridge. reducing exposure to volatile energy prices and improving long term energy security.

Many of the challenges to scaling retrofits in Cambridge are like those seen across the UK. However, some are linked to local contextual conditions such as high housing costs, a higher proportion of emissions from domestic buildings than the national average and large numbers of private rented and heritage listed homes. Current barriers include high upfront costs, a lack of skilled retrofit professionals and inadequate national funding structures which are complex and difficult to access.

The retrofit potential in Cambridge is significant but realising it requires a co-ordinated, well-resourced, and locally tailored approach to improving energy efficiency, phasing out fossil fuels

and ensuring a resilient, low-carbon energy system. Crucially, we must ensure this transition is fair, protecting residents from fuel poverty and the health impacts of a changing climate.

Delivering this approach at scale will require changes in government policy, long-term funding certainty, a skilled work force and strong co-ordination across public, private and community partners.

Funding is also a key constraint but with rising energy costs, the need for on-going maintenance and new regulatory standards, investment is needed. Our investment in City Council buildings and facilities is driven by a dual purpose: reducing energy costs; and fulfilling our commitment to become operationally net zero. We are taking a measured approach to funding, actively pursuing external funding opportunities and prioritising projects that deliver the most significant, cost-effective emission reductions. This ensures we make the best possible use of available resources for retrofitting and decarbonisation while modernising our estate for the long term.

We also recognise that as a fast-growing hub for UK innovation, we must decouple economic expansion and new housing development from carbon emissions, using our plan making powers to ensure that new developments in Greater Cambridge mitigate rather than compound climate risks.

In addition to our retrofit work on our commercial and corporate property portfolios, we also play an important role in delivery across the city as a housing provider and developer, planning authority and as a convenor, enabler and advocate. Through strong partnership working, targeted investment and advocacy for national policy reform, we will help drive progress at scale, despite limited direct powers, to enable the development of low-carbon energy infrastructure across the city, support delivery of high-quality retrofit and ensure that new development incorporates climate mitigation and adaptation measures.

Over the course of the strategy, the Council aims to

1. **Increase the energy efficiency of homes and buildings** in Cambridge, reducing heat loss and overall energy demand.
2. **Enhance the climate resilience of homes** in Cambridge, to ensure homes and residents are better prepared for extreme weather, such as hotter and more frequent heatwaves.
3. **Support and enable the phase out of fossil fuels,** as far as possible, especially gas heating, across the city's buildings.
4. Ensure the energy required to heat and power homes in Cambridge increasingly comes from **low- or zero-carbon energy sources**, supported by robust infrastructure that enhances energy security and long-term affordability.
5. **Reduce fuel poverty** by enabling residents to live in well-insulated homes that stay warm in winter and cool in summer, providing resilience to heatwaves that will become more frequent and more intense as the climate changes.
6. **Provide support to increase the amount of renewable energy generated** in the city by supporting community-led energy projects
7. **Attract and align funding to enable retrofit delivery at scale** and to stimulate the local retrofit economy for long-term social and economic benefits for communities.

Sustainable Council
We have updated our **Asset Management and Decarbonisation Plan** < https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/documents/s62221/Asset%20Management%20Plan%20Draft%202023%20SR%20FINAL.pdf> to ensure our commercial and corporate property portfolios are both financially robust and environmentally resilient. This process involves an assessment of priority sites and funding routes, allowing us to develop a targeted improvement programme that ensures our estate is fit for the future.

Sustainable City
Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council are working together to create the first **joint Local Plan for Greater Cambridge** < https://greatercambridgeplanning.org/local-plan >. The draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan consultation ended in January 2026. The plan will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in December 2026 following further consultation in Summer 2026 and it is anticipated to be adopted late 2028, subject to further consultations and approvals.

Sustainable Housing Design Guide
The Sustainable Housing Design Guide < https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/uuflsryl/sustainable-housing-design-guide.pdf > and its 2024 Addendum (incorporating the Cam Standard) < https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/documents/s66917/Agenda+item+10+-+Appendix+4+B+-+Sustainable+Housing+Design+Guide.pdf >, ensure that all new Council housing will be designed to Cam Standard from 2021, and to Net Zero standard from 2030.

Local Area Energy Plan
The Local Area Energy Plan < https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/local-area-energy-plan > is a place-based evidence base that sets out what energy infrastructure is needed, where it should be located, and when it must be delivered to support long term economic growth and local energy security.

Cambridgeshire County Council Community Energy Action Plan
The Cambridgeshire County Council Community Energy Action Plan < https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/Community-Energy-Action-plan.pdf > sets out proposed County Council actions to support communities which want to develop their own clean energy projects, promote domestic energy efficiency in their neighbourhoods and raise awareness of clean energy opportunities.

Action on Energy Cambridgeshire
Action on Energy Cambridgeshire < https://www.actiononenergycambs.org/ > is a partnership between Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridge City Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, Fenland District Council, Huntingdonshire District Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council). It provides advice on how to maximise the energy efficiency of homes, save money on energy bills and cut carbon emissions.

Objectives

Sustainable Council

1. Based on the outcomes of the Asset Management Review, we will establish **a targeted property improvement programme to reduce emissions** across our corporate and commercial estate to meet a minimum Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ratings in line with legislation.

Our plan will detail how we will meet **energy efficiency standards for Council-owned leased properties** to comply with The Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 and ensure that properties are fit for purpose in terms of function, size, environmental performance, cost, financial return and location. We will identify priority sites for improvement, assess the decarbonisation measures required, and determine potential funding routes.

Where we don't yet have defined proposals, our strategic review of the Asset Management and Decarbonisation Plan will **identify further potential actions and the funding required** to reduce or offset the residual emissions from our building stock.

2. Through the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA), we will **invest at scale to improve the energy performance, climate resilience and thermal comfort of council homes**. This will prioritise achieving EPC C, reducing fuel poverty and supporting our pathway to net zero housing.

Sustainable City

1. Building on our successful council house programme the council aspires to **deliver 1,300 new council homes by 2036 with a significant number delivered by 2030**, subject to Homes England Funding. Our council homes are designed to meet the Sustainable Housing Design Guide which is currently the Cam Standard – a low energy performance standard. Post 2030, new homes will target a net zero standard.
2. We will **create a cohesive, citywide retrofit strategy that enables accelerated, equitable and high-impact retrofit** across all housing tenures – council-owned homes, private rented sector and owner-occupied homes. This will allow a co-ordinated approach to fragmented retrofit efforts under one defined delivery approach, attract and align funding to enable delivery at scale, develop local skills and supply chain, and stimulate the local retrofit economy whilst contributing to wider the economy.
3. By 2030, we will **increase the proportion of homes achieving EPC C** or above, prioritising council homes and low performing properties and reduce reliance on fossil fuel heating across the City. This will be in line with Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) and national policy frameworks to reduce the overall demand from homes and buildings though targeted retrofit measures.
4. We will target energy efficiency improvements and clean heat upgrades towards households most at risk of **fuel poverty, focussing on low-income residents and homes in the lowest EPC bands**, to reduce exposure to cold, damp and overheating by 2030.

Photo - NewCouncilhomes Ditton PassivHaus.jpg

Photo - NewCouncilhomes_Fen Road PassivHaus.jpg

Photo - NewCouncilhomes_Aragon & Sackville 2.jpg

Delivery

Sustainable Council
Transition to low-carbon infrastructure

i. Leisure facilities

The Council's leisure facilities, as a group, were responsible for the greatest proportion of the Council's emissions in 2024/25. The procurement of a new leisure contract for 2026-2041 will seek to reduce carbon emissions.

ii. Civic Quarter Project

This major redevelopment project, if approved, will upgrade the Guildhall, Corn Exchange and Market and could be completed in December 2028. The project targets operational net zero for the Guildhall and water neutrality across the site, with a 65% reduction in Corn Exchange emissions through upgrades to the building's energy efficiency and solar power and includes a future connection to the proposed city centre district heating network.

iii. Commercial properties

We are developing a plan which will detail how we will meet energy efficiency standards for Council-owned leased properties to comply with The Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 and ensure that properties are fit for purpose in terms of function, size, environmental performance, cost, financial return and location. We will identify priority sites for improvement, assess the decarbonisation measures required, and determine potential funding routes.

iv. City Centre Buildings (through City Centre Heat Network)

Feasibility work has started to consider supplying renewable heating to the City Council's heritage buildings like the Guildhall, Corn Exchange and Parkside Pool complex through the City Centre Heat Network. This would involve working with partner properties throughout the city centre, with the aim of co-ordinating rapid decarbonisation and most specifically providing a decarbonisation solution where ability to do so on site is limited due to building age, construction and size. The Council and partners are working towards a final approval for this project in 2027/28.

Sustainable City
City delivery partnerships

Leveraging our role as a community leader and major landowner, we are driving system-wide change through three areas of activity:

Transition to low-carbon infrastructure

We are collaborating with regional partners to build the backbone of a sustainable Cambridge.

i. City Centre Heat Network

Working in partnership with the University of Cambridge, Anglia Ruskin University and some of the Cambridge Colleges, we are exploring a transformative low-carbon heat network to provide a viable alternative to fossil fuel heating for major city institutions, which if approved, would be delivered from 2030.

ii. Local Area Energy Plan

Led by Cambridgeshire County Council, this strategic framework ensures our transition to a low-carbon, sustainable and resilient energy system is technically robust and socially inclusive, aligning national targets with local priorities to be economically viable. The plan supports both existing communities and future growth while reinforcing long-term sustainability and energy security.

We will contribute to the production and maintenance of the Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP), an evidence base for Cambridgeshire setting out the energy infrastructure requirements for current and future growth, and how this growth can be delivered sustainably.

iii. Community energy

Supporting Cambridgeshire County Council to deliver the Community Energy Action Plan, we aim to empower residents to increase local renewable energy generation. Meaningful community-led climate action, helping to reduce emissions and delivering long-term benefits in energy savings will strengthen local energy resilience and deliver wider social and economic benefits across the city.

Housing improvements through retrofit support

We are accelerating the retrofit of existing homes, prioritising those most in need.

i. Improving energy efficiency of existing Council homes

We recognise our responsibility to lead by example in reducing emissions from the built environment through the retrofitting of existing Council homes. The Housing Revenue Account plays a central role in delivering energy efficiency improvements and climate resilience across the councils housing stock. Over the next 5 years, the HRA will invest over £100m in safe, decent and energy efficient homes.

Building on established retrofit programmes, we will continue to deliver high quality, whole house retrofit that reduces carbon emissions, improves energy efficiency and supports progress towards minimum energy performance standards. This work will continue to prioritise resident health, comfort and affordability, while acting as a demonstrator for low carbon retrofit approaches that can be scaled across the city to support our transition to net zero. We aim to support learning, skills and the growth of a resilient supply chain.

ii. Action on Energy

The Council will develop Action on Energy further as a key local route for energy advice and retrofit support. We are strengthening this partnership between Cambridgeshire and Peterborough local authorities. It provides trusted, locally tailored advice on energy efficiency measures, available funding opportunities and support to find experienced installers, helping households reduce energy demand, lower energy bills and cut carbon emissions. It also develops and supports the supply chain to build capacity, resilience and skills to meet the retrofit demands of the future, and works with partners to support market development, encourage high quality standards and will be a vehicle to explore innovative approaches to finance and delivery.

iii. Targeted delivery on low-income private homes

We continue to deliver upgrades for low-income private homes, focusing on areas of deprivation to ensure a fair transition for all residents with Action on Energy partners increasing Energy Performance when relevant funding is available.

iv. Council house building programme

In relation to our council house building programme, subject to Homes England funding, the council committed in our recent budget to an aspiration to build 1,300 council homes by 2036.

Sustainability standards for new developments

We are embedding rigorous climate change mitigation and adaptation requirements into the economic growth of the city.

i. Council housing standards

We are leading by example, with all new Council housing designed to meet the sustainable housing design guide which exceeds minimum standards on energy and carbon emissions. This is being delivered through the Cam Standard from 2021 and moving towards operational Net Zero from 2030, biodiversity and water efficiency.

ii. Building to net zero standards

Through the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan <https://greatercambridgeplanning.org/local-plan >, we intend to mandate that new build homes achieve operational net zero, including insulation, energy and water efficiency, biodiversity net gain and onsite renewables subject to national policy.

iii. Low carbon energy generation

The emerging Local Plan < https://greatercambridgeplanning.org/local-plan > planning policies will support and encourage proposals for renewable and low carbon energy generation schemes, including domestic schemes.

iv. Building climate resilient homes and buildings

Through the emerging Local Plan < https://greatercambridgeplanning.org/local-plan >, require all new developments to embed climate resilience into their design including responding to the Urban Heat Island Effect and implementing the cooling hierarchy to prioritise design led approaches to reduce the risk of overheating in buildings.

7.2 Nature and water - Enhancing nature and safeguarding water to support Cambridge to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Enhancing nature and safeguarding water
Enabling efficient water use and adapting to climate change
Standards for sustainable growth
Community and neighbourhood action

Background

Protecting and enhancing nature is a fundamental structural component of building a climate-resilient Cambridge. Healthy, interconnected natural systems act as critical infrastructure that regulates temperature, manages flood risk and stores carbon. A city rich in biodiversity, characterised by a diverse, resilient, well-managed urban forest, clean rivers, and connected habitats, increases our capacity to adapt to rising temperatures and extreme weather events. This approach places nature at the core of our response to the climate emergency.

Cambridge City Council manages more than 80 parks and open spaces, such as play areas, allotments, community gardens and orchards, totalling over 742 hectares. It is also responsible for maintaining 23 km of water courses, including some globally rare chalk streams, which are vital freshwater ecosystems and over 30,000 trees.

The biodiversity emergency

In 2019, Cambridge City Council declared a biodiversity emergency and a climate change emergency in recognition of the pressures facing our natural world, both locally and internationally. The Council's Biodiversity Strategy 2026–2031 embeds biodiversity principles and considerations across all Council service areas and the communities we serve.

Some of the key driving forces causing the biodiversity emergency are increasing demands for housing, food and energy production. These can result in habitat loss, habitat degradation and fragmentation and environmental pollution. They also contribute to, and exacerbate, the effects of climate change.

As urbanisation intensifies, the loss of biodiversity exacerbates our vulnerability to the urban heat island effect (overheating in urban areas), flooding and water stress. Residents have been clear about their priorities, identifying biodiversity loss as the most urgent climate-related challenge facing Greater Cambridge, closely followed by water scarcity and quality. We are committed to addressing these challenges with a clear view of the risks, recognising that protecting nature is essential for both mitigation and adaptation.

Strategic frameworks

Sustainable Council & Sustainable City
This Climate Change Strategy has been developed to align with the Council's **Biodiversity Strategy (2026–2031)** < https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/biodiversity > and the **Urban Forest Strategy (2026–2036)** < https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/urban-forest-strategy >, ensuring that the Council's approach to adapting to climate change is coordinated with work to increase the city's tree canopy and enhance biodiversity in the city.

The Biodiversity Strategy 2026-31 integrates biodiversity into planning and operations, focusing on mainstreaming nature, enhancing core reserves and promoting community-led action.

Strategic Objectives
Working towards these objectives also helps to address climate change, in particular helping Cambridge to adapt and be more resilient to climate change.
The Urban Forest Strategy 2026-36 guides our commitment to growing a diverse and equitable urban forest through shared action across all land ownerships that serves as a living legacy for future generations.

The **Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy** <https://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/documents/Strategies/LNRS/FINAL-WEB-PDFS____LNRS-joint.pdf > is an evidence-based plan agreed to reverse biodiversity decline and restore habitats at a regional scale.

Objectives

Sustainable Council

1. We will take **a strategic, whole-estate approach to enhancing nature and safeguarding water** across Council-owned land during 2026-31, recognising the critical role that green and blue infrastructure plays in supporting biodiversity, managing water and strengthening Cambridge's resilience to climate change.

We will continue managing our Local Nature Reserves and Commons, ensuring that every site achieves at least one habitat condition improvement (as defined by DEFRA Condition Assessment) by 2031. This will include the creation and expansion of meadows, scrub and woodland habitats, improved habitat connectivity and strengthening the role of these spaces in water management and climate adaptation.

2. We will take a strategic approach to **managing water more efficiently across the Council's estate** during 2026-31, focusing on reducing demand, enabling more efficient water use and re-use, managing surface water more sustainably and strengthening resilience to drought and flooding.

We will **ensure that water is managed sustainably** across the Council's assets, supporting adaptation to a changing climate while delivering wider environmental benefits. This will include improving water efficiency and resource management at Council sites such as our swimming pools, a programme of water efficiency retrofit measures in Council housing and rainwater management for irrigation.

3. We will **increase the extent, quality and connectivity of habitats** during 2026-31, ensuring that all sites maximise their potential for biodiversity, whilst playing a critical role in managing water and responding to climate change.

Connecting urban habitats gives wildlife a network to move safely through the city. It helps animals move around to find food, mates, and new places to live, reducing the risk of species disappearing from isolated pockets of land. By keeping these green pathways open, nature is better able to cope with a changing climate. Healthy, connected habitats also support the things people rely on - like pollination, clean air and a thriving ecosystem.

Sustainable City

Our goals are designed to leave a lasting impact on the city's landscape:

1. We will secure a **measurable increase in biodiversity** across the city by 2031, supporting the Natural Cambridgeshire vision to 'double nature' across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough <https://naturalcambridgeshire.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Doubling-Nature-LR-1.pdf >

An ambitious vision for **a high-quality natural environment** is essential for contributing to the local quality of life. We will integrate biodiversity into planning, housing and operations and adopt the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy to achieve a 20% biodiversity net gain for council-led developments.

2. The very best **wildlife habitats will form the Cambridge Nature Network** that will permeate the whole of the city and link to the wider Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Wildlife **habitats will be protected, enhanced and where possible expanded and linked**.

3. We have set a target to **expand tree canopy cover from 17% to 20% by 2050**.

This will be done by the **growth of the existing canopy, minimising unnecessary canopy loss** (through felling and pruning) **and planting to achieve approximately 4 hectares of new canopy annually** across the city (on public and private land) (the equivalent of between five and six football pitches) prioritising areas of greatest need to ensure equitable access to shade and cooling.

Delivery

Sustainable Council

Our strategy for 2026-31 includes transformative projects to both enhance nature, safeguard watercourses and enable efficient water use - supporting adaptation to a changing climate while delivering wider environmental benefits.

<emphasis>

Enhancing nature and safeguarding water

i. **Climate-resilient land management practices in our parks and open spaces**

We are reducing reliance on chemicals, adopting less intensive management practices and expanding drought-tolerant and pollinator-friendly planting across parks, verges and open spaces. For example, we have already ceased the use of herbicides on grass verges and will trial new grass-cutting and collecting methods that reduce soil fertility, creating improved conditions for wildflowers and supporting biodiversity.

<emphasis>

Enabling efficient water use and adapting to climate change

i. **Water retrofit and water recovery measures**

We will target water retrofit and water recovery measures at Council sites. This includes implementing water reduction measures to three swimming pools: Abbey Leisure Complex, Kings Hedges Learner Pool and Parkside Pool, incorporating pool water recovery systems which clean and re-use backwashed water. These measures will reduce water consumption by 90%, whilst also reducing chemical use and the energy required to heat water, supporting both climate mitigation and adaptation objectives.

ii. **Water efficiency retrofit measures**

Making use of government funding, we will help the Council's tenants maximise water efficiency and reduce their water bills. This will support long-term sustainable development and resilience to water scarcity.

iii. **Engineered and nature-based solutions**

Across the wider Council estate, we will prioritise the use of both engineered and nature-based solutions to manage water and respond to climate risks. We will explore the feasibility of installing rainwater harvesting systems on or near Council-owned buildings and car parks, enabling rainwater to be captured and stored for uses such as irrigation of trees and open spaces. This approach, if feasible, reduces demand on mains water, lowers flood risk during heavy rainfall and improves drought resilience by retaining water for use during dry periods. We will also explore the use of rain gardens in communal areas and car parks across Council housing sites. Rain gardens help to reduce surface water run-off, manage intense rainfall and reduce flood risk by soaking up rainwater when it falls. This nature-based solution supports biodiversity to flourish and supports cooling in urban areas.

iv. **Allotment sites and splash pads**

We are exploring water recovery measures and rainwater harvesting using Water Scarcity Funding in partnership with the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning service.

Sustainable City

To increase our impact, we are strengthening collaborations to deliver systemic change across three key areas:

Enhancing nature and safeguarding water

We are taking **a partnership-led approach to managing water resources and reducing flood risk**. This includes the Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project, which focuses on protecting nationally significant streams like Cherry Hinton Brook, Hobson's Brook, Vicars Brook at Coe Fen and Coldham's Brook on Stourbridge Common. We are also innovating with trial projects, such as exploring the viability of using solar-powered pumps to improve flow at Jesus Green Ditch and working with the Cambridge Water Scarcity Group to advocate for strategic, long-term water supply solutions.

Standards for sustainable growth

We are **using our influence within the planning system**. Existing planning policy standards for sustainable drainage already go beyond national requirements and through the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan < https://greatercambridgeplanning.org/local-plan >, we are exploring policies that mandate higher standards for both water efficiency (currently capped at 110 litres/person/day) and sustainable drainage. The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning System will also continue to develop work to **ensure that new developments deliver a biodiversity net gain** and progress planning policies in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan < https://greatercambridgeplanning.org/local-plan > which protect and enhance nature.

Community and neighbourhood action

We are empowering residents to take ownership of their local environment through **"Nature in Your Neighbourhood"** initiatives. By promoting Nature City Accreditation and pollinator-friendly projects, we are fostering a culture of shared stewardship where communities actively contribute to the city's climate resilience.

7.3 Transport - Reducing the need for fossil fuel-powered travel and encouraging the use of low and zero carbon modes of transport to reduce emissions.

Enabling the electric vehicle transition
Scaling sustainable infrastructure

Background

Transport plays a critical role in Cambridge's transition to a net zero city, currently accounting for approximately 18% of our greenhouse gas emissions.

Cambridge is a compact city, which naturally supports lower carbon travel options; as a result, our transport emissions (18%) are significantly lower than the national average of 32%. However, continued population and employment growth demands that we remain proactive.

Reducing emissions from our own transport operations is an important part of the Council's approach to tackling climate change. In 2024/25, our fleet accounted for 19% of the City Council's direct emissions, making it the second largest contributor to our total emissions. The council's vehicle fleet is critical in delivering statutory, discretionary and income generating services which include the maintenance of public buildings and spaces, the maintenance of the council's homes and pest control services.

While the city already benefits from very high cycling and walking rates, compared to the national average, (top city for cycling and seventh in England for walking), <Walking and cycling statistics, England: Local area walking and cycling rates (Active Lives Survey) Published 28 August 2024 - https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/walking-and-cycling-statistics-england-2023/walking-and-cycling-statistics-england-local-area-walking-and-cycling-rates-active-lives-survey#:~:text=69%25%20of%20adults%20reported%20walking,decrease%20from%2042%25)> continued action is required to reduce our residual reliance on fossil-fuelled travel. Our overarching aim is to facilitate a decisive shift toward sustainable modes: walking, cycling, public transport and electric vehicles (EV); ensuring that when residents and visitors need to travel, they can do so conveniently and sustainably.

We are navigating specific local hurdles to decarbonisation:

- **Infrastructure constraints:** Many Cambridge homes rely on on-street parking, making the installation of EV charging infrastructure for residents complicated. While on-street chargers have already been installed, scaling up provision remains a key challenge.
- **Convenience and perception:** Car use often remains the default where sustainable alternatives are perceived as less reliable or convenient.
- **Governance complexity:** We recognise that the multi-layered responsibility for transport, shared between the City Council, County Council, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP), can be a source of frustration for residents. We are committed to navigating this landscape to influence regional priorities effectively.
- **National policy:** Changes to national policy, including the delay to the ban on new petrol and diesel cars from 2030 to 2035 and reduction in ambition of these policies, can create a challenging environment, increase uncertainty and slow momentum for change.

Responsibilities for Transport in Cambridge

Local authority area	*Responsible for*
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority	Overarching strategy and project delivery including active travel and public transport.
Cambridgeshire County Council	Manages and maintains roads, pavements and highways including busways, on-street parking and on-street electric vehicle infrastructure.
Cambridge City Council	Manages land use planning, street-cleaning, off-street parking, car parks, taxi licensing, managing off-street electric vehicle infrastructure development.
Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) (a partnership in which the City Council is a voting member)	Reducing congestion in Cambridge including implementing new green infrastructure and smart cities initiatives.

Strategic frameworks

Sustainable Council

Our **Fleet Replacement and Decarbonisation Programme** < https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/documents/s50531/DECARBONISING%20CAMBRIDGE%20CITY%20COUNCIL%20VEHICLE%20FLEET%20Environment%20and%20Community%20Scrutiny%20Committee%20004.pdf > targets a decarbonised Council fleet by 2030. It is a three-year rolling replacement programme of fleet vans and trucks with electric zero emissions vehicles, where feasible and financially viable. Where this is not possible, alternative low-emission fuels such as hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) may be considered.

Sustainable City

Our local actions support and align with the national direction of travel for transport decarbonisation. We are working in the context of the **UK's Zero Emission Vehicle mandate** < https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/phasing-out-sales-of-new-petrol-and-diesel-cars-from-2030-and-supporting-the-zev-transition/outcome/phasing-out-sales-of-new-petrol-and-diesel-cars-from-2030-and-supporting-the-zev-transition-summary-of-responses-and-joint-government-response >, which requires 100% of new cars and vans sold to be zero-emission by 2035.

Furthermore, our approach mirrors the **UK's Climate Change Committee's Seventh Carbon Budget**, which emphasises that infrastructure improvements must precede and enable the behavioural shift toward public transport and EVs.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy < https://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/ev-charging/

Building Regulations which set the framework for EV charge points required.
The emerging **Greater Cambridge Local Plan** < https://greatercambridgeplanning.org/local-plan > focuses on the submission of site-wide electric vehicle strategies for major sites to ensure a coordinated and properly designed-in approach to their provision (and also ensuring sufficient grid capacity is available).
The **Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document** < https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/media/3hlhdxi3/greater-cambridge-sustainable-design-and-construction-supplementary-planning-document-january-2020.pdf > sets out the standards required to meet the visions, objectives and policies of the Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Local Plans as sustainably as possible, with guidance to ensure improved design and quality of new developments while reducing environmental impact.

In terms of wider work to promote sustainable transport modes, the **Combined Authority's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan** <https://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/what-we-deliver-archive/transport/local-transport-plan/> sets the broad framework, although the current Mayor has suspended the 15% traffic reduction target within it, pending update. The CPCA is currently developing the **Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy** which will set out the specific approach to transport strategy in Greater Cambridge. The **Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP)'s Future Investment Strategy 3**<https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/CCC_live/Document.ashx?czJKcaeAi5tUFL1DTL2UE4zNRBcoShgo=RqzBDonZqvhjjieXOMKd7Yk4ykTJJoDkpJWekkG48TSdC7ZZtlg8vw%3d%3d&rUzwRPf%2bZ3zd4E7Ikn8Lyw%3d%3d=pwRE6AGJFLDNlh225F5QMaQWCtPHwdhUfCZ%2fLUQzgA2uL5jNRG4jdQ%3d%3d&mCTIbCubSFfXsDGW9IXnlg%3d%3d=hFflUdN3100%3d&kCx1AnS9%2fpWZQ40DXFvdEw%3d%3d=hFflUdN3100%3d&uJovDxwdjMPoYv%2bAJvYtyA%3d%3d=ctNJFf55vVA%3d&FgPlIEJYlotS%2bYGoBi5olA%3d%3d=NHdURQburHA%3d&d9Qjj0ag1Pd993jsyOJqFvmyB7X0CSQK=ctNJFf55vVA%3d&WGewmoAfeNR9xqBux0r1Q8Za60lavYmz=ctNJFf55vVA%3d&WGewmoAfeNQ16B2MHuCpMRKZMwaG1PaO=ctNJFf55vVA%3d>**,** published in 2023, sets out a programme of sustainable transport investment funded by the Greater Cambridge City Deal. As well as the investment in walking, cycling and public transport routes themselves, the GCP commits to 20% net biodiversity gain on all infrastructure projects. Through its SMART programme <https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/CCC_live/Document.ashx?czJKcaeAi5tUFL1DTL2UE4zNRBcoShgo=XRyvy4Oz%2b8vghk4fnjf1ZsPz2tmAsK3Kse5UdKiAF9A544fRuz6R1w%3d%3d&rUzwRPf%2bZ3zd4E7Ikn8Lyw%3d%3d=pwRE6AGJFLDNlh225F5QMaQWCtPHwdhUfCZ%2fLUQzgA2uL5jNRG4jdQ%3d%3d&mCTIbCubSFfXsDGW9IXnlg%3d%3d=hFflUdN3100%3d&kCx1AnS9%2fpWZQ40DXFvdEw%3d%3d=hFflUdN3100%3d&uJovDxwdjMPoYv%2bAJvYtyA%3d%3d=ctNJFf55vVA%3d&FgPlIEJYlotS%2bYGoBi5olA%3d%3d=NHdURQburHA%3d&d9Qjj0ag1Pd993jsyOJqFvmyB7X0CSQK=ctNJFf55vVA%3d&WGewmoAfeNR9xqBux0r1Q8Za60lavYmz=ctNJFf55vVA%3d&WGewmoAfeNQ16B2MHuCpMRKZMwaG1PaO=ctNJFf55vVA%3d> the GCP is also developing innovative solutions to sustainable city growth.

Objectives

Sustainable Council

1. We aim to **replace the Council's fleet of 120 vans and trucks with EVs or alternative fuel vehicles by 2030.**

For every electric vehicle which replaces an internal combustion engine in the fleet, there will be **immediate benefits to local air quality** as electric vehicles create no carbon emissions at the point of use. The fleet replacement and decarbonisation programme should significantly reduce emissions from the council's fleet.

2. Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service, a partnership between South Cambridgeshire District and Cambridge City Councils is committed to **replacing its refuse collection vehicles with EVs or alternative fuel vehicles by 2030**.

The **Waterbeach Renewable Energy Network solar project**, known as the WREN project, which began construction in 2026, **will support the Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service's transition** to electric refuse collection vehicles.

Sustainable City

Through this strategy, the Council seeks to achieve four long-term outcomes for Cambridge:

1. **Seamless sustainable travel**
   A city where residents move easily between areas using active modes or public transport.

2. **Emissions reduction**
   A significant decrease in greenhouse gas emissions driven by a shift away from internal combustion engines.

3. **Confident EV transition**
   An expanded, accessible network of 600 EV charging points that allows residents to switch to electric vehicles with confidence.

4. **Public transport integration**
   A convenient system that makes public transport the logical, low-carbon choice over private car use.

Delivery

a. Sustainable Council

Our strategy for 2026-31 includes the following transport projects:

Enabling the electric vehicle transition

i. **City Council Fleet and Operations**

Following the opening of our new Cowley Road operational hub, which was designed to include required EV charging infrastructure, the Council is proceeding with the **rolling three-year replacement of vans and trucks with electric zero emissions vehicles, where feasible and financially viable**. Where this is not possible, such as for the 20 tractors and mowers that do not currently have EV options, alternative low-emission fuels such as hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) may be considered.

ii. **Waste vehicles**

Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service, a partnership between South Cambridgeshire District and Cambridge City Councils, is **progressively replacing refuse collection vehicles with electric vehicles or low carbon alternatives when they are due for replacement**. Following a successful trial of using hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) as a direct replacement for mineral diesel fuel to power eight waste vehicles in 2022, 11 of the waste vehicles that operate in Cambridge City have mainly used HVO since 2023/24, which has resulted in at least a 90% reduction in carbon emissions when compared to running the same vehicles on diesel. Of the Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service's 58-vehicle fleet, 30 refuse collection vehicles now run on HVO and four are fully electric. Due to electricity grid constraints, this is the

maximum number of electric refuse collection vehicles that can currently be charged at the Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service's Waterbeach depot.

iii. Waterbeach Renewable Energy Network

The Waterbeach Renewable Energy Network solar project, known as the WREN project, will support the Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service's transition to electric refuse collection vehicles. **The WREN project is essential to overcome the barrier of local electricity grid capacity constraints**, which is currently at capacity for charging the four electric waste vehicles that are currently in the fleet. By providing renewable energy from a ground-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) array and an energy storage solution to charge, the WREN project will be able to power up to 18 waste vehicles on land adjacent to the Greater Cambridge Waste Service Depot at Waterbeach. The project has been funded by the City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, with construction having begun in early 2026, and is expected to reduce the shared service's emissions by 539 tCO2e per year once operational.

iv. Business mileage

To encourage **lower carbon business journeys**, staff have access to pool bikes, two electric bikes and two electric cargo bikes. Staff also have membership of the city-wide car club, as alternatives to using their own petrol or diesel or fleet vehicle for business journeys. The 35 low-emission vehicles in the car club are available to residents too, 24-hours a day with pay-as-you-go access, using the Enterprise Rent-A-Car branches across the city or the mobile app.

Sustainable City

City delivery partnerships

To increase our impact, we are deepening collaborations to deliver systemic change across two strategic themes:

Enabling the electric vehicle transition

We are actively removing barriers to EV adoption through direct intervention and policy.

i. Charging infrastructure

In collaboration with a commercial partner, we are supporting them to bid for funds to **deploy approximately 600 charging points across 14 Council car park sites**. This project, delivered at no cost to the Council, addresses the "driveway gap" by providing overnight charging with free parking between 6pm and 8am. We are also working with partner councils to support the delivery of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy and delivery of Cambridgeshire County Council's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) grant scheme.

ii. Planning for the future

We are embedding resilience into the city's growth. New **Council homes are being built with EV infrastructure** (50% will have active, fast charging places and 50% will have ductwork for future provision) and reduced parking ratios to discourage car dependency. Through the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan < https://greatercambridgeplanning.org/local-plan >and the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan, we are ensuring all new developments prioritise access to low-carbon transport and that new housing and non-residential developments are designed to support walking, cycling and public transport.

Scaling sustainable infrastructure

We work side-by-side with regional partners to deliver major transport projects. Reducing emissions from transport requires a continued shift away from private car use altogether, particularly for shorter journeys.

i. Active travel corridors

As a member of the Greater Cambridge Partnership, we support the delivery of the 12 Greenways and the Chisholm Trail (Phase 2), **creating high-quality connections between communities and employment hubs**.

ii. Network improvements

We are advocating for and supporting improvements to bus and cycling infrastructure on key arteries like Madingley Road, Hills Road and the A1134 **to make sustainable choices the easiest choices** for everyday journeys.

iii. Public transport corridors

A number of **high quality public transport corridors are being developed**, to improve the connectivity of neighbouring areas into Cambridge, such as Cambourne to Cambridge, (west-east corridor) and Cambridge South East Transport (CSET) (a south-east corridor) which aims to provide a dedicated public transport route including a guided busway, bus priority measures and supporting walking/cycling infrastructure.

iv. Smart Cities

Through the Greater Cambridge Partnership's Smart Cities programme, we will **support the improvement of the travel network in Cambridge by using digital technology, data and innovation** to understand travel behaviours, optimise the transport network and enable more sustainable travel choices.

Photo - Transport section_WREN.pdf

Photo - Transport-Charging infrastructure-ConnectedKerb.jpg

Photo - Transport-Charging infrastructure-ConnectedKerb (2).jpg

Photo - Transport section_EV charger.jpg

7.4Waste minimisation - Reducing waste and supporting a circular economy.

Collaborative service delivery
Empowering community action

Background

Emissions from waste contributed 11% of the city's total emissions in 2023, making efficient waste management a critical component of our net zero vision. Through the Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service, a partnership between Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council, we deliver initiatives that support residents and commercial customers to reduce, reuse, and recycle. Our strategy focuses on reducing the volume of waste sent to landfill and driving a shift toward sustainable consumption patterns.

Reducing waste, reducing resource consumption and increasing recycling and re-use are essential parts of reducing emissions. City Council-run events at the Guildhall, Corn Exchange, and open spaces are now single-use plastic free since 2021 to reduce plastic waste pre-dating wider UK legislation, implemented by the government in England from October 2023. The Council is committed to promoting the urgent need to remove single use plastic from all day-to-day use in businesses and events around the city.

It is estimated that 45% of global emissions could be tackled by shifting towards a circular economy, keeping products in circulation through maintenance, reuse and refurbishment rather than disposal.

While households in Greater Cambridge achieved a recycling rate of approximately 50% in 2024/25, significant challenges remain regarding residual waste. Local analysis carried out in 2022 revealed that 33% of the contents of general waste bins is food waste, mirroring national waste composition trends where one third of landfill waste is food. Furthermore, with 25% of food purchased nationally ending up as waste, avoiding waste at the source remains a priority.

Strategic frameworks

Sustainable Council
Single-use plastics were banned in a 2021 Council policy decision < https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/documents/s57250/211021%20Decisions%20for%20the%20Web.pdf >
Organisers for events taking place on City Council land, must not use any single use plastic on site and provide evidence of this when planning or applying for the event, as well as displaying signage at events to inform the public of this.

Sustainable City
Nationally, our approach is framed by the **Environment Act 2021** < https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents > and the **UK Government's Resources and Waste Strategy** < https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c18f11740f0b60bbee0d827/resources-waste-strategy-dec-2018.pdf >, which aim to drive nationwide consistency in recycling and support a circular economy.
Locally, operations are guided by the **Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service Collection Policy** < https://www.scambs.gov.uk/media/dhodp0xz/gcsws-policy-document-v8-april-2025.pdf > and the upcoming **Recycling in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste**

Strategy < https://www.recap.co.uk/asset-library/RECAP-Strategy-10.10.2025.pdf > due for adoption in 2025/26. We are also preparing to meet the '**Simpler Recycling' requirements** < https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/simpler-recycling-in-england-policy-update/simpler-recycling-in-england-policy-update >which have nationwide requirements to improve recycling, ensuring core recyclables (paper and card, glass bottles and jars, plastic tubs, post and trays, and bottles and Tetrapak cartons) are collected by March 2026 and soft plastics are included by March 2027.

Objectives

Sustainable Council

1. To continue to implement existing requirements to **eliminate single-use plastics at events on council-owned land**.

This action supports a shift towards more sustainable, low-waste public events across the city.

2. To continue **to minimise waste and increase recycling in our offices and operations** during 2026-31.

Sustainable City

To achieve our vision for a low-waste city, we will:

1. To address the significant proportion of food waste currently going to landfill, we are implementing a **phased rollout of weekly food waste collections** for domestic properties which started in early 2026 and diverts organic matter from landfill.
2. Support the **transition to a circular economy** by empowering residents to adopt reuse and repair behaviours through targeted communications and support.
3. **Support commercial premises to design out waste** and meet their recycling duties.

Delivery

Sustainable Council

Recycling collections at Council office buildings

Within all Council offices we use recycled paper, and collect paper, confidential waste, cardboard, plastic, glass and tins for recycling and collect food waste for compost

Recycling of building and construction materials including children's play areas

As part of our approach to building new Council homes, we follow construction waste regulations and requirements: prioritising reduction, reuse, and recycling over landfill disposal. We adhere to the duty of care which mandates that we securely store, correctly classify, and legally dispose of waste, primarily through registered carriers. This includes segregating waste (e.g., metals, plastics, wood) at the source to maximise recycling.

We will also use recycled materials for surfacing in Council playgrounds to reduce waste and support a circular economy, replacing play surfaces that require regular maintenance and replacement with bark and sand materials.

Sustainable City delivery partnerships

To amplify our impact, we are deepening collaborations to deliver systemic change across two strategic themes:

Collaborative service delivery

Through the Recycling in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough partnership, we collaborate to **deliver mutually beneficial projects and influence national policy across the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area**. This collaboration provides the mechanism to respond to consultations and ensures a strategic, area-wide approach to resource management.

The Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service (GCSWS), a partnership between Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council, delivers initiatives that **support residents and commercial customers to reduce the amount of resources going to landfill (reduce, reuse, and recycle)**. The GCSWS recycled approximately 50% of waste in 2024/25 and are targeting 55% by 2030.

Empowering community action

We are supporting community action on waste by **funding voluntary organisations through the Sustainable City Grant to run waste reduction initiatives** like repair cafes, which help residents reuse electrical items and clothing. We also continue to partner with community groups to redistribute abandoned bikes and support the national Refill campaign by promoting free drinking water access across the city, including maintaining Council-provided facilities and the integration of new fountain site, to reduce single-use plastics across the city.

Photo - Waste section_SustainableCityGrant_repaircafe

Photo - Waste section_SustainableCityGrant_repaircafe.jpg

Photo - Waste section_Electric refuse vehicle.jpg

Photo - Waste section_Electric refuse vehicle(2).jpg

7.5 Sustainable food - Increasing access to local, low impact, seasonal food and reducing food waste.

Promote and advocate for sustainable food
Integrate food into the built environment
Empower community action

Background

Cambridge Sustainable Food defines sustainable food as food that is produced, processed, and consumed in ways that are environmentally friendly, socially just, and economically viable. It emphasises eating seasonal, locally sourced, and agroecological produce (organic, regenerative), reducing food waste, promoting plant-based options, and ensuring fair treatment of producers and workers

Purchasing, eating and advocating for sustainable food represents a tangible action that the Council, businesses and residents can take to lower greenhouse gas emissions from production, packaging and transport.

Cambridge has established itself as a pioneer in this field; in 2024, the city was awarded the Sustainable Food Places Gold Award, becoming only the third place in the UK to receive this recognition. This follows our achievement of the Silver Award in 2021 and Bronze in 2016, demonstrating a long-term trajectory of leadership. Our overarching purpose is to maintain this momentum, ensuring Cambridge continues to be seen as a place to grow, procure, access and eat sustainable food.

Promoting sustainable food principles brings wider social and health benefits. While Cambridge City Council has limited direct powers in relation to food and the wider food system and provides limited catering for select events, we can use our community leadership role, procurement practices and influence to embed sustainable food principles in our own operations and to act as a positive example for others across the city.

Nationally, the food system is a major contributor to climate change, with agriculture and land use accounting for approximately 12% of the UK's total greenhouse gas emissions. The UK's Climate Change Committee notes high meat intake in the UK and advises that a 20% reduction in meat and dairy consumption by 2030 is critical to meeting net zero targets.

Locally, we recognise that as a district council, we have limited direct control over food production. However, we are committed to lead by example in our operations and champion sustainable practices.

Strategic framework

Sustainable Council
Cambridge City Council's **Sustainable Food Policy Statement** < https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/6869/sustainable-food-policy-statement.pdf > looks out beyond the council's own statutory responsibilities surrounding food hygiene and food safety into this wider role food can play in reducing carbon emissions, improving biodiversity and health. We will focus on the food provided at civic meetings and events and in community centres and cafés.

In 2023, a City Council motion committed to **increasing the amount of plant-based food** < https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=5423 > being offered at civic events and events on open spaces and in community centres (providing that the majority of plant-based choices are consumed at events and that suppliers can fulfil this requirement and at the same cost as non-plant-based foods).

Sustainable City
We align our support for sustainable food with the **UK's Climate Change Committee** <LINK> recommendation for a 25-35% cut in overall meat consumption by 2040/2050 to safeguard natural ecosystems.
Furthermore, our work builds upon the **Sustainable Food Places framework** < https://www.sustainablefoodplaces.org/about/6-key-issues/ >, which focuses on key themes including 'action on climate and biodiversity' and moving 'from food insecurity to food justice'.

Objectives

Sustainable Council

1. We will build on Cambridge City Council's Sustainable Food Policy commitments by strengthening the Council's role in how it procures, provides and promotes sustainable food to **embed sustainable food principles across Council services and activities** during 2026-31.

2. The Council will **promote and normalise plant-based food** by transitioning to provide more plant-based food options at Council meetings and events where food is served, due to the greenhouse gas emissions of meat and dairy production. From 2026 we will provide 100% plant-based food at annual Council civic events, including Remembrance Day, the Mayor's Reception, the Annual Full Council meeting, Reach Fair and Midsummer Fair.

Catering will be predominantly plant-based, seasonal and local, procured from local suppliers, where possible.

b. Sustainable City
To strengthen Cambridge's food resilience, we will:

1. **Promote and advocate for sustainable food** across the city, acting as a visible leader and part of the Cambridge Sustainable Food Partnership.
2. Enable **easier access to locally grown, healthy produce** for residents.
3. Embed **sustainable food principles into planning, land use and funding** the areas where we hold direct influence.

Delivery

Sustainable Council
Our strategy for 2026-31 will:

Promote and advocate for sustainable food

i. **Transitioning away from meat and dairy**
Moving to plant-based food when Council is serving and procuring food, thus helping to normalise the low-carbon choice of plant-based food.

ii. **Embedding sustainable food principles**
Introducing these in council catering contracts and food procurement.

iii. **Extend the availability of plant-based food**
Increase plant-based food options in our open-spaces and at events on Council-owned land.

Empower community action

i. **Using surplus food to reduce food waste**
Council run community centres will continue to play an important role in reducing food waste and working towards more sustainable food practices through activities including hosting holiday lunch activities and breakfast clubs, hosting a social supermarket, supporting circulation of surplus food.

ii. **Innovating community approaches for sustainable food**
This is in keeping with the Council's community wealth building approach - to cultivate a more inclusive, fair and sustainable economy with support for local charities and community groups. We will commission Cambridge Sustainable Food to run the café at the Meadows Community Centre from 2026. The café will serve meals that are freshly cooked, seasonal, predominantly plant-based and where suitable utilise surplus food, helping to reduce food waste and lower carbon emissions. If successful, this innovative model could be rolled out to other community centres across the city, increasing accessibility to affordable, sustainable food and ensuring a stronger, fairer local food system.

Sustainable City
We recognise that Cambridge already possesses a strong foundation driven by an active network of community and voluntary organisations. Our role is to complement and enable this work through two strategic themes:

Integrating food into the built environment

We will use our planning powers and land assets to expand community food growing and access to fresh food.

i. **New developments**
We are encouraging developers to incorporate food-growing opportunities—such as allotments, community orchards, and rooftop gardens—into new residential and non-residential schemes through the Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). We've also included policy in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan < https://greatercambridgeplanning.org/local-plan > which includes a criterion on providing opportunities to access healthy food including through allotments and food growing opportunities

ii. **Underused spaces**
We will work with 'Friends of' groups and residents to transform underused local spaces into community orchards and wildlife gardens.

iii. **Accessible allotments**
To ensure inclusivity, we are dividing existing allotment plots into smaller, manageable sizes and raising awareness of their availability.

iv. **Fresh local produce at Cambridge Market:** we support access to fresh, local and sustainably sourced food through the active management of Cambridge City Market,

where a significant proportion of stalls sell fresh produce, and where residents value the market as an important way to buy local food that is not readily available elsewhere.

Empowering community action

We will strengthen our collaboration with the voluntary sector to scale impact.

i. **Gold Award**

We will continue to support the Cambridge Sustainable Food Network to maintain the city's Gold Award status. These community and voluntary organisations are working to increase awareness and engage on the benefits of sustainable food across the city. We'll work in partnership with them to support, enable and strengthen their work

ii. **Grant funding**

Through the Sustainable City Grant < https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/sustainable-city-grants#:~:text=We%20award%20Sustainable%20City%20Grants,for%20up%20to%20%C2%A310%2C000 > and Community Grants < https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/community-grants >, we fund projects that increase access to low-impact, seasonal food. For example, in 2025/26, we funded a surplus food collection project that connects local growers with those in need, simultaneously addressing food waste and food justice.

7.6 Supply chain and procurement - Reducing emissions and maximising the social and environmental value of procurement and partnerships across Cambridge.

Understand, manage and reduce emissions from our suppliers

Background

Procurement regulations can help embed sustainability into the purchasing lifecycle of an organisation like Cambridge City Council.

These target Scope 3 emissions (that occur indirectly through Council suppliers, contractors and purchases) by encouraging us to select low-carbon providers and prioritise circular materials that reduce waste and resource depletion. As Scope 3 emissions usually represent 70-80 per cent of a local authority's total emissions, this is an important area to consider. They enforce ethical standards in supply chains and regulatory compliance and transparency through supplier audits and reporting. Together, supply chain and procurement can help mitigate Scope 3 emissions (often an organisation's largest environmental footprint) and ensure environmental regulatory compliance.

Strategic framework

Sustainable Council
Cambridge City Council incorporates sustainability and environmental impacts of procurement into its **Contract Procedure Rules** < https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/3066/contract-procedure-rules.pdf >.
For contracts over certain thresholds, criteria that improve the environmental well-being of Cambridge must be included. Cambridge City Council's **Social Value Framework** < https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/twobc2e0/social-value-framework.pdf > seeks to use every opportunity in the purchasing decisions to award contracts, lease buildings or issue grants to maximise social value. As part of our approach to community wealth building, it supports using the Council's funds to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of our city.

Sustainable City
As a contracting authority the City Council must comply with the Procurement Act 2023 which significantly enhances the role of social value in public procurement, requiring authorities to integrate social, economic, and environmental considerations into their procurement processes. – Procurement Act 2023 - Guidance documents - GOV.UK Procurement Act 2023

Objectives

Sustainable Council

1. During 2026-31, the Council will undertake work to **understand, manage and reduce emissions from our suppliers**.

Understanding these sources of emissions will give us **a more comprehensive view of the council's overall emissions and allow us to support suppliers to further reduce their emissions**, and in turn, the Council's emissions.

2. We will **expand the use of our Social Value Framework** for commissioning and procurement during 2026-31.

Sustainable City
By demonstrating good practice in procurement and social value, we will encourage and support other organisations to adopt similar practices.

Delivery

Understand, manage and reduce emissions from our suppliers

Sustainable Council
Social value in procurement can help Cambridge City Council carry out activities in a way that creates long lasting benefits for the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of our communities.

i. **Supplier emissions**
As part of our commitment to reducing our emissions further, we will look to engage with suppliers and partners to understand, manage and support the reduction of emissions from our suppliers.

ii. **Social value framework**
The Match my Project online platform < https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/match-my-project > helps match suppliers with community projects in Cambridge to deliver social value activities that need support. All City Council suppliers should register on the Match my Project platform and use it to deliver at least part of their social value offering.

Sustainable City
By demonstrating good practice in procurement and social value, we will encourage and support other organisations to adopt similar practices.

7.7 Community support and engagement - Ensuring a just transition: providing accessible and inclusive support to communities and residents to empower and enable them in shifting toward more sustainable habits.

Communication and engagement
Place-based action
Capacity building and skills

Background

While the Council is directly responsible for only 0.7% of emissions in Cambridge, our influence extends much further. Working with other local authorities, we estimate that we can influence around one-third of local area emissions through policy, service delivery and leadership. However, the most significant shift must come from local businesses, organisations and the community; with estimates suggesting that 60% of necessary reductions rely on consumer behaviour change, such as adopting low-carbon products and altering diets.

Consequently, our role is to show leadership that empowers residents and businesses to play their part in this collective effort.

To deliver this strategy, requires all staff and councillors to be able to embed the priority wherever possible in the Council's work. To support our organisation to do this, we deliver training to increase carbon literacy and ensure that we all understand how to take positive action as part of the Council's work.

We are committed to ensuring that the transition to a net zero Cambridge is a 'just transition'. This recognises that climate change disproportionately affects low-income and ethnically diverse communities, and we must ensure these groups are not left behind. Our challenge is to ensure that the benefits of climate action, such as improved health, wellbeing and economic opportunity, are shared widely and felt by all.

Strategic framework

Sustainable Council
Cambridge City Council's Corporate Plan for 2022 to 2027 < https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/corporate-plan-2022-27-our-priorities-for-cambridge >

Sustainable City
Our approach is anchored in the Council's **Community Wealth Building Strategy** < https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/community-wealth-building-strategy > which puts forward that wealth should be fairly owned and shared within the local economy. The Climate Change Strategy aligns with its four key themes:

- Using the Council's resources, assets and powers to build community wealth
- Building an inclusive and sustainable local economy
- Empowering residents and communities
- Supporting whole-system approaches.

Objectives

Sustainable Council

1. To deliver training to increase carbon literacy and **ensure that staff and Councillors understand how to take positive action** as part of the Council's work to lead Cambridge's response to the climate and biodiversity emergencies and work towards a net zero council by 2030.

We will continue to provide this training to new starters, both managers, staff and councillors **to ensure consideration for climate change is embedded** in our staff thinking and organisational culture.

Sustainable City

1. We will **support communities to take forward their own climate and nature initiatives**, empowering residents to take meaningful climate action during 2026-31, while delivering long-term benefits in energy savings, local resilience and social equity.

Delivery

Sustainable Council

Capacity building and skills

i. **Training for managers and councillors**
The training emphasises the **actions attendees can take at work and at home to help the council and the city to mitigate and adapt to climate change**.

Sustainable City

To increase our impact, we are deepening collaborations to deliver systemic change across three key areas:

Capacity building and skills

We support voluntary and community organisation activities with funding through the **Sustainable City Grants**. https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/sustainable-city-grants#:~:text=We%20award%20Sustainable%20City%20Grants,for%20up%20to%20%C2%A310%2C000 >

We convene the **Local Climate Change Forum** with community and voluntary organisations to facilitate the sharing of best practice and opportunities to work together in the community.

Community-led renewable energy projects: The Council will support Cambridgeshire County Council to promote community energy generation, supporting communities to take a bottom-up approach to reducing energy demand by exploring opportunities to enable and grow community energy projects, including local renewable generation and shared ownership models.

We will provide free advice on energy efficiency improvements through our **Action on Energy** < https://www.actiononenergycambs.org/ > advice service.

Communication and engagement

We are **updating and sharing resources that help residents understand how to reduce their emissions**. We will cascade information through community organisations to ensure accessibility. We are exploring further workshops to increase carbon literacy across the city and will deploy evidence-based 'nudge' techniques at high-footfall venues like the Corn Exchange to encourage low-carbon choices.

Place-based action

We are localising our strategy by co-developing **Neighbourhood Climate Action Plans for the city neighbourhoods**. These plans highlight local priorities—such as tree planting opportunities or repair cafes—making climate action relevant and accessible to residents within their own neighbourhoods.

Photo - CommunitySupport_Capacitybuilding_SustainableCityGrant

Part Three

8.0 Working together for a sustainable Cambridge

Convening, enabling collaboration and shaping a shared approach to climate action
Promoting best practice and sharing success
Partnership working to support the growth of innovation, climate tech and access to employment in the green economy
Exploring a carbon budget for Greater Cambridge

Background

Together, across the city, we have already delivered significant impacts to increase sustainability and working side by side we can do so much more. We are supporting and encouraging partners to share best practice and learning, collaborate and explore city wide approaches to reduce the city's emissions and adapt to climate change.

Cambridge is a world-renowned centre for research and innovation, with globally significant life science and technology sectors and an emerging cleantech sector, providing innovative low-carbon solutions to the changing climate. This provides the unique opportunity to accelerate climate solutions and decarbonisation locally and globally *and* to create meaningful and high-quality employment for local people in the green economy

Goal

Our 2026-31 strategy aims to deepen relationships with and between key partners in the community and with business, innovation and anchor institutions in the city. Cambridge's strength lies in its people, institutions, businesses and innovation ecosystem. Together, we can scale city-wide actions to reduce emissions, learn from and each other and continue to work towards achieving the vision for a net zero city.

Outcomes

Through this collaborative approach, we aim to achieve the following outcomes:

1. Strengthen collective leadership and shared responsibility for delivering a net zero Cambridge
2. Facilitate a joint dialogue with businesses and institutional stakeholders to share collective progress and identify new opportunities for action.
3. Increased deployment of innovative low-carbon and climate-resilient solutions, supported by collaboration between researchers, businesses and the public sector.
4. Greater visibility and uptake of best practice, with organisations across the city learning from one another and building momentum through shared success.
5. A clearer understanding of Greater Cambridge's emissions and contribution to national climate targets, potentially supported by the development of a locally determined carbon budget.
6. Growth of a thriving climate innovation and green economy in Greater Cambridge, supporting high-quality jobs and scalable solutions with local, national and global impact.

Strategic framework

The Cambridge City Leaders Climate Change Group is a collaborative initiative bringing together key local, business, and institutional leaders to drive the city's goal of becoming net-zero carbon by 2030. The group focuses on sharing best practices, accelerating decarbonisation, and co-developing a city-wide climate plan to tackle emissions.
The group acts as a bridge between council initiatives and practical actions taken by businesses and organisations in Cambridge.

Objectives

We will **strengthen partnerships** that bring together businesses, public sector organisations, institutions and civic leaders to align around shared climate priorities and accelerate collective action.
By **convening and supporting cross-sector collaboration**, we aim to reduce duplication, unlock system-wide solutions and address emissions that cannot be tackled by individual organisations alone, in the spirit of 'together we are greater than the sum of our parts'.
We recognise that significant and impactful action is already taking place across the city to tackle climate change. We will use our role to help **share learning, promote best practice and highlight the positive action** already happening in Cambridge.

Delivery

Convening, enabling collaboration and shaping a shared approach to climate action
The Council will continue to convene the City Leaders Climate Change Group, working in collaboration with the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL) and Cambridge Zero. This brings together Cambridge based businesses, public sector and institutions committed to accelerating the city's transition to a net zero, climate-resilient future.

Promoting best practice and sharing success
We will seek to develop a **regular sustainability newsletter** to share success and good practice from across the city.

We will also use our convening role to bring people and organisations together and explore opportunities to recognise and celebrate organisations that are delivering action to reduce emissions and strengthen the climate resilience of the city, including through the potential development of an **annual sustainability awards** for Cambridge.

Coordinate a research project in partnership with the Cambridge Ahead Young Advisory Committee Sustainability Subgroup to **engage with businesses and organisations based in Cambridge through an interview-based approach to identify key themes, challenges, opportunities and areas of good practice** to addressing climate change

Partnership working to support the growth of innovation, climate tech and the green economy
Through our partnership approach, we will **support the growth of a climate cluster** in Greater Cambridge in partnership with Innovate Cambridge, Cambridge Cleantech, Cambridge Zero, CISL, and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority to drive innovation, recognising the city's unique role in developing and scaling solutions across the wider region that can reduce emissions locally and nationally. Together this helps to drive innovation, support climate-focused businesses, and grow the green economy—creating high-quality, long-term green jobs.

The City Council will **support innovation** by partnering with CISL LivingLab Accelerator project and other university, business and innovation partners, to explore funding opportunities, contribute learning from the Corn Exchange and the Guildhall and provide testbed environments where feasible. This approach will help innovators trial and scale retrofit and sustainability solutions in operational settings and aims to bridge the gap between research, innovation and implementation, accelerating the deployment of solutions that reduce emissions and enhance climate resilience.

We'll also work in partnership with the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority and local business networks to **support businesses to reduce carbon emissions** by facilitating access to tailored advice, funding opportunities and peer support.

Exploring a carbon budget for Greater Cambridge
We will work with other local authorities including South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council to explore the feasibility of developing a Locally Determined Contribution for the Greater Cambridge area, aligning with the new unitary authority area following Local Government Reorganisation. If feasible, a Locally Determined Contribution would set out local area-wide targets and actions in relation to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and building resilience to climate change impacts and develop a carbon budget for the area.

Green skills and employment
We will support people to access and prepare for green job opportunities through green skills development, digital badges and employer engagement and collaboration with a range of partners.

As part of our retrofit programme we are investing in the future workforce by providing retrofit apprenticeships to develop the practical skills needed for long-term careers in the green economy, while also contributing to the delivery of low-carbon homes across the city.

We are also linking young people, especially those who are facing most disadvantage, to career opportunities in the climate sector through employment and skills projects, such as **Included, Region of Learning** and the **Skill Mill**.

Employment and Skills Plans - Work with the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service and South Cambridgeshire District Council on a shared approach to implementing the Employment and Skills Plans which are encouraged as part of the Section 106 process as a route to enabling access to jobs including green/ climate related roles created during the construction and operation phases of new developments.

Photos -City Climate Leaders meeting

[i] *Global Electricity Mid-Year Insights 2025* Ember (October 2025).
[ii] *Global EV Outlook 2025: Trends in electric car markets* International Energy Agency (May 2025)
[iii] *The future is green: the economic opportunities brought by the UK's net zero economy* CBI Economics: Energy and Climate Intelligence Unit (February 2025)
iv The Cam Standard is a low energy performance standard <LINK>
[v] Local-Authorities-and-the-Sixth-Carbon-Budget.pdf, UK Climate Change Committee, December 2020.
[vi] This is the total of all Scope 1, 2 + 3 emissions as described in our most recent 2024 Greenhouse Gas (GHG) report.
[vii] Local-Authorities-and-the-Sixth-Carbon-Budget.pdf, UK Climate Change Committee, December 2020.
[viii] Guide: Climate change reporting guidance for local authorities, Local Government Association, 2024.
[ix] Cambridgeshire County Council Annual Carbon Footprint Report April 2023 – March 2024, Cambridgeshire County Council, 2024.
[x] *Local Authorities and the Sixth Carbon Budget*, UK Climate Change Committee, 2021

Glossary

Term	Meaning
Cam Standard	The Cam Standard provides a robust baseline maintaining low-energy and climate change resilience requirements which all new Council housing developments must either meet or exceed. It is a stepping stone to increasingly sustainable outcomes.
Cambridge Sustainable Housing Design Guide	The 2021 Cambridge Sustainable Housing Design Guide provides a summary of the council's expectations for sustainable design and placemaking for new council homes, setting high sustainability standards. The Guide ensures that all new Council housing will be designed to Cam Standard from 2021, and target Net Zero Carbon from 2030.
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA)	The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority was established in 2017. It is made up of a directly elected Mayor, seven local authorities and the Business Board (Local Enterprise Partnership). The Combined Authority works with local councils, the Business Board, local public services, Government departments and agencies, universities and businesses to grow the local and national economy.
Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP)	A global non-profit that runs the world's only independent environmental disclosure system for companies, capital markets, cities, states and regions to manage their environmental impacts.
Climate Change Committee (CCC)	An independent, statutory body established under the Climate Change Act 2008 whose purpose is to advise the UK and devolved governments on emissions targets and to report to Parliament on progress made in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for and adapting to the impacts of climate change.
Climate Cluster	A local ecosystem of businesses, researchers and government organisations collaborating to develop and implement innovative sustainable solutions which address climate change, driving innovation and fostering green growth (often in sectors such as renewable energy, clean technology and sustainability).
Community Energy	Renewable energy generation designed, developed, owned, used and controlled by the community, often community groups. This means that communities benefit financially from the clean energy projects they deliver, either by generating revenue for community initiatives or by offering cheaper energy to residents.
District Heat Network	A system that generates heat in a central location (such as an energy centre) and supplies it through a network of underground pipes

	carrying hot water, to provide heat and hot water to multiple buildings, avoiding the need for individual boilers or heat pumps.
Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)	An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rates the energy efficiency and environmental impact of a property. It is rated on a scale from A to G (where A is the most efficient and G the least efficient).
Greater Cambridge City Deal	The Greater Cambridge City Deal is a deal between central Government and local authorities in the Greater Cambridge areas which is providing up to £500 million funding over 15 years from 2015/16 for transport, jobs, skills and homes.
Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP)	The delivery body for the Greater Cambridge City Deal, bringing investment to improve local infrastructure, transport, housing and skills. The 5 partners are Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, the University of Cambridge and the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority Business Board.
Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service	The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service is the joint planning service for Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council. The service is currently developing a new Local Plan for the Greater Cambridge area.
Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service	The Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service is a joint service responsible for waste collection from domestic properties for Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council. It also provides a commercial waste collection service for businesses and institutions in the Greater Cambridge area.
Greenhouse gas emissions (GHG)	Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are the release of gases, primarily carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide into the atmosphere (caused by burning fossil fuels) that trap heat, causing the greenhouse effect and global warming, causing the climate to change.
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	A ring-fenced account, managed by Cambridge City Council, recording income and expenditure for council-owned housing, including rent, service charges, maintenance, and capital investment. It operates on a self-financing basis (since 2012), allowing local control over housing investment.
Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO)	A fossil-free biofuel alternative for petrol and diesel, made from waste materials like vegetable oils and animal fats via the process of hydrogenation.
LED	A light-emitting diode (LED) is a semiconductor light source that emits light when current flows through it. LED lighting products produce light up to 90% more efficiently than traditional incandescent light bulbs.
Living Lab	A real-world environment to test innovative sustainable solutions in the built environment.
Local Area Energy Plan	A place-based evidence base that sets out what energy infrastructure is needed, where it should be located, and when it must be delivered to support long term economic growth and local energy security to inform strategies and plans for local energy infrastructure requirements and guide Cambridgeshire's transition toward a more sustainable, low-carbon, and resilient energy system
Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)	The upcoming changes in the structure, responsibilities, and boundaries of local councils in England. It is a government-driven process for 'two-tier' areas (such as Cambridgeshire) where there are currently both district (including city) councils and a county council delivering different services to the same area, to be reorganised so that all services for an area are delivered by a single council, termed a Unitary Authority.
Local Plan	Local Plans are prepared by Local Planning authorities to set out a vision and a framework for the future development of an area. They establish the number of new homes and jobs that should be planned for in the local area, where this development should take place, and the services, facilities and infrastructure that should accompany development.

Net Zero	Reducing carbon emissions to as close to zero as possible and any residual emissions are required to be balanced by schemes to offset an equivalent amount of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere, such as through planting trees or using technology like carbon capture and storage.
Passivhaus	Passivhaus is a voluntary standard of energy efficiency in homes and other buildings. It focusses on a fabric-first approach to minimising energy consumption from space heating and cooling. Passivhaus buildings are well constructed, insulated and ventilated, so that they retain heat from the sun and the activities of occupants, requiring very little additional heating or cooling.
Rain gardens	A shallow area of ground or dip which receives run-off from roofs and other hard surfaces, designed to capture, filter, and absorb rainwater run-off from impermeable surfaces.
Rainwater harvesting systems	A system which collects, filters, and stores rainwater, usually from rooftops via gutters, for later use, reducing reliance on mains water.
Retrofit	The process of making improvements to a home or building to make it more energy efficient. Measures can include improvements to insulation of walls, floors, lofts, windows and doors alongside appropriate ventilation to maintain good indoor air quality. Retrofits may also include solar photovoltaic (PV) installation and upgrades to heating, hot water and lighting, or measures to reduce water use.
Scope 1, 2, 3 emissions	Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions categorise an organisation's greenhouse gases based on ownership and source. Scope 1 covers direct emissions from owned/controlled sources (e.g. fuel combustion such as gas in buildings, company vehicles). Scope 2 covers indirect emissions from purchased energy (e.g. electricity, heat). Scope 3 includes all other indirect emissions as a result of an organisation's operations (e.g. purchased goods and services, business travel, outsourced services).
Solar PV	Solar electricity panels, also known as photovoltaics (PV), capture the sun's energy and convert it into electricity for use.
Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs)	Plug-in hybrid vehicles (PHEV) or extended range electric vehicles (E-Rev) with carbon dioxide emissions less than 75g per km.
Urban Heat Island effect	When towns and cities are warmer than nearby rural areas because buildings, roads and other hard surfaces absorb and trap heat, and there is less vegetation to cool the air.
Zero-emission vehicles	Vehicles that emit no emissions during their operation. These include battery electric vehicles, hydrogen fuel cell vehicles, and electric vehicles.

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	Appendix B: Climate Change Strategy Action Plan					
	Energy and Retrofit					
	Action	**Lead Officer**	**Resources**	**Completion date**	**Outcome/Target**	**Co-benefits**
1	Assessment of building decarbonisation upgrades recommended for all building stock.	General Fund Retrofit Manager	•Existing staff •Consultants •Budget/ funding bids required for subsequent feasibility studies	Jul-26	Identification of projects	Improved investment prioritisation, stronger funding bids, reduced long term energy and maintenance costs and a clear evidence base to support future decarbonisation delivery across corporate estate
2	Reduction of gas consumption in City Council corporate buildings and improving energy efficiency through insulation and building fabric upgrades.	General Fund Retrofit Manager	•Existing staff •Consultant design team and contractors. • Subject to business case •Budget/ funding bids required •External grant funding (when available) •Funding for prioritised measures to be agreed, including use of the council's Climate Change Fund.	Apr-29	Reduction in gas consumption and carbon emissions	Reduced operational carbon and energy costs, improved asset value and resilience and lower long term maintenance liabilities
3	Reduce electricity consumption from heating and lighting in City Council corporate buildings and improving energy efficiency through insulation, building fabric upgrades and	General Fund Retrofit Manager	•Existing staff •Consultant design team and contractors. • Subject to business case •Budget/ funding bids required •External grant funding (when available)	Apr-29	Reduction in electricity consumption and carbon emissions	Improved energy efficiency and building performance, strengthened financial resilience to grid prices, improved asset value

	optimised building management.		•Funding for prioritised measures to be agreed, including use of the council's Climate Change Fund.			
4	Undertake a strategic asset review of all City Council corporate and commercial assets to identify priorities for disposal, investment and improvement, including decarbonisation and meeting government energy efficiency standards.	Director of Economy & Place with Chief Property Surveyor and Strategy Lead	•Existing staff and consultants •Budget secured and procurement commenced	Dec-26	identification of projects only	Potential income, reduced running costs and Council carbon emissions from disposal, higher energy performance and compliance of buildings
	Procurement of new leisure contract 2026-2041 will seek to reduce carbon emissions at the pools and leisure facilities towards net zero through requirements for capital investment into the facilities.	Recreation Development Manager	•Third party capital investment as part of tender. • Subject to business case •Budget/ funding bids required •External grant funding (when available) •S106 developer contributions (where appropriate).	Outcome of tender due - April 2026 Work due to be carried out September 2026 - March 2030	750+ tonnes of Co2 saving per annum	Reduction of carbon from one of the highest emitters within the Council portfolios, reduction of energy utility costs, partnership working, comfortable swimming experience, customer satisfaction, promotional opportunities, promotion of sustainable lifestyle

6	Redeveloping Cambridge's Civic Quarter, including retrofitting the Guildhall (to ENERPHIT and emerging Net Zero Carbon standards) and Corn Exchange, and improving the sustainability of the Market Square, through installing water saving measures, solar PV panels and fabric upgrades.	Assistant Director - Development / Senior Development Manager	•Existing staff •Consultant •Contractors •Funding not yet approved	If approved, works completed on a phased basis from 2028 - 30	•Water neutrality •20% Biodiversity Net Gain by 2030 across the Civic Quarter •Achieve operational net zero for the Guildhall by 2030 •Achieve 65% reduction in Corn Exchange carbon emissions by 2030	
7	Exploring broad-scale heat decarbonisation opportunities in the city centre to support the long-term transition away from fossil-fuels (subject to funding).	Senior Development Manager	•Existing staff •Consultant •Contractors •External funding required	Targeting cabinet approval for final decision no later than March 2028	Decarbonisation projects implemented in city centre	Reduced gas consumption for Council buildings
8	Development of the Cambridge City Centre Heat Network to support the phase out of gas heating in Cambridge City Centre and targeting long term expansion (subject to Cabinet approval and funding).	Senior Development Manager	•Existing staff •Consultant •Financial contributions from project partners •Government funding (when available, subject to successful application)	Target 2030 for first phase of building connections to district heat network	Reduction of c500,000 tonnes of CO2 (93% carbon emissions reduction) over a 40-year project lifetime compared to gas boiler business as usual scenario	
9	Reduce energy use from data storage on the Council's servers and websites.	3C Shared Services ICT, Website and Digital Manager	•Existing staff	Ongoing	Server energy usage	Improved efficiency of 3C ICT service delivery

10	Delivering new Council homes in line with the adopted Sustainable Housing Design Guide, designing homes to Cam Standard from 2021, and to Net Zero from 2030 (subject to securing further funding beyond what is already secured).	Assistant Director - Development / Senior Development Manager	•Existing staff •Consultant •Contractors •Budget/ funding bid required	Subject to Homes England funding 1,300 council homes by 2036	•Cam Standard then Net Zero from 2030 •Meeting of 20% biodiversity net gain across development sites brought forward by the Council •Water usage targeting below 90l/pp/per day •Parking ratios to not exceed 0.5bays per home	
11	Develop a delivery plan and funding plan for accelerating decarbonisation of Council homes, including transition to low carbon heating.	Energy & Retrofit Manager	•Existing staff and budget • Consultant if required	Sep-27		
	Create a citywide retrofit strategy that enables a coordinated and defined approach to deliver accelerated, equitable and high-impact retrofit at scale across all housing tenures (council owned homes, private rented sector and owner-occupied homes).	Energy & Retrofit Manager	•Existing staff •Collaborative work with local stakeholders and regional partners	Dec-26		Healthier homes, reduced fuel poverty, improved air quality and long term social and economic benefits for communities
13	Develop delivery plan and pilot projects (subject to funding) for Council homes including remaining housing archetypes identified in the Fielden and Mawson report (below EPC C and not yet addressed by the current	Energy & Retrofit Manager	•Existing staff • Consultants with expertise in non-traditional and heritage retrofit •Budget/ funding bid required	Oct-28		

	energy efficiency programme), including system-built, solid-walled, traditional and heritage buildings.					
14	Develop an overheating mitigation strategy and design guidance for Council homes, including monitoring of internal temperatures following retrofit to assess impact of measures on overheating.	Energy & Retrofit Manager	•Existing staff and budget •Consultant •Academic research partnerships (subject to exploration)	Apr-29		
15	Investigate and secure funding sources (such as Government regulated supplier obligation funding, local authority and combined authority funding and innovative funding opportunities) to support installation of energy improvements in private homes.	Energy & Retrofit Manager	•Existing staff •Partnership working through the Cambridgeshire Energy Retrofit Partnership •External funding required	Ongoing		
16	Explore and pilot alternative funding routes and innovative financing opportunities for the willing to pay market (e.g. bulk purchase and low interest loans) and look to create a blended finance delivery model.	Energy & Retrofit Manager	•Existing staff	Apr-27		

17	Develop Action on Energy as a local route for energy advice and retrofit support, increase awareness through resident engagement and behavioural support, investigate feasibility of cross-tenure and introduce new projects that respond to the needs of residents.	Energy & Retrofit Manager	•Existing staff	Ongoing		
18	Develop a new procurement framework to support cross tenure retrofit work.	Energy & Retrofit Manager	•Existing staff	May-27		
19	Develop policy for heat pumps and any other energy efficiency installations for leaseholders in council owned blocks.	Sustainable Energy Manager (currently vacant)	•Existing staff •Consultant if required	Mar-27		
20	Retrofit council homes using Wave 3 grant funding by installing external wall insulation, windows, doors and loft insulation where required, and improved ventilation.	Energy & Retrofit Manager	Existing staff	Mar-28	Deliver retrofit measures to 370 Council homes Install 37 air source heat pumps	
21	Investigate, plan and procure a programme of cavity wall insulation (CWI) to council-owned blocks including extract and refill of failed CWI.	Energy & Retrofit Manager	•Existing staff and budget •External funding required (when available)	Mar-30		

22	Deliver a targeted engagement and support programme for private landlords to help them meet new Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (private rented housing stock EPC C or above by 2030), including providing advice, signposting to relevant grant funding and providing support to those with least energy efficient properties, to improve energy efficiency from EPC E to EPC D, or in line with legislation.	Residential Team Manager, Environmental Health & Public Safety	•Existing staff	2028	Sharing information as widely as possible with L/L & Property Manager Communities in the city – at least those on the Councils database / HMO licence register / L/L & Property Manager 'opt in' contact list.	Ensuring good private rented sector housing standards within the city. Ensuring safe & healthy homes for private renters in the city. Ensuring compliance with statutory provisions via an informal approach.
23	Targeted action plan from 2030 (subject to funding) to enforce new Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards Regulations where appropriate (to achieve EPC C on all applicable private rented housing stock).	Residential Team Manager, Environmental Health & Public Safety	•Existing staff •Budget/ funding bid required	2031	Approx 435 property EPC reviews. Up to approx. 244 investigations inc. progression of enforcement where necessary / appropriate.	Ensuring good private rented sector housing standards within the city. Ensuring safe & healthy homes for private renters in the city.
24	Reduce the environmental impact of future events by exploring the feasibility of installing a renewable electricity supply at Parker's Piece to power generators for events, (to reduce reliance on biofuels); exploring the use of solar panels and drones and reducing transport emissions from events, (including	Parks Development Officer & City Events Manager	•Existing staff •Electrical consultants	Mar-27	Installing renewable electricity supply - £150k saving year on year in Biofuel usage/transportation Reduction in emissions of future events.	Reduction and cessation in fossil fuel and bio diesel generators use currently required on site for all large-scale events, financial savings, improved air quality.

	through analysing mileage on quotes and promoting sustainable methods of travel).					
25	Update the Council's Events Policy to further reduce emissions from events including through requirements to reduce the use of diesel for generators (subject to successful budget/funding bid).	Asset Development Officer	Budget/ funding bid required	Apr-26	New electrical supply would save approximately 2.8 tonnes CO_2 per year	Increased security of supply of power, improved air quality and noise nuisance reductions
26	Explore how AI and emerging technologies can help reduce carbon emissions in Cambridge, including supporting smarter retrofit planning, optimising local energy use, and enabling innovative low-carbon solutions.	Energy & Retrofit Manager	•Existing staff • Government funding (when available) • Collaborative partnerships (where possible)	2030 - Initial exploration, piloting and integration completed to support net zero with ongoing and continuous development and improvement	AI-driven tools are integrated into council climate initiatives to improve decision-making, optimise retrofit with more efficient and cost-effective retrofit programmes, and enhance emissions reduction projects	Better understanding of building performance and heat loss patterns, reduced energy bills for homes and council buildings, improved grid resilience
27	Contribute, in collaboration with partners, to the completion of the Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) for Cambridgeshire, setting out the evidence base to meet future energy demand.	Climate Change Officers	Existing staff	End of f/y 26/27	Completion of the plan	Increased reliance in the face of greater energy demand and international energy insecurity. Reduced costs where energy demand can be better managed
28	Use all available means to encourage developers to go beyond current requirements for energy efficiency in new developments.	Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service -	Existing staffing resources	Ongoing	Average EPC in Cambridge, Domestic emissions	Mitigating health impacts from living in cold homes, reduced energy bills for residents, where

		Principal Sustainability Officer				undertaken appropriately improved resilience in the face of increasingly adverse weather.
29	Progress planning policies requiring high energy efficiency standards and environmental sustainability for new homes and non-residential developments as part of the new Greater Cambridge Local Plan, considering the outcomes of the Greater Cambridge Net Zero Evidence Base study and other evidence informing the plan, as well as the National Planning Policy Framework.	Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service - Planning Policy Manager	Existing staffing resources	End of f/y 2027/28	Average EPC in Cambridge, Domestic emissions	Mitigating health impacts from living in cold homes, reduced energy bills for residents, where undertaken appropriately improved resilience in the face of increasingly adverse weather.
30	Provide energy efficiency support and advice through 3C Building Control.	3C Shared Services - Building Control	Existing Resources	Ongoing	Number of promotional materials released/resident reach	Mitigating health impacts from living in cold homes, reduced energy bills for residents, where undertaken appropriately improved resilience in the face of increasingly adverse weather. Reduced demand on grid

31	Explore opportunities to respond to climate risks through policies in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan, such as water efficiency and the management of water resources; designing buildings that are simple to keep cool; and Sustainable Drainage Systems measures to help reduce flood risk, implementing changes through the Water Resources Group.	Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service - Planning Policy Manager	Existing resources	End of f/y 2027/28	Implementation of policies	Support in adapting to climate change, reduction in water consumption, protecting and enhancing biodiversity where nature-based solutions are implemented
	Nature and Water					
	Action	**Lead Officer**	**Resources**	**Completion date**	**Outcome/Target**	**Co-benefits**
32	Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project: Deliver and monitor city case study sites to inform and secure future restoration investment.	Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project Lead	•Existing staff •Council, CPCA and South Staffs Water and Anglian Water funding and grants •External funding (when available) to extend project	Ongoing funded programme of works until at least November 2026. Seeking funding for 3-year extension beyond Nov 2026	Enhance condition of designated sites and priority habitats, where possible, to increase resilience and contribute to the Cambridge Nature Network.	Flood resilience, water quality, wellbeing, community engagement and empowering
33	Revise, consult and adopt management plans for core sites (including all LNRs and Commons) identified in the Biodiversity Strategy, to ensure designated sites and priority habitats are in good / favourable condition and connected, where possible, to increase resilience to a	Biodiversity Manager	•Existing staff and budgets •CPCA grant	Ongoing	Enhance condition of designated sites and priority habitats, where possible, to increase resilience and contribute to the Cambridge Nature Network. That every site achieves at least	Natural Green spaces provide cooling, mitigating heat island effect, trees provide shade and filter pollutants. Wetlands hold back flood waters and improve water quality. Recreational spaces provide health

	changing climate and contribute to the Cambridge Nature Network.				one habitat condition improvement (as defined by DEFRA Condition Assessment) by 2031.	and wellbeing benefits.
34	Manage climate change-related flood risk through delivering watercourse improvements to ensure runoff is directed in more appropriate locations, working with Cambridgeshire County Council and other partners in the Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Partnership.	Sustainable Drainage Engineer	•Existing staff	By 2027	Management of climate change - related flood risks (from extreme weather)	Reduced flooding, improvement in water quality
35	Pilot Project Plan for the restoration of Jesus Green Ditch - trial project aims to restore a 60-metre section of the ditch by using solar-powered pumps to simulate natural flow conditions.	Sustainable Drainage Engineer	•Existing staff	End of 2026/early 2027	Enhancement of the local ecosystem and improvement in water quality.	Reduced flooding, improved flow
36	Strengthen statutory protections for the urban forest while enhancing maintenance practices and monitoring tree health.	Urban Forest Manager/ Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service	•Existing budget •External grant funding (when available), to accelerate delivery	2050	Achieve and sustain 20% canopy cover by 2050. Current carbon storage baseline 330.3 tCO_2	
37	Expand the urban forest canopy equitably by planting the right tree in the right place.	Urban Forest Manager	•Existing staff and budget •External grant funding (when available), to accelerate delivery	2030–2050 (for long-term canopy outcomes)	Contribute to achieving and sustaining 20% canopy cover by 2050.	

					Updated benefit valuations on i-Tree software system in 2030	
38	Promote public engagement and collaborative stewardship to support the health and sustainability of the urban forest.	Urban Forest Manager/ Communities Group & Corporate Group	•Existing staff and budget •External grant funding (when available), to accelerate delivery	2030 (scheme established) – ongoing thereafter	Increased community participation in planting and stewardship (metrics to be confirmed through engagement strategy)	
39	Continuation of water efficiency campaign in both Council owned homes and non-domestic buildings.	Energy & Retrofit Manager	•Existing staff	March 2027	Reduction in domestic water use.	
40	Explore the effectiveness of rain gardens in retaining water and reducing surface water run-off in communal areas and car parks of Council housing stock.	Estate Services Manager	•Existing staff	By March 2027	Reduced surface water run-off in communal spaces. Flooding avoided in car parks	
41	Encouraging climate-resilient gardening by updating the annual garden competition for council tenants. focusing on gardens for rain retention, drought-tolerant gardens, and kitchen gardens.	Resident Engagement Manager	•Existing staff	September 2026	10 x entries per category Positive press coverage 3 x case studies captured	
42	Develop an Environmental Management System (EMS) for Environmental Services activity, following the move to the new operational hub; prepare the system for future	Assistant Director Public Realm & Environment/ Senior Operations	•Existing staff	December 2026	To be confirmed following aspects/impacts assessment but anticipated to support: 0.05–0.1	Improved compliance, reduced waste, reduced resource use, supports Net Zero objectives.

	ISO 14001 accreditation once embedded and operational.	Manager (Public Realm)			$ktCO_2$ annual reduction through operational efficiencies (reduced fuel, water, energy use).	
43	Continuing climate resilient management of Council parks and open spaces by expanding drought-tolerant and pollinator-friendly planting, reducing chemical use, increasing floral wildflower meadows and adopting less intensive management practices such as no-mow regimes and no herbicides.	Parks Development Officer	•Existing staff	Ongoing initiative and formalised through site management plan reviews which can specifically target dates.	Continuous contribution towards the City Councils commitment to the 2019 Biodiversity Emergency declaration	Demonstration of citywide net biodiversity gain.
44	Explore feasibility of implementing rainwater harvesting solutions from buildings on/near Council open spaces, such as Parkside Pool and car park, to reduce flooding risk and re-use water for plant irrigation. Implement solutions if feasible.	Recreation Development Manager	•Existing staff and specialist company •Water Retrofit funds	March - September 2026 First phase investigations and implementations at Abbey and Parkside Pools. March 2028 for the remaining pool facilities.	Savings to be calculated as part of the project and is dependant as a % against annual rainfall recovery so will be based upon East of England estimated annual rainfall, currently at 800mm per annum.	Savings being calculated as part of initial project work Reuse of grey water and harvested water for local tree watering, reduce reliance on local water resources Reduced water bills
45	Explore the feasibility of recycling water from pool filter backwashing and diverting for tree and plant irrigation on open spaces.	Recreation Development Manager	•Existing staff and specialist company •Water Retrofit funds	March 2026 – September 2026 for first phase investigations and implementations	Abbey & Parkside Pools Backwash water saving estimated as 10,000m3 per Annum per site.	Savings being calculated as part of initial project work Re use of grey water and harvested water for local tree watering

				at Abbey and Parkside Pools. Summer 2027 for the remaining pool facilities starting at Kings Hedges Pool.	Saving per site based on electrical heating costs £20,000 per site per annum or £12,000 per site per annum based on Gas heating costs Savings 150,000kwh per annum per site of heating costs	reduce reliance on local water resources Reduced water bills
46	Reduce the environmental impact of cleaning processes at the Corn Exchange and Guildhall by exploring the use of different cleaning products.	Venues General Manager	•Existing staff	Sep-26	Switch to new products by September 2026	
47	Progress planning policies which protect and enhance nature as part of wider work on green infrastructure in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan	Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service - Planning Policy Manager	•Existing staff	End of f/y 2027/28	Planning policies identified	Mental health benefits from exposure to green space and community benefits from joining together with other people.
48	Work with the Community Health Initiative on the development of a contemporary open spaces policy for the Great Cambridge Local Plan that places wellbeing as a central policy objective.	Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service - Planning Policy Manager	•Existing staff	End of f/y 2027/28	Planning policies identified	Mental health benefits from exposure to green space and community benefits from joining together with other people.

49	Continue to develop our processes, resources and guidance to ensure delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain in new developments.	Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service - Natural Environment Team Leader	•Existing staff	Ongoing	Average % BNG implemented as part of new developments	Mental health benefits from exposure to green space, community benefits from joining together with other people and tackling social isolation.
50	Require new housing to meet the water efficiency standards in the current South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (maximum of 110 litres/person/day) and explore where higher standards could be adopted in the new Greater Cambridge Local Plan.	Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service - Planning Policy Manager	•Existing staff	End of f/y 2027/28	Water efficiency standards implemented	Reduced water stress, increased resilience
51	Use opportunities from the development of the Waterbeach Renewable Energy Network project to create high quality areas for nature.	Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service - Waste Operations Manager	•Existing staff	End of f/y 2026/27		
52	Work with the Cambridge Water Scarcity Group and other stakeholders to advocate for solutions to address short term water supply issues and longer-term strategies to identify solutions which protect the environment and enable growth needs to be met.	Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service	•Existing staff •Water Retrofit funds	Ongoing	Positive outcome with solution with strategic solutions identified	Reduced water stress, increased resilience

53	Explore opportunities to respond to climate risks through policies in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan, such as water efficiency and the management of water resources; designing buildings that are simple to keep cool; and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDs) measures to help reduce flood risk, implementing changes through the Water Resources Group	Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service - Planning Policy Manager	•Existing staff	End of f/y 2027/28	Implementation of policies	Support in adapting to climate change, reduction in water consumption, protecting and enhancing biodiversity where nature-based solutions are implemented
	Transport					
	Action	**Lead Officer**	**Resources**	**Completion date**	**Outcome/Target**	**Co-benefits**
	Purchase Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEV) when replacing vans and trucks in the Council's fleet (where there is a suitable ULEV alternative and the infrastructure allows).	Fleet & Garage Operations Manager	•Existing staff •Consultants - funding bid already secured •Budget/ funding bids required for fleet replacement	Annually to 2030	Annual fleet emissions TBC When suitable ULEV replacements are not currently available, examine alternative fuel solutions such as HVO to reduce fleet emissions	Improved air quality, reduced emissions from fleet
55	Continue to expand the utilisation of alternative fuels, including hydrogenated vegetable oil (HVO) in our waste fleet to support emissions reduction in the interim before the implementation of the	Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service - Waste Operations Manager	•Existing staff and budget	End of f/y 2026/27	Annual fleet emissions	Reputational benefits, improved air quality and so health benefits

	Waterbeach Renewable Energy Network.					
56	Deliver the Waterbeach Renewable Energy Network project which will increase electricity provision at the Waterbeach Waste Depot, enabling the electrification of up to 18 further waste collection vehicles as they reach the end of their life.	Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service - Waste Operations Manager	•Existing staff •Approved Council and CPCA funding	End of f/y 2026/28	Annual fleet emissions	Reputational benefits, improved air quality and so health benefits
57	Promote sustainable modes of transport to staff to increase the use of low carbon options for business travel, including the Car Club (particularly the hybrid and electric options) and pool bikes, as alternatives to using own vehicle.	Senior Operations Manager	•Existing staff	Ongoing (see below for Car Club)	Reduction in staff business milage claims and increase in miles travelled reported for car club	Improved air quality, reduced Council business mileage claims.
58	Promote the Car Club to residents to increase use.	Senior Operations Manager	•Existing staff	Continuation of contract beyond August 2026 subject to agreement between Cambridgeshire County Council and Cambridge City Council	Increased use of car club.	Improved air quality.
59	Further delivery of electric vehicle charging infrastructure in Council car parks through a commercial partner.	Assistant Director Homes & Commercial / Deputy Operations Manager	•Existing staff •No City Council funding, although Council will work with commercial partner to bid for LEVI (Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure)	15 years fixed contract. Up to 600 EV chargers by 2038 or earlier, subject to attracting LEVI	Up to 600 EV chargers to be installed by 2038.	Improved air quality.

			funding to support delivery.	funding and commercial viability		
60	Develop and deliver a programme of activities and events that promote walking and active modes of transport, in partnership with local community groups and health partners.	Senior Active Lifestyle Officer	•Existing staff •Grant funding when available	Ongoing		Improved air quality, improving physical health, reducing congestion, mental health benefits from exposure to green space, community benefits from joining together with others and tackling social isolation
61	Work with councils within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to support the delivery of the Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority's Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy and delivery of Cambridgeshire County Council's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) grant scheme.	Inclusive Economy & Climate Manager	•Existing staff	Ongoing	Number of charging points	Improving connectivity, reduced costs for users. Reduced costs of improvements for infrastructure.
62	Applying policies in the current Cambridge Local Plan and the Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document to support housing and non-residential development which supports travel by walking, cycling and public transport.	Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service	•Existing staff	Ongoing	Annual Monitoring report? Monitoring requirements from new developers. Number of charging points installed in new developments	Reduced traffic so community benefits, improved health where people travel more actively, reduced fuel costs of people. Improving rural connectivity, reduced costs of EV owners

63	Developing new policies related to promoting sustainable transport and ensuring accessibility of new development sites to sustainable transport infrastructure is a key aspect in decision-making in preparing the Greater Cambridge Local Plan.					
64	Encouraging the provision of electric vehicle charging points in future new housing and non-residential developments to support the electrification of transport.					
65	Promote sustainable modes of transport through the planning system by: • Applying policies in the current Local Plan and Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document to support housing and non-residential development which supports travel by walking, cycling and public transport. • Develop new policies related to promoting sustainable transport and ensure that the accessibility of new development sites to sustainable transport infrastructure is a key aspect in decision making in	Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service	Existing Resources		Annual Monitoring report Monitoring requirements from new developers. Number of charging points installed in new developments	Reduced traffic so community benefits, improved health where people travel more actively, reduced fuel costs of people. Improving rural connectivity, reduced costs of EV owners

	preparing the Greater Cambridge Local Plan • Encourage the provision of electric vehicle charging points in future new housing and non-residential developments to support the electrification of transport.					
66	Supporting the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) to deliver a range of walking, cycling and bus improvements on key routes into and across Cambridge, including: • 12 Greenways, providing radial cycling and walking routes connecting Cambridge and surrounding settlements and employment sites to promote active travel and modal shift. • The Chisholm Trail Phase 2 cycling route connecting Cambridge and Cambridge North Stations • Bus, cycling and walking improvements to Madingley Road. • Public transport corridor schemes to connect growing communities to employment hubs • Cycling Plus Hills Road and A1134, improving cycling facilities in Cambridge.	Greater Cambridge Partnership - Senior Programme Officer	GCP Officer time, CCC support where required	Ongoing through to 2030 (end date of GCP's City Deal funding).	These schemes represent a significant increase in sustainable transport capacity that will support more people to walk, cycle or take public transport.	

	Sustainable Food					
	Action	**Lead Officer**	**Resources**	**Completion date**	**Outcome/Target**	**Co-benefits**
67	Continue to provide and increase plant-based food options at Council meetings and events including at outdoor events (subject to financial offers) and menu at Corn Exchange.	Venues General Manager & City Events Manager	Existing staff	Ongoing	50% of products to be plant based at Corn Exchange. by March 26 100% plant-based food at civic events from 2026	
68	Supporting the Cambridge Sustainable Food Network to maintain the Sustainable Food Cities Network Gold Award for Cambridge.	Strategic Enabling Communities Lead	Existing staff		Gold Award maintained for the city	
69	Working towards more sustainable food practices at Council-run community centres and reducing food waste through hosting holiday lunch activities and breakfast clubs, hosting a social supermarket and supporting circulation of surplus food.	Strategic Communities Facilities Lead	•Existing staff •Outsourcing where café operations are contracted	By July 2026	25 holiday lunch events provided within council community centres, with a total of 1000 meals provided.	
70	Supporting the creation of community orchards and wildlife gardens in new developments through planning policy and by supporting residents to transform local spaces.	Parks Development Officer	•Externally lead initiative by local Friends and Community groups •Supported by existing staff	Look towards achieving a city side portfolio of orchards and gardens or have a plan in place to expand these by 2028	At least 3 new community orchards and wildlife gardens in Cambridge by 2030 Support reduction on maintenance liability to the Council and release resources	Demonstration of citywide net biodiversity gain

					operationally. Continuous contribution towards the City Councils commitment to the 2019 Biodiversity Emergency motion.	
71	Promote access to local food growing by requiring all new developments to provide allotments through planning policy, increasing awareness through communication and promotion, and making plots more accessible by dividing them into smaller, manageable sizes to ensure local access to sustainable home-grown food to all socio-economic groups.	Parks Development Officer	•Existing staff	Ongoing	Short term target – let all new plots transferred as part of new Darwin Green site -spring 2026.	Reduced reliance on shop bought produce to, at a local level, demonstrate sustainable home growing, citywide awareness of Council allotments
72	Using guidance in the Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to encourage developers to incorporate food growing in new housing and non-residential development (e.g. providing fruit trees, roof top gardens and growing space as part of landscape design).	Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service - Principal Sustainability Officer	Existing Resources	Ongoing until 2027/28	Number of initiatives implemented	Mental health benefits from exposure to green space, community benefits from joining together with others and tackling social isolation, carbon emission reduction, tackling food poverty and encouraging healthy eating

	Waste Minimisation					
	Action	**Lead Officer**	**Resources**	**Completion date**	**Outcome/Target**	**Co-benefits**
73	Review and reinforce messaging and promotions for staff around waste and recycling in Council offices and work locations to ensure that waste is recycled correctly and waste sent to landfill is minimised.	Waste Project Officer (Comms) & Climate Change Officers	Existing staff including Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service	Ongoing		Increase in quantity and quality of recycling collected, reducing amount sent to landfill
74	Using recycled materials for surfacing in Council playgrounds to reduce waste and support a circular economy.	Parks Development Officer	Existing staff	Ongoing initiative supported by Play Strategy 2024	To remove all play surfaces in portfolio that require regular upkeep and maintenance replacement, e.g. bark and sand materials.	Medium-long term budgetary benefit realised.
75	Support the national Refill campaign by promoting free drinking water access across the city, including maintenance of Council-provided facilities and integration of new fountain sites into public realm projects.	Parks Development Officer	•Existing staff •S106 contributions where appropriate for installation of new fountains (public realm and open space)	Ongoing		nationally evidenced to reduce bottled water use by: approx. 0.005–0.01 $ktCO_2$ per year based on increased refill usage, resilience to hotter summers, public health, reduced plastic waste Indirect carbon benefit through single-use plastic reduction
76	Support a circular economy: Redistribute abandoned bikes with community partners, reducing landfill	Strategic Enabling Communities Lead	Existing staff	Ongoing	Redistribution of 400 bikes per year 3 x case studies captured	

	and enabling more sustainable travel.					
77	Work with Recycling in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (RECAP) partners on the new Joint Municipal Waste Strategy setting out how authorities across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will collect and dispose of waste over the next 10 years.	Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service - Waste Policy Manager	Existing staffing resource	Ongoing	Increase in recycling and reduction in black bin waste	Waste reduction and avoiding ghg emissions
78	Seek opportunities to increase reuse of or recycle items not collected as part of kerbside collections e.g. small electricals.	Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service - Waste Policy, Change & Innovations Manager	•Existing staffing and budget •Budget/funding bid required if taken forward further	Financial year 2027/28	Volume recycled	Waste reduction and avoiding ghg emissions
79	Deliver separate weekly food waste collections from April 2026.	Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service - Waste Policy, Change & Innovations Manager	Existing resources	End of financial year 2026/27	Collections implemented across Cambridge	Methane emissions avoidance
80	Review food waste collection through commercial waste service to identify opportunities for support for food waste reduction.	Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service - Commercial Waste Manager	Existing staffing resource	2026/27	Food waste collection volumes from commercial waste	Avoidance of methane emissions, tackling food poverty through redistribution of surplus food.
81	Carry out communications campaigns focussed on increasing recycling rates and reducing non-recyclable waste from Circular	Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service - Waste Policy, Change	Existing staffing and budget	Ongoing	Number of communications activities undertaken and number of people engaged	Reduced costs, waste reduction, avoiding ghg emissions, reduce amount going to landfill

	Resource Plan. Provide information, communications and support to businesses to design-out waste, adopt circular economy practices and increase recycling (ongoing).	& Innovations Manager/ South Cambridgeshire District Council - Climate & Sustainability Manager / Commercial Waste Manager				
	Supply Chain and Procurement					
	Action	**Lead Officer**	**Resources**	**Completion date**	**Outcome/Target**	**Co-benefits**
82	Work with Council suppliers where possible to encourage and support them to measure and reduce their emissions.	Chief Procurement Officer, Procurement Delivery Manager, Senior Community Investment Officer (social value), Climate Change Officers	Existing staff	Ongoing		
83	Explore how councils might compensate for unavoidable residual emissions to meet net zero targets to inform future decisions that may be needed by the council or a newly formed unitary council to achieve net zero by 2030 and seek funding through	Climate Change Officers	•Existing staff •Budget/ funding bid required if taken forward	By 2029		

	budget bid/ funding bid if taken forward.					
84	Working with our supply chain through the Council's social value framework, to provide advice and support, connecting suppliers with local environmental projects to enhance the social and environmental impact of Council procurement.	Senior Community Investment Officer & Procurement team		Ongoing		Suppliers actively engaged in reducing emissions and social value, and contributing to local community projects in Cambridge
85	Review existing contracts and introduce further sustainability conditions into all new commercial event agreements on council-owned land, including requirements such as the use of biodiesel and a ban on single-use plastics.	Strategic Lead for Culture & Events	Existing staff May be hidden costs in contract pricing	Jun-27	Approval of revised Events Policy	
86	Providing retrofit apprenticeship opportunities to support the development of green skills and long-term green jobs.	Energy & Retrofit Manager	•Existing staff •External funding required such as government or retrofit focussed funding (when available) •Embed social value and green skills clauses in all retrofit contracts • Apprenticeship levy funding	2030	•Completion of initial retrofit green skills expansion •At least 30-50 retrofit apprentices delivered through the supply chain by 2030 •100% of major retrofit contracts to include mandatory green skills and apprenticeship requirements	Strengthened local supply chain addressing skills shortages, enhanced resilience and economic growth through a skilled workforce, long-term green job creation and improved career pathways

87	Supporting businesses to reduce carbon emissions by facilitating access to tailored advice, funding opportunities, and peer support, working in partnership with the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority and local business networks.	Inclusive Economy & Climate Manager	•Existing staff •Partnership working		Local businesses are better equipped to tackle climate through improved access to practical decarbonisation support	Businesses are more resilient to the impacts of climate change such as extreme weather events
	Community Support and Engagement					
	Action	**Lead Officer**	**Resources**	**Completion date**	**Outcome/ Target**	**Co-benefits**
88	Develop and implement a communications plan to regularly communicate and engage with different audiences, build a city-wide approach to climate action, encourage collaboration and co-ordinate council engagement in communities and with business e.g. through social media posts, a climate change themed newsletter, residents training and working with Neighbourhood Hubs.	Inclusive Economy and Climate Manager	•Existing staff	Sept 26 for plan	Plan produced and initiatives being delivered. E-Newsletter published and being read. Reach and engagement increased. Residents and businesses trained/ supported.	Awareness raising, increased levels of engagement and action. Collaborative initiatives/partnerships which accelerate Cambridge's path to net zero and climate resilience. Further environmental, social and economic co-benefits unlocked.
89	Design and deliver a creative behavioural change campaign for high-footfall venues, including the Corn Exchange, using evidence-based ‘nudge’ techniques to engage eventgoers and	Strategic Lead for Culture & Events	•Existing staff	July 2026	Behavioural change campaign designed and delivered.	increased levels of engagement and action, changes in behaviours/choices bring financial and wellbeing benefits

	encourage adoption of low-carbon behaviours and choices.					
90	Inspire local climate action by delivering at least one high-impact, environmentally themed public event each year, designed to raise awareness, motivate behaviour change, and empower communities with practical knowledge to address climate change.	Strategic Lead for Culture & Events	•Existing staff	Ongoing - continuous project	Environmentally themes public event delivered annually	Stronger community engagement, increased carbon literacy, changes in behaviours/choices bring financial and wellbeing benefits
91	Continue to develop and deliver training on net zero, sustainability and climate change to staff and councillors.	Climate Change Officers	•Existing staff	Ongoing	Training sessions delivered to staff and councillors.	Financial savings for Council where staff make changes as a result which leads to a reduction in consumption e.g. energy consumption, fuel consumption
92	Developing Ward Climate Action Plans for each neighbourhood in Cambridge, reflecting local priorities and opportunities, to encourage and empower climate action, and reduce carbon emissions within each neighbourhood.	Strategic Enabling Communities Lead/ Climate Change Officers	•Existing staff	2027	4 Neighbourhood Climate Action Plans created and promoted	Increased resilience to impacts of climate change (such as extreme weather), community cohesion, more equitable climate action (ensure all neighbourhoods benefit, including those most vulnerable to climate impacts.) stronger partnerships between Council, communities, residents and local groups

93	Fund community activities by voluntary and community groups, through the annual Council's Sustainable City Grant, to deliver the objectives of the Climate Change Strategy, including reducing energy use, reducing consumption and waste, supporting sustainable food and sustainable travel and communities to be more resilient to climate change.	Community Investment Team/ Climate Change Officers	•Existing staff •Council's annual grant budget	Annually	Reduction in emissions in the City as a result of reduced energy consumption, waste or reduced transport powered by fossil fuels	Reduction in amount sent to landfill, financial savings from reduced energy use, better prepared for impacts of climate change (such as extreme weather), local economic benefits
94	Review the Council's Sustainable City Grant to update the fund's criteria and priorities to ensure they are in line with the new Climate Change Strategy's objectives and the Community Wealth Building Strategy.	Community Investment Team/ Climate Change Officers	•Existing staff	Aug-26	Review completed and changes made to eligibility criteria and amendments included in guidance for 2027/28 funding round	
95	Explore opportunities for community-led renewable energy generation and shared ownership models, and work with Cambridgeshire County Councils Community Energy team to provide accessible and inclusive support and advice to help unlock funding for groups who wish to empower low-carbon behaviour change and	Climate Change Officers/ Cambridgeshire County Council Community Energy Team/	•Existing staff	Ongoing to 2030	Collaboration leading to support provided to groups and projects identified for council sites.	Less reliant on national electricity grid, more resilient energy system, less vulnerable to national/global price hikes, stronger community cohesion, improved air quality (as fewer fossil fuels being emitted), community wealth building (keeps financial benefits in

	deliver community energy generation projects.					local area), possible financial savings from lower energy costs
96	Supporting young people to access and prepare for green job opportunities through green skills development, digital badges and employer engagement and collaboration with a range of partners.	Region of Learning Delivery Manager and Inclusive Economy and Climate Manager	•Existing staff (subject to continued programme funding)	Ongoing to 2031 with annual review (subject to continued programme funding).	Support at least 200 young people in Greater Cambridge to engage with green skills learning and career pathways through the Region of Learning by 2031.	•Improved youth employability and clearer progression routes into emerging green jobs •Increased engagement in learning among young people, particularly those furthest from opportunities •Stronger local employer relationships and improved alignment between training and labour-market needs •Enhanced digital literacy and recognition of transferable skills through digital badges •Contribution to a more inclusive, future-ready workforce that supports local economic resilience •Strengthened community confidence and wellbeing through supported pathways into meaningful careers

97	Link young people, especially those who are facing most disadvantage, to career opportunities in the climate sector through the Included project and Region of Learning delivery.	Head of Economy, Energy and Climate & Region of Learning Delivery Manager	•Existing staff •Partnership working	Ongoing	Opportunities are promoted on the Included website and via the partnership programme	Young people can explore opportunities created locally in line with their ambitions. Quality of life outcomes improved via access to good employment and education/training.
98	Work with the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service and South Cambridgeshire District Council on a shared approach to implementing the Employment and Skills Plans which are encouraged as part of the Sec 106 process as a route to enabling access to jobs including green/ climate related roles created during the construction and operation phases of new developments.	Head of Economy, Energy and Climate and Inclusive Economy Manager	•Existing staff •Partnership working	Ongoing	Sec 106 agreements Employment and Skills Plans deliver opportunities for green jobs and upskilling	Quality of life outcomes for people as a result of accessing good quality employment and education/training.
99	Maintain an Environmental Management System for the Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service.	South Cambridgeshire District Council - Climate & Sustainability Manager	•Existing staff	Ongoing	Environmental Policy completed	Consideration of climate and nature within decision making
	Collaboration					
	Action	**Lead Officer**	**Resources**	**Completion date**	**Outcome/Target**	**Co-benefits**
100	Continue to convene the City Leaders Climate Change Group, bringing together	Climate Change Officer	•Existing staff •Partnership working	Ongoing		Collaborative initiatives/ partnerships which

	Cambridge based businesses, public sector and institutions to identify opportunities for collaboration and systems working and support and progress collaborative cross-sector initiatives that occur as a result.					accelerate Cambridge's path to net zero and climate resilience. Further environmental, social and economic co-benefits unlocked.
101	Co-ordinate a research project in partnership with the Cambridge Ahead Young Advisory Committee Sustainability Subgroup to engage with organisations based in Cambridge through an interview-based approach to identify key themes, challenges, opportunities and areas of good practice to addressing climate change.	Inclusive Economy & Climate Manager / Climate Change Officer	•Existing staff •Partnership working	Dec-26	Report produced	
102	Support the growth of a climate cluster in Greater Cambridge in partnership with Innovate Cambridge, Cambridge Cleantech, Cambridge Zero, CISL and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority to drive innovation that addresses climate change and creates high value jobs.	Head of Economy, Energy and Climate	•Existing staff •Partnership working • Potential for Local Innovation Partnership Funding (bid submitted)	Ongoing		

103	Explore grant funding opportunities for projects and provide test bed opportunities (where feasible) to support innovators to develop and scale sustainable solutions, in partnership with the CISL Living Lab Accelerator project and other university, business and innovation partners.	Inclusive Economy & Climate Manager / Head of Economy, Energy and Climate	•Existing staff •Partnership working	Ongoing		
104	Establish the feasibility of a Cambridge Climate Awards for 2027, scope and seek media partner and sponsorship support and explore funding if feasible	Inclusive Economy & Climate Manager/ Climate Change Officer	•Existing staff •Partnership working • Media partner and/or sponsor support to be secured •Budget/funding bid required if feasible to take forward	Feasibility by Nov 26	Resources in place to enable Awards and launch early 27 for awards later in 27	Awareness raising, increased levels of engagement and action. Collaborative initiatives/ partnerships which accelerate Cambridge's path to net zero and climate resilience. Further environmental, social and economic co-benefits unlocked.
105	Work collaboratively with local authority partners, including Cambridgeshire County Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council, to explore the feasibility and funding options for developing a Locally Determined Contribution (LDC) for the Greater Cambridge area, aligned with the new unitary	Climate Change Officers	•Existing staff •Budget/funding bid likely required if taken forward	March 2027		

	authority area following Local Government Reorganisation.					

Cambridge City Council Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

This tool helps the Council ensure that we fulfil legal obligations of the Public Sector Equality Duty to have due regard to the need to –

(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;

(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Guidance on how to complete this tool can be found on the Cambridge City Council intranet. For specific questions on the tool email Helen Crowther Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer at equalities@cambridge.gov.uk or phone 01223 457046.

Once you have drafted the EqIA please send this to equalities@cambridge.gov.uk for checking.

1. Title of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service
Climate Change Strategy 2026-2031

2. Webpage link to full details of the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service (if available)
The Strategy will be available at Appendix A of the 24 March Cabinet meeting's paper, due to be published on 16 March 2026: (Cabinet - Tuesday, 24th March, 2026 5.00 pm)

3. What is the objective or purpose of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?
The Council's Climate Change Strategy has been developed following the engagement exercise and survey which ran from 1st October – November 2025. It sets out the Council's approach to addressing climate change in Cambridge by helping the Council reduce its own carbon emissions to achieve the target of net zero carbon by 2030; supporting residents, businesses and organisations in Cambridge to reduce their emissions to reduce the city's overall carbon emissions and supporting the city to adapt so that it is more resilient to the effects of climate change. **Our focus in 2026-31 is to:** 1. Continue to reduce the City Council's own emissions and increase organisational climate resilience. 2. Provide support to reduce Cambridge city's emissions - mitigating and adapting to climate change - to increase its climate resilience. 3. Protect and enhance nature, biodiversity and the urban forest.

4. Achieve better outcomes for people's daily lives through lower energy bills, cleaner air, more comfortable homes, greener neighbourhoods, with new job opportunities and a stronger local economy.
5. Ensure that our climate change strategy is fair and inclusive, delivering a just transition, so that those most affected by climate change are not left behind and the benefits of addressing climate change - improved health, wellbeing and livelihoods, for current and future generations - are shared widely and felt by all.

The strategy sets out detailed objectives that underpin the Council's approach:

- Continue to reduce the Council's direct emissions to work towards net zero and increase our resilience to the impacts of climate change.
- Continue to support residents and businesses to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to climate change through the provision of services and as a housing provider
- Use our policy and financial powers to create systemic change.
- Convene and collaborate with local partners, businesses, organisations and residents to act.
- Influence Government, industry and regulators to make the necessary changes and investments needed to enable the city to achieve net zero.

The eight thematic areas of the strategy are:

1. **Energy and retrofit:** Improving energy efficiency and climate resilience of homes and buildings across Cambridge
2. **Nature and water:** Enhancing nature and safeguarding water to support Cambridge to adapt to the impacts of climate change.
3. **Transport:** Reducing the need for fossil fuel-powered travel and encouraging the use of low and zero carbon modes of transport to reduce emissions.
4. **Waste minimisation:** Reducing waste and supporting a circular economy.
5. **Sustainable food:** Increasing access to local, low impact, seasonal food and reducing food waste.
6. **Supply chain and procurement:** Reducing emissions and maximising social and environmental value of procurement and partnerships across Cambridge.
7. **Community support and engagement:** Ensuring a just transition: providing accessible and inclusive support to communities and residents to empower and enable them in shifting toward more sustainable habits.
8. **Collaboration:** Working together for a sustainable Cambridge - deepening relationships with and between key partners in the community and with business, innovation and anchor institutions in the city as part of a city-wide approach to climate change and inclusive innovation.

This EqIA has been produced to assess the impacts of the thematic areas and actions in the Climate Change Strategy.

4. Responsible Team and Group
Economy, Energy and Climate, Economy & Place Group.

5. **Who will be affected by this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?** **(Please tick all that apply)**	☒ Residents ☒ Visitors ☒ Staff
Please state any specific client group or groups (e.g. City Council tenants, tourists, people who work in the city but do not live here): Everyone	

6. **What type of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service is this?**	☒ New ☐ Major change ☐ Minor change

7. **Are other departments or partners involved in delivering this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service? (Please tick)**	☒ Yes ☐ No
If 'Yes' please provide details below: The Strategy has been developed with input from a range of service areas that will deliver the actions included in the strategy's action plan. This includes teams from City Services, Economy & Place (including Retrofit team and Development team) Communities, Corporate Hub, Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service and Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service. The Strategy will also set out the Council's intention to continue to work collaboratively with a range of partners to reduce carbon emissions in Cambridge and adapt to climate change, including South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, Greater Cambridge Partnership, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, the University of Cambridge and some University Colleges, Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge Institute of Sustainability Leadership and other businesses and institutions in the city	

8. **What research methods/ evidence have you used in order to identify equality impacts of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?**
As part of the development of the Climate Change Strategy, we have referred to a range of research and evidence, including: • Climate Change Committee, 2020, Net Zero: The UK's contribution to stopping global warming p31 + p218 • Why older adults are especially vulnerable to climate change | AAMC

- Why older people are some of those worst affected by climate change
- The impacts of fuel poverty | Fuel Poverty Action
- Low carbon thermal technologies in an ageing society – What are the issues? - ScienceDirect
- Bridging the Digital Divide: Ensuring No One is Left Behind
- The Impacts of Climate Change on Marginalised Groups
- Equality analysis Heatwave plan for England 2013
- Cut off from nature, UK's ethnic minorities hit harder by heat | Context by TRF
- Leaving No One Behind in the Transition Towards a Low-Carbon Economy | UNFCCC
- UK Poverty 2025: The essential guide to understanding poverty in the UK | Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- Experts warn of serious health impacts from climate change for pregnant women, children, and older people
- Equality analysis Heatwave plan for England 2013, p8

9. Potential impacts

For each category below, please explain if the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service could have a positive/ negative impact or no impact. Where an impact has been identified, please explain what it is. Consider impacts on service users, visitors and staff members separately.

(a) Age - Please also consider any safeguarding issues for children and adults at risk

Vulnerabilities to climate change
The Climate Change Committee highlighted that global temperature increases of between 1.5°C and 2°C would affect poor and vulnerable people most of all[1] and so it is important that the strategy and actions will significantly reduce emissions in the city and support all residents to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Older people are more likely to be vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, such as heat waves, water shortages and extreme weather events, due to the fact that as people age, they may be more likely to have pre-existing medical conditions and ill-health and experience social isolation and dependency on others[2]. Overheating is one of the main impacts of climate change in Cambridge. Urban areas such as Cambridge are particularly vulnerable to changes in heat, in particular due to the urban heat island effect. Heatwaves can be deadly for older people due to a reduced ability to regulate body temperature in old age which is made worse by chronic health conditions such as cardiovascular and respiratory disease, diabetes and susceptibility to dehydration[3].

Positive impacts of taking action

[1] Climate Change Committee, 2020, Net Zero: The UK's contribution to stopping global warming p31
[2] Why older adults are especially vulnerable to climate change | AAMC
[3] Why older people are some of those worst affected by climate change

Vulnerable people such as older adults and young children are likely to benefit disproportionately from measures to support residents to be more resilient to a changing climate (increased risk and severity of extreme weather) and the co-benefits associated with a transition to net zero carbon emissions, such as health benefits from reduced air pollution as a result of encouraging sustainable low/zero carbon travel as these groups are more vulnerable to poor air quality[4].

Vulnerable populations such as older adults and young children will also directly benefit the most from actions to reduce emissions, such as measures to improve energy efficiency in homes (e.g. the installation of better insulation, often through the use of government grants) can reduce fuel poverty, which disproportionately benefits older people and younger families who may face higher costs of living and lower incomes and are at greater risk from health problems that can get worse or result from cold and damp living conditions[5] and so would benefit from better health and wellbeing from being able to heat their homes adequately.

Negative impacts
However, there may be some negative impacts to mitigate. Installing low-carbon measures into homes may be more difficult for older residents to adapt to as older adults often find the installation of low carbon measures to be time-consuming, confusing, and stressful due to their less confidence with newer digital heating controls and systems. This is influenced by various factors, including biological, cognitive, institutional, and social dimensions related to aging. Additionally, older adults may struggle with the transition to new technologies, which can affect their thermal comfort and overall satisfaction with the changes[6].

Given that older people may be disproportionately negatively impacted by climate change it is important to ensure they are able to access the support available, as described in the strategy and so the Council will ensure that once the Strategy is in place communication methods are accessible to them. The council is also aware that older people are more likely to be digitally excluded[7]. The communication of the actions and projects in the Council's Climate Change Strategy will therefore ensure communication and engagement methods used are accessible to all age groups, providing non-digital forms of communication as well as digital with support from internal teams and groups who work with older adults and young children.

(b) Disability

Vulnerabilities to climate change
The Climate Change Committee highlighted that global temperature increases of between 1.5°C and 2°C would affect vulnerable people most of all[8] and so it will be important that the actions that will be developed, following the engagement exercise, will significantly reduce emissions in the city and support residents to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

People with disabilities, in particular, such as respiratory conditions, mobility impairments, mental health issues and weakened immune systems are more likely to be vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, such as heat waves[9], water shortages and extreme weather

[4] Climate Change Committee, 2020, Net Zero: The UK's contribution to stopping global warming p218
[5] The impacts of fuel poverty | Fuel Poverty Action
[6] Low carbon thermal technologies in an ageing society – What are the issues? - ScienceDirect
[7] Bridging the Digital Divide: Ensuring No One is Left Behind
[8] Climate Change Committee, 2020, Net Zero: The UK's contribution to stopping global warming p31
[9] Equality analysis Heatwave plan for England 2013 p8

events, due to the fact that they are more vulnerable to conditions such as overheating and flooding.

Positive impacts of taking action
Vulnerable people such as those with disabilities are therefore likely to benefit disproportionately from measures to support residents to be more resilient to a changing climate (increased risk and severity of extreme weather) and the co-benefits associated with a transition to net zero carbon emissions, such as health benefits from reduced air pollution as a result of encouraging sustainable low/zero carbon travel as these groups are more vulnerable to poor air quality[10].

Vulnerable people such as those with disabilities will also directly benefit the most from actions to reduce emissions. Measures to improve energy efficiency in homes (e.g. the installation of better insulation, often through the use of government grants which those in receipt of certain means-tested benefits are eligible for) can reduce fuel poverty, which disproportionately benefits disabled people who may face higher costs of living and lower incomes. Disabled people are at greater risk from health problems that can get worse or result from cold and damp living conditions[11] and so would benefit from better health and wellbeing from being able to heat their homes adequately.

The process of retrofitting brings a number of co-benefits: reduced energy consumption resulting in lower energy bills and a more comfortable home which is cooler in summer and warmer in winter, bringing benefits to health and wellbeing. Retrofitting can help to tackle fuel poverty when targeted at low-income households and vulnerable households, to support a just transition. Retrofitting also can improve air quality of the city and increase resilience to extreme weather.

Negative impacts
Given that disabled people may be disproportionately negatively impacted by climate change it is important to ensure they are included in methods of communication of the actions they can take and can access projects that they can benefit from such as through the use of non-digital means of communication with support from internal teams and groups who work with disabled people.

(c) Gender reassignment

No impacts have been identified specific to this equality group.

(d) Marriage and civil partnership

No impacts have been identified specific to this equality group.

[10] Climate Change Committee, 2020, Net Zero: The UK's contribution to stopping global warming p218
[11] The impacts of fuel poverty | Fuel Poverty Action

(e) Pregnancy and maternity

Vulnerabilities to climate change
The Climate Change Committee highlighted that global temperature increases of between 1.5°C and 2°C would affect vulnerable people most of all[12] and so it will be important that the actions that will be developed, following the engagement exercise, will significantly reduce emissions in the city and support residents to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Pregnant people are more likely to be vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, such as heat waves, water shortages and extreme weather events, due to the fact that they are more vulnerable to higher average temperatures, ambient air pollution and any increases in stress, anxiety or other mental health issues as a result of extreme weather events or other climate change impacts could have a greater impact on them through increased blood pressure and unborn children (adverse birth outcomes)[13].

Positive impacts of taking action
Vulnerable people such as pregnant women and babies are therefore likely to benefit disproportionately from measures to support residents to be more resilient to a changing climate (increased risk and severity of extreme weather) and the co-benefits associated with a transition to net zero carbon emissions, such as health benefits from reduced air pollution as a result of encouraging sustainable low/zero carbon travel as these groups are more vulnerable to poor air quality[14].

Vulnerable people such as pregnant women and babies are likely to also directly benefit the most from actions to reduce emissions, such as measures to improve energy efficiency in homes (e.g. the installation of better insulation, often through the use of government grants) which can keep homes cooler and reduce the costs of heating and negative health benefits from living in a cold home, which can disproportionately benefits pregnant women who are at greater risk from health problems that can get worse or result from cold and damp living conditions[15] and so would benefit from better health and wellbeing from being able to heat their homes adequately. For low-income households, the economic costs of low-carbon transitions (such as changes to energy systems or cars) could disproportionately affect households already facing financial inequalities. The strategy includes actions related to grant funding available to residents on low incomes for energy efficiency upgrades and low-carbon heating through Action on Energy and the Cambridgeshire Energy and Retrofit Partnership (CERP).

Negative impacts
However, there may be some negative impacts to mitigate, as actions to encourage people to use sustainable methods of transport may not be so easy for pregnant women to adopt as they may be less mobile find journeys are uncomfortable or difficult, especially without rest stops and need to use buggies and prams. However, increased tree planting and canopy cover would provide shade on hotter days, keeping those using sustainable transport methods, such as walking, cycling and buses, cooler on hot days.

[12] Climate Change Committee, 2020, Net Zero: The UK's contribution to stopping global warming p31
[13] Experts warn of serious health impacts from climate change for pregnant women, children, and older people
[14] Climate Change Committee, 2020, Net Zero: The UK's contribution to stopping global warming p218
[15] The impacts of fuel poverty | Fuel Poverty Action

Given that pregnant women may be disproportionately negatively impacted by climate change it is important to ensure they are included in methods of communication of the actions they can take and can access projects that they can benefit from. We will develop a communication plan following the adoption of the strategy.

(f) Race – Note that the protected characteristic 'race' refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

Vulnerabilities to climate change

The Climate Change Committee highlighted that global temperature increases of between 1.5°C and 2°C would affect vulnerable people most of all[16] and so it will be important that the actions that will be developed, following the engagement exercise, will significantly reduce emissions in the city and support residents to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Cambridge is one of the most diverse places in the country outside of London, with an increasing proportion of its population made up of ethnic groups that are non-white. In the 2021 Census, 25.5% identified themselves as belonging to non-white groups, compared to 17.5% in 2011 and 10.0% in 2001. This is a considerably more diverse profile than the national average: in England as a whole in 2021, the white population was 81.0%, with ethnic minorities making up 19.0% of the population.

Ethnic minority groups are more likely to be vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, such as heat waves, water shortages and extreme weather events[17]. Ethnic minority groups may be at increased risk of suffering harm in hot weather as significant proportions of these groups live in urban environments and there is evidence to show that when there is a heatwave the urban 'heat island' effect increases mortality rates[18] and many live in poor housing in urban areas with few green spaces[19].

Positive impacts of taking action

Ethnic minority groups are therefore likely to benefit disproportionately from measures to support residents to be more resilient to a changing climate (increased risk and severity of extreme weather) and the co-benefits associated with a transition to net zero carbon emissions, such as health benefits from reduced air pollution as a result of encouraging sustainable low/zero carbon travel as these groups are vulnerable to poor air quality[20].

Ethnic minority groups will also directly benefit from actions to reduce emissions, such as measures to improve energy efficiency in homes (e.g. the installation of better insulation, often through the use of government grants) can improve the efficiency of poor housing and reduce fuel poverty, which disproportionately benefits groups who may face higher costs of living and lower incomes and are at greater risk from health problems that can get worse or result from cold and damp living conditions[21] and so would benefit from better health and wellbeing from being able to heat their homes adequately.

[16] Climate Change Committee, 2020, Net Zero: The UK's contribution to stopping global warming p31
[17] The Impacts of Climate Change on Marginalised Groups
[18] Equality analysis Heatwave plan for England 2013
[19] Cut off from nature, UK's ethnic minorities hit harder by heat | Context by TRF
[20] Climate Change Committee, 2020, Net Zero: The UK's contribution to stopping global warming p218
[21] The impacts of fuel poverty | Fuel Poverty Action

Negative impacts
Given the diversity of Cambridge and that ethnic minority groups may be disproportionately negatively impacted by climate change it is important to ensure that that once the Strategy is in place communication methods are accessible as some ethnic minority residents may experience language barriers, which may make it more difficult to access information provided by the Council. The Council's communication plan for the Climate Change Strategy, which is to be developed, will ensure communication and engagement methods used are accessible to ethnic minority groups with support from internal teams and groups who work with ethnic minority groups such as Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum.

(g) Religion or belief

No impacts have been identified specific to this equality group.

(h) Sex

No impacts have been identified specific to this equality group.

(i) Sexual orientation

No impacts have been identified specific to this equality group.

(j) Other factors that may lead to inequality – in particular, please consider the impact of any changes on:

- **Low-income groups or those experiencing the impacts of poverty.**
- **People of any age with care experience – this refers to individuals who spent part of their childhood in the care system due to situations beyond their control, primarily arising from abuse and neglect within their families. The term "Care experience" is a description of a definition in law, it includes anyone that had the state as its corporate parent by virtue of a care order in accordance with the Children Act 1989 and amendments.**
- **Groups who have more than one protected characteristic that taken together create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. (Here you are being asked to consider intersectionality, and for more information see: https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/1_l59kt25q).**

Intersectionality

One of the thematic areas: 'Community support and engagement': aim is to provide accessible/inclusive support to empower low-carbon behaviour change, ensuring benefits are shared widely' is worded to ensure that actions that are proposed will ensure a just transition. A just transition means ensuring that change is 'as fair and inclusive as possible to everyone concerned', 'leaving no one behind.'[22] The majority of the actions in the Climate Change Strategy will benefit all groups and particularly those on low incomes and those that are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change as resilience will be increased, energy cost savings made and air quality improved as a result of implementation of the actions. As a result, we want the actions that residents can take and benefit from, to be as accessible and inclusive as possible and will address this as part of the communications plans for the strategy, which is to be developed, ensuring that all groups have access to the information and support needed to take action and take advantage of schemes available to them.

Some groups, such as older people, babies and toddlers, disabled people, people experiencing poverty, those with caring responsibilities and people with care experience might be more greatly impacted that others by climate change like by adverse weather events, rise in temperatures causing overheating, and by air pollution. Groups may be directly more disadvantaged by climate change as it impacts directly on their health or impacted due to lack of support networks/ barriers to seeking information (like language barriers and digital exclusion). Where people have more than one of these characteristics, issues may be exacerbated. For instance, some groups are more likely to experience poverty than others such as disabled people, some ethnic groups and lone parent families (most likely to be headed by women)[23]. National evidence identifies that around half of people in Pakistani (49%) and Bangladeshi (56%) households live in poverty. This makes Pakistani people more than two-and-a-half times, and Bangladeshi people 3 times more likely as people in white households (19%) to be in poverty.

Some ethnic groups experiencing poverty may have barriers from seeking information/ support to help them where English is their second language. Disabled people are more likely to experience poverty, have barriers from accessing info (associated with digital exclusion or lack of reasonable adjustments to communication methods associated with impairments like visual/ learning disabilities) and may be more likely to have health issues exacerbated by effects of climate change. Lone parent families that experience poverty might include babies or very young children who are also more likely to have their health impacted negatively by climate change. Where walking, cycling and public transport are encouraged, it must also be borne in mind that people with caring responsibilities are likely to take more trips and may be more likely to use prams and buggies, and disabled people may have mobility needs.

<u>Low-income groups or those experiencing the impacts of poverty</u>

The national Climate Change Committee suggests that people in poverty are most likely to be affected by the risks and impacts of climate change[24] and are likely to benefit most from the co-benefits of reducing carbon emissions, such as the health benefits of improved air quality[25].

For low-income households, the economic costs of low-carbon transitions (such as changes to energy systems or cars) could disproportionately affect households already facing

[22] Leaving No One Behind in the Transition Towards a Low-Carbon Economy | UNFCCC
[23] UK Poverty 2025: The essential guide to understanding poverty in the UK | Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
[24] Climate Change Committee, 2020, Net Zero: The UK's contribution to stopping global warming p31
[25] Climate Change Committee, 2020, Net Zero: The UK's contribution to stopping global warming p218

financial inequalities. The strategy includes actions related to grant funding available to residents on low incomes and certain means-tested benefits for energy efficiency upgrades and low-carbon heating through Action on Energy and the Cambridgeshire Energy and Retrofit Partnership (CERP). We are updating and sharing resources that help residents understand how to reduce their emissions. We will cascade information through community organisations to ensure accessibility and increase uptake.

10. Action plan – New equality impacts will be identified in different stages throughout the planning and implementation stages of changes to your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service. How will you monitor these going forward? Also, how will you ensure that any potential negative impacts of the changes will be mitigated? (Please include dates where possible for when you will update this EqIA accordingly.)

- A joint public engagement exercise was carried out in autumn 2025 with South Cambridgeshire District Council based on an outline of the proposed strategy. The engagement survey was hosted on the Council's GoVocal platform and was completed by residents, businesses and community organisations. It aimed to engage with local residents, particularly those with limited knowledge of climate change, as well as representatives from local businesses.
- The majority of the actions in the Climate Change Strategy will benefit all groups and particularly those on low incomes and those that are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change as resilience will be increased, energy cost savings made and air quality improved as a result of implementation of the actions. As a result, we want the actions that residents can take and benefit from, to be as accessible as possible and will address this as part of the communications plans for the strategy, which is to be developed. For example, officers will engage with groups such as Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum and where relevant and requested, communications materials will be provided in various formats and languages, as required.
- We will develop a communication plan for the Climate Change Strategy, following the adoption of the strategy. The communication plan will ensure communication and engagement methods used are accessible to all residents with support from internal teams and groups who work with groups such as Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum.
- We will liaise with officers who will deliver the actions in the strategy, particularly when requesting updates on progress, to keep under review, the impacts of the actions to ensure that they remain inclusive and any negative impacts are identified and mitigated as the communication plan and the strategy implementation goes forward.

11. Do you have any additional comments?

A stated focus of the strategy is to, 'Ensure that our climate change strategy is fair and inclusive, delivering a just transition, so that those most affected by climate change are not left behind and the benefits of addressing climate change - improved health, wellbeing and livelihoods, for current and future generations - are shared widely and felt by all' and so the

new strategy will aim to achieve this through the actions that have been developed for the '7. Community support and engagement' which will give greater prominence to the Council's role in supporting, empowering and motivating individuals and communities, particularly those most vulnerable to climate impacts, to adopt low-carbon lifestyles. The actions within this and particularly '1, Energy and retrofit' themes will ensure accessible and inclusive support to empower low-carbon behaviour change, ensuring benefits are shared widely, such as through support and grant funding through Action on Energy for insulation measures.

To ensure all groups have access to information on climate change, the Council will continue to provide carbon literacy training to staff, councillors and residents. The residents training is designed to be relevant to all income groups, including low-income groups, and includes low and no cost steps they can take to reduce their carbon footprint and be more prepared to the effects of climate change which will often have a positive impact on other areas of their life too, for example adding insulation will lower energy bills, create a more comfortable home and healthier home, less at risk of damp.

12. Sign off

Name and job title of lead officer for this equality impact assessment: David Wright - Inclusive Economy & Climate Manager

Names and job titles of other assessment team members and people consulted: Lily Simmonite - Community Equity Officer, Janet Fogg - Climate Change Officer.

Date of EqIA sign off: 10 March 2026

Date of next review of the equalities impact assessment: 16 September 2026

Date to be published on Cambridge City Council website: 16 March 2026

All EqIAs need to be sent to the Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer at equalities@cambridge.gov.uk

REPORT TITLE: Biodiversity Strategy Mid-Term Review (2022 – 2025) and Action Plan (2026 – 2031)

To: Cabinet 24th March 2026

Cabinet Member: Cllr Martin Smart, Cabinet Member for Nature, Open Space and City Services

Report by:
Guy Belcher, Biodiversity Manager

Tel: 01223 458532 Email: Guy.Belcher@cambridge.gov.uk

Wards affected:

All

Director Approval: Director James Elms confirms that the report author has sought the advice of all appropriate colleagues and given due regard to that advice; that the equalities impacts and other implications of the recommended decisions have been assessed and accurately presented in the report; and that they are content for the report to be put to the Cabinet/Cabinet Member for decision.

1. Recommendations

1.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Note the outcome of the midterm Biodiversity Strategy review, public consultation and recommendations of the Services, Climate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
2. Approve the content of the midterm review of the Cambridge City Council Biodiversity Strategy (2022 – 2031) for corporate design and publication.

2. Purpose and reason for the report

2.1 Our current Biodiversity Strategy (2022 – 2030) pledged to undertake a 5-year review of

actions and progress to ensure we continue to collaborate to protect, manage and enhance nature in the city.

Following December 2025 Cabinet Approval a joint public consultation on the draft Biodiversity Strategy mid term review and a draft new Urban Forest Strategy was run on the City Council Go Vocal consultation portal from 7th January to 10th February, with a further one-week extension for emailed responses, as requested by specific groups.

The revised Strategy reflects feedback and views from the consultation, retaining similar supported updated vision, themes and objectives, and additional actions and projects to align with our new statutory Biodiversity Reporting Duty, the new Urban Forest Strategy (UFS), and wider initiatives including the statutory Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), the BIG Chalk partnership and an ambition to collaborate with our communities to achieve future Nature City Accreditation. These more recent initiatives are described within the strategy.

The strategy action plan includes the proposed designation of two new Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), both within Cherry Hinton. These have been supported through the consultation, and if approved we will seek formal declaration though the statutory Natural England process in 2026.

3. Alternative options considered

3.1 1. **To not review and allow the current strategy to continue without review through to 2030.**

This option is not recommended as it would fail to consider new initiatives and wider strategies and risk not aligning with future collaborations and associated funding priorities and opportunities.

4. Background and key issues

4.1 The current Biodiversity Strategy was adopted in 2022 and set out a clear vision and actions to address our declared Biodiversity Emergency. This vision has been retained following the 2026 consultation with only minor amendments to strengthen our commitment (shown in **bold** below):

*'Our **Biodiversity Strategy** vision is that over the next **5** years Cambridge will see a "measurable net gain" in biodiversity **compared with the 2020 Biodiversity Audit baseline**, both within **every ward of** the city and the surrounding countryside, including the extent and quality of priority habitats and populations of priority species. Wildlife habitats will be protected, enhanced and where possible expanded and linked.*

*The very best wildlife habitats will form part of a much wider Cambridge Nature Network that will permeate the whole of the city **and link to the wider Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy**. Everyone who lives or works within Cambridge will have access to **nature rich** greenspaces **within walking distance of** their home or place or work, and there will be a greater awareness and understanding of biodiversity with opportunities to be involved and collaborate in local wildlife enhancement projects and monitoring.'*

The 7 strategic objections to deliver the vision are retained, with only minor amendments (shown in **bold** below) in response to consultation and the addition of objective 2 referencing the recently adopted Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

1. To secure a measurable net gain in biodiversity across the city **by 2031, compared with the 2020 baseline, in** support of the Natural Cambridgeshire Doubling Nature Vision by 2030.

2. To ensure designated sites and priority habitats are in good / favourable Condition, **wherever feasible**, **and that by 2031 no Council-managed LNR, Common or County Wildlife Site remains in poor condition without a management plan in place. Thus, enhancing habitat and species** resilience to a changing climate and

contribut**ing** to the Cambridge Nature Network and Local Nature Recovery Strategy

3. To **engage and** promote awareness of biodiversity and wellbeing, supporting coordinated action in our communities, businesses, and institutions **through embedding Natural England's Green Infrastructure strategies and principles, with particular focus on wards with high social disadvantage or poor access to natural green space**

4. To ensure that biodiversity **protection and enhancement** is considered by all council service functions and projects **in line with our statutory Biodiversity Duty**

5. To maximise the potential of our buildings, parks, open spaces, allotments and community gardens, watercourses and tree stock to support biodiversity, whilst balancing their multifunctional needs

6. To harness the wealth of local professional and amateur knowledge and experience in identifying and solving local issues.

7. To **work with partners to** establish long term, species and habitat monitoring to measure the impact of activities and identify new threats and opportunities across the city and **publish an annual report on progress**

Since adoption of the current strategy, we have delivered many diverse projects and initiatives across services and in collaboration with partners and communities. These have been summarised in the accompanying Cabinet approved Biodiversity Duty Report 2022 – 2025) and associated case studies, the submission of which is a new statutory requirement for all local authorities established within the Environment Act, 2021.

Since 2022 several new initiatives and partnership have arisen that require capturing in an updated plan:

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), adopted December 2025, is a new statutory strategic document that sets out the County

wide sites, species and habitats priorities for action. These actions have been captured within the revised City Strategy and action plan to ensure we are coordinated with adjoining authorities within the remaining lifetime of the strategy, and that our plans are aligned for future Local Government Reorganisation.

Our existing cross-boundary Cambridge Nature Network and Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project have been formally recognised by BIG Chalk, a major landscape scale alliance of over 150 organisations working to retore nature across 20% of England focuses on chalk and limestone landscapes.

A key new ambition within the revised strategy is to seek Nature City Accreditation through a recognised process of increased collaboration for nature recovery with our communities, which has received significant support through our 2026 consultation.

5. Corporate plan

5.1 The Biodiversity Strategy review seeks to address the following corporate priorities (2022 – 2027):

- **Responding to the climate and biodiversity emergencies and creating a net zero council by 2030**

  Through collaboration with communities and partners to deliver strategic nature recovery in the city and beyond. Nature based solutions including increase canopy cover, sustainable urban drainage and restoration of urban chalk streams will help mitigate the impacts of climate change on both communities and nature.

- **Tackling poverty and inequality and helping people in the greatest need**

  Seeking to ensure everyone living or working in Cambridge has easy access to safe, high-quality, nature rich, natural green spaces, promoting wellbeing and social inclusion.

- **Building a new generation of council and affordable homes and reducing homelessness**

  Ensuring new council homes meet our ambition of delivering 20% Biodiversity Net Gain

- **Modernising the council to lead a greener city that is fair for all**

Ensuring that we meet our Biodiversity duty through seeking opportunities to protect and enhance nature across all services and partnerships

6. Consultation, engagement and communication

The current Biodiversity Strategy was adopted in 2022 following a public consultation held in 2021.

To inform the midterm review we promoted a public consultation on a draft revised strategy between 6th January and 10th February 2026 on our consultation portal. The public consultation undertaken jointly for the Biodiversity Strategy Mid-Term Review and the new Urban Forest Strategy generated a strong and constructive level of engagement. A total of **256 respondents** participated, with 83% choosing to comment on both strategies together, supporting the intention to present these interrelated documents as a coordinated package.

On request officers approved a one-week extension of the consultation for local groups to collate and submit emailed responses by the 17th February 2026. These responses do not appear within the Consultation summary report but have been provided in full within the supporting papers.

Overall, feedback demonstrated very high levels of support for the strategic direction of the Biodiversity Strategy. Over 92% of respondents either strongly supported or supported the Strategy's vision, with fewer than 4% expressing opposition. Respondents consistently emphasised the importance of restoring priority habitats, enhancing ecological connectivity, and embedding biodiversity considerations across Council services.

A recurring theme throughout the consultation was the need to provide more space for nature, with 62% stating that current provision in parks is not sufficient and calling for increased wildflower meadows, wetlands, ponds, long grass, and deadwood habitats.

Respondents also highlighted the need for ongoing maintenance and monitoring, noting

that newly planted trees and habitats require consistent aftercare to ensure their success.

Comments also strongly supported the Strategy's focus on designated site management, nature-based solutions, and the ambition to secure Nature City Accreditation, with over 76% of respondents in favour of Cambridge pursuing accreditation.

Respondents felt the Nature City accreditation framework could strengthen collaborative delivery, improve accountability, and help celebrate positive progress on biodiversity.

Several themes emerged consistently across long-form answers. These included:

- Reducing pesticide and herbicide use, with strong calls to reinstate or strengthen herbicide-free commitments.
- Integrating biodiversity into all new development, with requests for stronger enforcement of Biodiversity Net Gain and greater on-site delivery.
- Improved access to nature, particularly for communities with low canopy cover and limited green space; 59% of respondents supported prioritising resources for communities with the poorest access.
- A focus on wetlands, chalk streams, rivers, and water management, reflecting local concerns over siltation, pollution, and habitat fragmentation.
- Greater support for community involvement, volunteering, citizen science, and environmental education, particularly involving schools and families.

Feedback also aligned strongly with the Strategy's emphasis on addressing climate risks, with respondents expressing clear support for diversifying new tree species selection, enhancing tree canopy in heat-vulnerable neighbourhoods, and creating more shade, water features, and drought resilient planting.

Overall, respondents expressed a clear desire for ambitious, practical and measurable action, and asked that the Council continue to demonstrate transparency and strong communication around evidence, decisions, and trade-offs.

The revised Strategy has been updated to directly reflect this feedback.

Key amendments include:

- Integration of Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework, to support Nature City Accreditation ambition
- Commitment to core site habitat condition enhancements by 2031
- Commitment to publish an annual progress review
- Reinsertion of herbicide reduction promotion into the Action Plan
- Moving technical details into appendices to reduce overall length of the document

The consultation has therefore played a significant role in shaping the revised Strategy and ensuring it remains evidence-led, community-supported and aligned with emerging regional and national policy frameworks.

The draft Biodiversity Strategy was reviewed by who agreed the following:

The Committee agreed the following:

• To note the progress made in the midterm review of the Biodiversity Strategy (2026 – 2031), including the public consultation.

• To recommend the Strategy (and Action Plan) to the Cabinet for adoption subject to the following points:

- the definition of 'measurable net gain' should be strengthened;
- there was a continuing need to focus on communications with residents when carrying out work on nature sites; and
- effective joint-working (within the council on areas such as allotments and dog control) was crucial to the delivery of the strategy.

• To support the proposed Local Nature Reserve (LNR) designations of Fulbourn Road and Church End in Cherry Hinton.

These recommendations have been incorporated into the relevant strategy sections and action plan.

7. Anticipated outcomes, benefits or impact

7.1 Adoption of the revised Biodiversity Strategy following the mid-term review is expected to deliver the following outcomes:

1. Improved plan quality: insights from stakeholders and communities will help ensure the Biodiversity Strategy is both deliverable and widely supported, with projects refined in response to feedback.

2. Increased participation and engagement: the consultation will raise awareness of the Biodiversity Strategy and encourage greater involvement of residents, community groups, developers, and landowners in its delivery.

3. Clearer accountability: the introduction of condition targets for core nature sites will allow progress to be monitored transparently over the remaining lifetime of the strategy.

4. Greater recognition: seeking Nature City Accreditation will ensure shared goals and new collaborations that can be celebrated.

What does good look like?

1. A Biodiversity Strategy that is accessible, evidence-based, and widely supported.

2. Broad public awareness of and engagement with the Biodiversity Strategy and wider Cambridge Nature Network and Local Nature Recovery Strategy

3. A clear route to achieve Nature City Accreditation in recognition and celebration of our shared vision, collaboration and delivery partnerships.

8. Implications

8.1 Relevant risks

Risk 1: Risks if the decision is made (approve the mid-term Biodiversity Strategy review)): Approving the BS carries a low level of strategic risk, primarily relating to deliverability and expectations rather than policy intent, as progress towards long-term biodiversity outcomes will depend on sustained funding, cross-Council coordination, engagement on private land, and external factors such as climate impacts, development pressures and tree disease. There is a risk that targets are perceived as guaranteed outcomes rather than long-term ambitions, that delivery capacity varies year to year due to funding constraints and local government reorganisation, and that some decisions on site management may attract challenge from user groups; however, these risks are mitigated through realistic long-term targets, a proportionate, evidence-led approach, alignment with existing statutory duties and corporate strategies, and monitoring and reporting to enable adaptive management.

Risk 2: **Risks if the decision is not made:** Not approving the BS carries a higher strategic risk, including loss of policy direction for managing and growing the city's core sites for nature, weaker alignment with the Climate Change and Urban Forest Strategy, reduced ability to influence development and partner activity, and increased exposure to ad hoc or inconsistent decision-making in high-risk areas such as, development pressure, tree protection and asset management. This would weaken the Council's ability to secure external funding and achieve the aspired Nature City Accreditation.

8.2 Legal Implications

There are no direct legal implications arising from the proposed decision to adopt the revised strategy.

The Council already has statutory duties to consider biodiversity in all its services and report to national government. The strategy will help ensure these duties are met within a clear framework.

Equalities and socio-economic Implications

Assessment found that the strategy and associated actions will have overall positive equality impacts across Cambridge's communities.

The actions promote equitable access to nature, health and wellbeing benefits, and inclusive community engagement. No negative or disproportionate impacts were identified, and equality outcomes will be monitored through annual reporting.

Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental implications

8.3 The overall impact of the Biodiversity Strategy midterm review is assessed as being moderately positive in terms of reducing impacts of climate change and enhancing biodiversity.

Healthy nature green spaces, wetlands, waterways and tree canopies form a vital part of climate mitigation and adaptation. The strategy sets out a proactive approach to protecting, maintaining, expanding and enhancing natural habitats, contributing to:

- Carbon storage and sequestration, supporting the Council's net zero targets.
- Urban cooling and shade, reducing the impacts of extreme heat.
- Stormwater management, helping reduce local flood risk.
- Biodiversity enhancement, contributing to Biodiversity Net Gain and habitat connectivity.

The Strategy complements and aligns with the Council's draft Climate Change and Urban Forest Strategies.

Procurement Implications

8.4 There are no procurement implications arising directly from this decision to approve the midterm Biodiversity Strategy review

Community Safety Implications

8.5 There are no community safety implications arising directly from this decision to approve the midterm Biodiversity Strategy review

The strategy supports public safety through developing natural solutions to mitigating the adverse impacts of climate on our communities.

Following adoption of the revised strategy any specific site project design or management reviews will consider community safety audits to ensure that the sites continue to be safe, inviting and accessible to all.

Financial

8.6 Revised Local Nature Reserve, Common and watercourse management will be delivered within existing budgets.

Future delivery of the strategy may require external funding, building on the Council's track record of securing over £900K (excluding Cambridge Canopy Project) of external funding since 2022.

A proposed 0.5 FTE post to support engagement delivery was included in the February 2026 Budget Setting Report and approved by Full Council, to help accelerate elements of the revised Biodiversity Strategy.

Actions without identified funding are included in the strategy as aspirational and will only be taken forward if resources become available.

9. Background documents

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

N/A

10. Appendices

10.1 Current Biodiversity Strategy - Biodiversity Strategy 2022-2030 - Cambridge City Council

Appendix A – Cambridge City Council Biodiversity Strategy (2022 – 2031)

Appendix B - 2026 Consultation responses

Appendix C – Cam Valley Forum Response

Appendix D – Friends of St Matthews Piece Response

Appendix E – Biodiversity Duty Report (2022 – 2025)

Appendix F – Biodiversity Project Case Studies (2022 – 2025)

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Guy Belcher, Biodiversity Manager, tel: 01223 458532, email: Guy.belcher@cambridge.gov.uk

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Cambridge City Council

Biodiversity Strategy

(2026 – 2031)



Sheep's Green Local Nature Reserve, Newnham

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1. Foreword



Councillor Martin Smart

Cabinet Member for Nature, Open Spaces & City Services

When we adopted our 2022 Biodiversity Strategy, we pledged to undertake a midterm review on progress, direction and delivery. This revised strategy update changes in national legislation and recognises new regional strategies, partnerships and local projects, setting clear, time bound actions and measures of success. It provides an opportunity to reflect on and celebrate the many successful projects and partnerships working to protect and restore nature across the city and beyond. Whilst also recognising the urgency to address the continued threats

The 2021 Environment Act places a new statutory duty on all Local Authorities to publish a Biodiversity Duty Report to demonstrate our collective efforts in support of biodiversity. The accompanying report showcases our shared regional and local visions, strategies and initiatives and provides case studies on what has been achieved between 2022 and 2025. However, we are now halfway through the decade in which the UK has committed to halt and reverse nature loss; hence the need to review and strengthen our efforts between 2026 and 2031.

This summer I felt great pride in joining the Friends of Logan's Meadow Local Nature Reserve at their opening event of the newly created wetlands in East Chesterton. This ambitious project is a great example of the collaborative approach needed to restore urban habitats and wildlife. The original concept from the Friends, supported the vision of the Cambridge Nature Network, whose partners helped secure initial Lottery funding for design and consultation. Natural England provided additional Green Recovery Funding for a new woodland buffer, planted by the local community. The resulting momentum secured a Combined Authority grant and developer (S106) contributions to dig the new wetlands, which, following the planting of reeds by volunteers have already been visited by water voles, otters and kingfishers.

Such projects give us hope that the decline in nature can be reversed when communities and partners work together on shared challenges and goals. This is also the ambition of the recently adopted statutory Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. We worked with the Combined Authority to

produce this overarching vision for our region with shared priorities and goals that complement the existing objectives and projects of the Cambridge Nature Network, and we look forward to collaborating on delivery.

The repeating message of collaboration fundamentally supports our ambition for Cambridge to achieve Nature City Accreditation for our collective work to put nature at the heart of our communities. We pledge to take a lead on this and commit to publishing annual public reports on progress against this strategy.



Swift Tower and new wetland at Logan's Meadow Local Nature Reserve, East Chesterton

2. Vision

Our corporate plan sets out a clear '**One Cambridge, Fair for All'** vision which we are working towards cooperatively with our residents and partner organisations. Collectively we are seeking **'Cambridge to be a net zero carbon city, where people and nature enjoy a clean river, clean air, and biodiverse green spaces'** and where **'strong nature networks are coordinated between relevant bodies to combat the impacts of social and climate injustice'**

We will deliver this vision through our Corporate Plan (2022 – 2027) priorities. The first of which is **'Leading Cambridge's response to the climate change and biodiversity emergencies'**

'Our Biodiversity Strategy vision is that over the next 5 years Cambridge will see a "measurable net gain" in biodiversity compared with the 2020 Biodiversity Audit baseline, both within every ward of the city and the surrounding countryside, including the extent and quality of priority habitats and populations of priority species. Wildlife habitats will be protected, enhanced and where possible expanded and linked. The very best wildlife habitats will form the Cambridge Nature Network that will permeate the whole of the city and link to the wider Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Everyone who lives or works within Cambridge will have access to nature rich greenspaces within walking distance of their home or place of work, and there will be a greater awareness and understanding of biodiversity with opportunities to be involved and collaborate in local wildlife enhancement projects and monitoring'.

Progress towards this vision will be monitored through annual reporting published on our website.

3. Executive Summary

The Cambridge City Council Biodiversity Strategy (2026–2031) sets out a renewed commitment to address the biodiversity emergency declared by the council in 2019. Building on the 2022 Biodiversity Strategy, this update aligns with the Environment Act 2021, regional Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), and the Natural Cambridgeshire (Local Nature Partnership) 'Doubling Nature' ambition

Vision:

By 2031, Cambridge will achieve a measurable net gain in biodiversity, ensuring priority habitats and species are protected, enhanced, and connected. This means more wildflower areas and nature rich grasslands in our parks and Commons; healthier chalk streams and riverbanks; more trees and shade on streets and in housing estates; and more places for birds, bats, insects and other wildlife to thrive. We also want every resident to have a good quality natural greenspace within a short walk of where they live, work or study, fostering engagement with nature and enhanced physical and mental wellbeing.

Strategic Objectives:

- Deliver measurable biodiversity net gain across the city, including a minimum 20% net gain on all Council-led developments and a net increase in biodiversity units across Council-managed natural green spaces by 2031.
- Improve condition and connectivity of designated sites and priority habitats, so that by 2031 all Local Nature Reserves and Commons have improved habitat condition, and no site remains in poor condition without a published management plan being implemented and monitored.
- Embed biodiversity considerations across all council services, policies, supply chains and developments.
- Educate and empower communities, businesses, and institutions to act to enhance local, with a particular focus on wards lacking high quality natural greenspace
- Maximise biodiversity potential of council properties, parks and urban spaces, whilst balancing their multi-functional uses
- Establish long-term monitoring and research partnerships.

Key Themes:

- **Biodiversity Mainstreaming:** Integrate biodiversity considerations into council procurement supply chains, planning, housing, and operations; help deliver the

Local Nature Recovery Strategy; achieve 20% biodiversity net gain for council-led developments.

- **The Core:** Enhance the habitat condition of all Local Nature Reserves and Commons; support Cambridge Nature Network; restore chalk streams; review and monitor grazing practices.

- **Nature in Your Neighbourhood:** Promote community-led projects, Nature City Accreditation, pollinator-friendly initiatives, and biodiversity education, targeting support for wards with lower tree canopy cover, fewer wildlife rich sites, or greater social disadvantage.

Action Plan (2026–2031):

The strategy outlines targeted actions under these themes, including policy adoption, habitat restoration, species recovery, and collaborative projects with partners. Progress will be monitored through site condition assessments, and community engagement metrics. Each action in the plan specifies a lead service, partners and timescales, and we will use these to publish an annual report on delivery and outcomes

Outcome:

This strategy aims to reverse biodiversity decline, strengthen ecological resilience, and embed nature at the heart of Cambridge's communities—delivering environmental, social, and health benefits for future generations.

4. Introduction

The term 'biodiversity' describes all forms of life, their interactions and the ecosystems that support them and us. It includes all species, both common and rare, which combine to provide us with the air we breathe, water we drink and the food we eat.

4.1 Why we need a strategy

In 2019, we declared a biodiversity emergency in recognition of the pressures facing our natural world, both locally and internationally. We adopted the Biodiversity Strategy in 2022 to guide our work to meet this challenge and pledged to undertake a

mid-term review to ensure we are meeting our objectives. This revised strategy for 2026-2031 is the result of this mid-term review.

As with the Council's climate change emergency declaration, the biodiversity emergency requires all our services to consider their net impact on biodiversity within their operations. This revised strategy embeds biodiversity principles and considerations across all Council service areas and the communities we serve.

For many years, we have worked with our Friends Groups, Local Nature Reserve volunteers and partners such as the Wildlife Trust, Cambridge Past Present and Future, community gardens and orchards to maintain and improve the rich diversity of habitats in and around Cambridge. We greatly value this shared expertise and passion, recognising that we cannot hope to reverse the decline and help our species adapt to a changing climate alone. For this reason, the strategy review seeks to further engage with other city property owners, businesses, community groups and visitors to respect, protect and enhance our city's wildlife and the multiple benefits it provides our communities.

Despite current efforts, our 2020–2025 core sites habitat audits show that many of our most visible Commons and recreation spaces remain in poor or only moderate ecological condition; furthermore, recreational pressure and urbanisation continue to erode wildlife value. This strategy therefore focuses on changing how we manage land and support more environmentally attuned behaviour in every neighbourhood.

We are partners in the Cambridge Nature Network (CNN), which incorporates our iconic riverside commons and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and we look forward to continue to work closely with other network stakeholders including the East Cambridge Farmland Cluster, Cambridge University colleges and the wider local community to conserve and enhance the network as a vital strategic piece of green infrastructure (network of natural and semi-natural features—such as parks, wetlands, green roofs, and street trees—that provides environmental, social, and economic benefits).for the city.

Due to the economic success of Cambridge and the local region, major housing and employment growth sites which were identified within the Cambridge City Council's former Nature Conservation Strategy (2006) have now been built, along with associated new country parks and habitats to complement the existing network of LNRs, woodlands and water courses. Trumpington Meadows Country Park and Hobson's Park are now vibrant new strategic green spaces, providing welcome respite for communities during the Covid pandemic and new homes for farmland and wetland species. These schemes demonstrate that with good design and planning policy, biodiversity net gain is achievable on multifunctional spaces, with Hobsons Park being designated a County Wildlife Site in 2025.

In addition, developments have included planning conditions securing Section 106 contributions, which have helped fund biodiversity projects on existing green spaces, such as 'The Rush' fish pass at Sheep's Green LNR and new wetlands at Logan's Meadow LNR.

The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service between the City and South Cambridgeshire District Council allows us to help plan on a strategic Greater Cambridge geography for existing and new green infrastructure and measurable biodiversity net gain within our emerging shared local plan. Identifying land not just for new homes but for new habitats and green connections to meet our duty under the Environment Act 2021.

4.2 Cambridge biodiversity in context

The biodiversity emergency we are experiencing is not just local but also global. Current global species extinction rates are 100 to 1000 times higher than the expected baseline rate, and they are increasing. Some of the key driving forces which are causing the emergency are increasing demands for housing, food and energy production. These can result in habitat loss, habitat degradation, habitat fragmentation and environmental pollution. They also contribute to, and exacerbate, the effects of climate change.

The result is a decrease in species diversity, or changes in how different plant and animals interact. Ultimately these declines and changes undermine nature's productivity, resilience and adaptability placing it at risk of further damage or collapse.

All these pressures are damaging to the intrinsic value of biodiversity, and the ecosystem services that we rely on for our social, economic and environmental health and wellbeing - including clean air, urban cooling, flood alleviation and food to name but a few. A thriving biodiverse environment is critical for life with a growing evidence base to suggest that we lead healthier lives, both mentally and physically, if we have more opportunities to interact with nature.

The UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world (ranked 189 out of 218). Almost 15% of all species in the UK are at risk from extinction. With 72% of the UK land area managed for agriculture it is no surprise that changes in this industrial sector, responding to Government policy and societal changes, have one of the greatest impacts on our nation's biodiversity. Other drivers for change include urbanisation, invasive species, hydrological change and climate change.

In comparison to other parts of the UK, Cambridgeshire has some of the lowest proportions of threatened Priority Habitats and land designated for nature conservation, and it has the second lowest proportion of woodland coverage. Within the region intensive agricultural has also been instrumental in land use changes and biodiversity losses. Grassland cover has decreased from around 30% in the 1930s to less than 10% in 2018, being replaced in large part by arable farmland. Cambridgeshire also contains relatively little accessible green infrastructure for people, while growing populations are placing greater recreational pressures on these existing greenspaces.

The same suite of threats impact on the biodiversity of Cambridge as they do throughout the rest of the world. Our city and its associated sub region are experiencing rapid urban growth, including housing, commercial and institutional development. Whilst this helps support a thriving local economy it places significant pressure on our natural environment[1] and the biodiversity it supports.

It is challenging in an urban environment to balance the needs of both wildlife and people. If we are to reverse the declines in biodiversity, we must value and make space for nature in the urban communities where we live and in the surrounding countryside. This will mean protecting and enhancing the precious biodiversity resources that we have left but also ensuring there is sufficient outdoor recreational space for residents to be able to access and enjoy.

The very fact that these pressures are occurring at a local level does mean that it is within our power to do something about them. Biodiversity is resilient, particularly in our towns and cities; and has the capacity to bounce back. There are many examples of positive interventions making a difference for biodiversity within the city and across the UK.

The suite of actions set out within this strategy is the response of Cambridge City Council to the biodiversity emergency we face locally, nationally, and internationally. We recognise the importance of a healthy and biodiverse environment that is sustainably planned and managed to ensure the current and future prosperity and health and wellbeing of all sections of our communities. Our aim is to go beyond simply halting the decline in biodiversity but to actively restore the quality of our natural environment and leave our city's wildlife in a better state than that in which we found it. We hope the following strategy will inspire you to join us and help to deliver the proposed actions and associated changes needed to achieve this.

4.3 Legislation and policy

This Biodiversity Strategy considers and is aligned with a range of national, regional and local policies and plans, as outlined below, Legislative documents, policy reports and reviews or policy drivers are described in further detail in Appendix 1.

National Legislation

- Environment Act 2021
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
- The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000

Policy documents (national, regional and local)

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 (updated 2024)
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2018) and Cambridge Local Plan (2018)
- Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan (publication timeline December 2026)
- South Cambridgeshire District Council Doubling Nature Strategy (2021)
- Greater Cambridge Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (2022)
- UK National Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan (NBSAP) 2025
- Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy (December 2025)

Reviews, plans and policy drivers (national, regional, and local)

- Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping (2020/2021)
- Greater Cambridge chalk streams project report (2024)
- CCC/MKA Ecology Ltd Biodiversity Audit (2021)
- Natural England Nature Networks
- Global biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and national security (HM Gov 2026)
- Making Space for Nature: A review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network (The Lawton Report, 2010)
- Cambridge Nature Network Report

Our strategy recognises and adopts the principle of the following national initiatives that support our vision and objectives.

The Big Chalk Partnership

An ambitious, national-scale alliance of over 150 organisations—primarily National Landscapes, National Parks, conservation groups, farms, community groups, and government agencies—working across southern England's chalk and limestone geologies, Big Chalk promotes collaborative conservation, data-driven project planning, and dynamic partnerships to ensure these vulnerable landscapes thrive in a changing climate.

Butterfly Conservation **-** ***Butterfly-Friendly Cities***

Butterfly conservation focuses on protecting butterfly species and their habitats, which are vital indicators of a healthy ecosystem. Urban areas can play a key role through the concept of a "butterfly-friendly city," where green spaces, parks, gardens, and roadside verges are managed to provide nectar-rich plants, native wildflowers, and shelter for butterflies. These cities reduce pesticide use, create pollinator corridors, and encourage community involvement in planting and monitoring..

Nature Town & Cities

Nature Towns and Cities is a coalition—led by Natural England, the National Trust, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and partners—aiming to transform urban living through nature. It seeks to give more people access to green and blue spaces within a 15-minute walk and enable more children to play in nature on their doorstep.

CABA (the Catchments Based Approach)

A community-led, collaborative framework for managing water environments at the river-catchment scale across England and Wales. It brings together a wide range of partners—including environmental NGOs, local authorities, government agencies, landowners, businesses, and community groups—to share evidence, develop joint catchment plans, and deliver integrated actions that improve water quality, enhance biodiversity, reduce flood risk, and support climate resilience.

4.4 Local initiatives

The continued decline in biodiversity has prompted several local and regional initiatives that seek to protect, restore and enhance biodiversity through both development and land management practices. Many of these seek landscape scale restoration of habitats to ensure that ecosystems are resilient. The City Council seeks

to support these through both policies and projects to ensure that opportunities are realised on our land holdings, and we deliver biodiversity improvements through our statutory functions, operational services and community influence.

Natural Cambridgeshire (Local Nature Partnership) Doubling Nature Vision

Natural Cambridgeshire is a partnership of leaders from businesses, local authorities, the health sector, farming, wildlife and environmental organisations that exists to champion, influence and enable the fulfilment of the Doubling nature vision

Cambridge Nature Network

The Cambridge Nature Network is a landscape scale biodiversity initiative led by the Local Wildlife Trust and Cambridge Past Present and Future with support from local Councils and other key landowning partners. The initiative is founded on an evidence based spatial plan for protecting and enhancing nature, focussed on the best of the remaining habitats within 10km of the city and key opportunities and locations for creating new habitats and associated linkages. Through collaboration with landowners and communities it represents an ambitious but achievable vision for local nature recovery.

Draft South Cambridgeshire Climate & Nature Strategy 2026–2030

South Cambridgeshire District Councils vision to empower the district to lead in climate action, enhance environmental stewardship, protect and restore nature, and build resilience for communities in the face of escalating climate impacts. Its key principles focus on embedding climate and nature objectives throughout the council's work, leveraging partnerships, and prioritising actions that deliver co-benefits—benefiting both nature and people—while enabling sustainable economic growth and improving wellbeing

Cambridge University Biodiversity Action Plan

Representing considerable land holdings across the city, this plan seeks to deliver a significant and measurable improvement in the biodiversity of the University of Cambridge estate, and the Greater Cambridge area more generally, in a manner that educates and inspires an appreciation of the natural environment, and that encourages interventions, research and innovation to enhance and protect biodiversity for future generations.

Wicken Fen Vision

The National Trust's Wicken Fen Vision is an ambitious, 100-year plan to create a diverse landscape for wildlife and people stretching from Wicken Fen to the edge of Cambridge. By restoring natural processes, careful management of water and grazing will allow the land to evolve a mosaic of habitats for a wide variety of abundant wildlife. People will be able to enjoy access and recreation opportunities across a beautiful, tranquil natural fenland landscape, with opportunities for volunteering, education, and interpretation.

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

The LNRS is a legally mandated framework under the Environment Act 2021, aimed at reversing nature decline in one of England's most nature depleted regions. Spearheaded by the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (responsible authority) in partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council, Natural Cambridgeshire and local (supporting) authorities, the strategy sets biodiversity priorities, maps existing and potential habitats, and identifies key areas and species for ecological restoration.



Meadow and urban forest planting at Cherry Hinton Hall

4.5 Cambridge City Council role

We manage more than 80 parks and open spaces, such as play areas, allotments, community gardens and orchards, totalling over 742 hectares. Some of these sites are designated and managed predominantly as nature reserves, for their wildlife value and form part of the key Cambridge Nature Network, whilst others provide valuable predominantly recreational open space for residents and visitors to enjoy. Whatever the primary purpose and size of these spaces, combined they provide a huge potential for increasing the extent, quality and connectivity of habitats within the city and their contribution to the wider Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Therefore, we have an obligation and opportunity to ensure that all sites maximise their potential for biodiversity, provide good examples of habitat management and creation and hopefully influence other landowners to do the same.

Watercourses

We manage approximately 23 kilometres of awarded watercourses, including some of our precious chalk streams, by ensuring management is sensitive to biodiversity, whilst providing our statutory drainage functions, we can protect such iconic species as otter, water vole, kingfishers and brown trout in the city. We have developed the Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project to deliver and monitor evidence-based restoration work to inform future investment. We also manage a significant stretch of the main riverbank through the city. Wherever possible we are seeking to ‘naturalise’ previously engineered banks such as at Stourbridge Common, creating new backwaters and wetland such as on Logan's Meadow LNR and providing passage for fish around artificial obstructions, such as at the weir at Byron’s Pool LNR and ‘The Rush’ fish pass at Sheep’s Green LNR.

Common land

We are custodians of our precious common land and oversee the historic grazing management practice that retains flood meadow landscapes and iconic cattle grazing in the heart of the city. These grasslands form a key part of the network of Cambridge spaces and offer potential for enhanced management to benefit biodiversity, urban drainage and capture carbon emissions.

Urban forest

Through implementation of our Urban Forest Strategy (2026 – 2036), we manage over 30,000 trees, contributing to the urban forest that provides both wildlife and communities with a range of ecosystem services, making our neighbourhoods cooler, cleaner and more attractive places to live. Streets trees provide vital shade for

communities as well as habitat and ‘stepping stones’ for species living in or moving through the built environment.

Property estate

Our property estate includes rental units, iconic buildings such as the Guildhall and council housing properties with gardens and communal open spaces. How we manage, renovate, and invest in these assets will impact upon existing species present and provide opportunities for restoring nature where people live and work.

Community action and volunteering

Through our Community Service, Community Engagement Team we offer support to local site Friends Groups, providing opportunities for volunteering in our parks and open spaces, and work closely with local community groups including On the Verge promoting new wildflower meadows and Action for Swifts, with swift box provision such as on Queen Ann Terrace car park and at Edgecombe Flats.

We provide local schools with natural green spaces for valuable environmental education opportunities enabling pupils to explore, experience and value nature close to home.

As a local authority we are often a key partner in many local initiatives and projects with links to community groups. By promoting biodiversity through raising awareness in communities, we can ensure that opportunities for people to connect with, protect, enhance, and appreciate nature are realised.

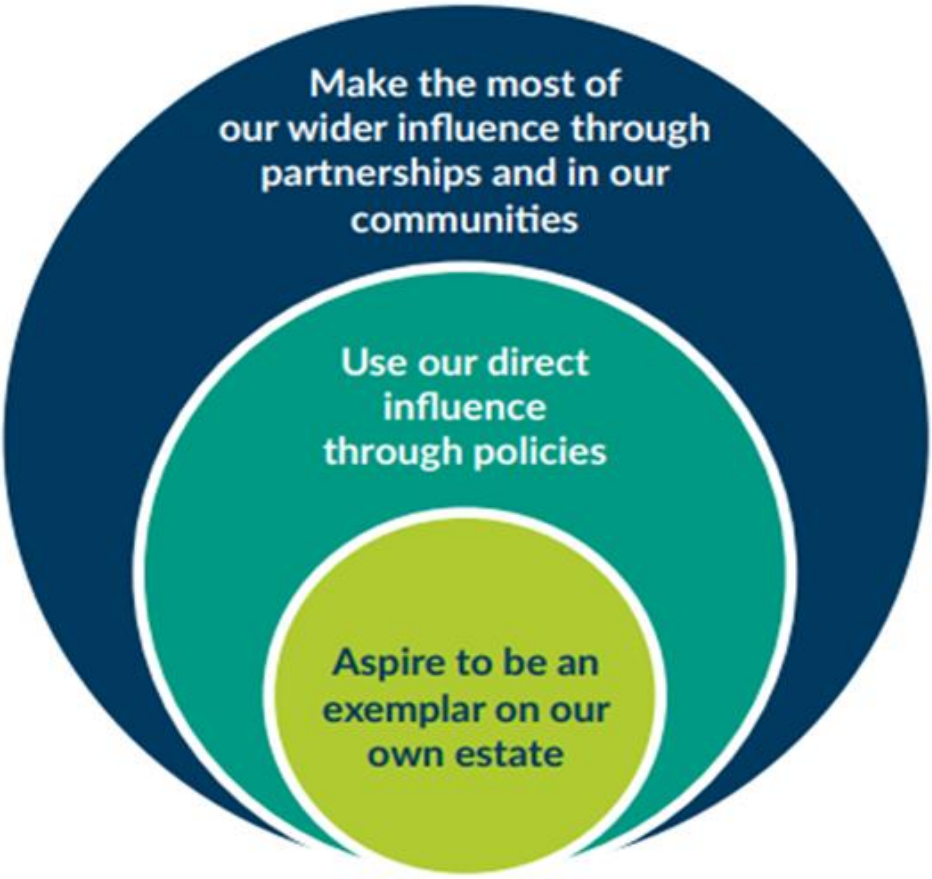


Figure 1. Our role in local nature recovery

4.6 Biodiversity in Cambridge

The geological and landscape setting

There are three National Character Areas (NCA) around Cambridge, each with distinctive geological features which dictate the landscape character and biodiversity contained within them.

To the north and west is (NCA 88) Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Clay lands. A broad gently undulating lowland plateau with shallow rivers, and notably the Great Ouse and Nene, which broaden as they reach the Fens. The area is dominated by intensive arable farming. There is an underlying clay geology which is overlain by glacial deposits of chalky boulder clays which add great character to the ancient woodlands in the area.

To the south and east is (NCA 87) East Anglian Chalk. Characterised by smooth rolling chalkland hills with large irregular field enclosed by low-lying hedgerows. Much of the area is under cereal production but important semi-natural habitats include lowland calcareous grassland and the chalk streams which are under significant threat from modification, pollution and abstraction.

Further north and east of the city, and with a narrow corridor alongside the River Cam, is (NCA 46) The Fens. Characterised as an expansive low-lying wetland landscape. Woodland cover is sparse, and the open fields are bounded by drains and river systems which provide an important ecological network. An important area for biodiversity with several internationally recognised areas of nature conservation value.

Within the City of Cambridge, it is possible to see the influence of each of these regions on the habitats and species that are present. Directly to the south-east of the city are chalky grasslands with exposed chalk (such as East Pit in Cherry Hinton). To the north and east are areas which have characteristics of fenland with reedbeds and drains (such as Wilbraham Fen). To the west, and running right through the heart of the city, are riverside meadows and pastures which are characteristic of the semi-natural habitats of the clay lands (such as Grantchester Meadows and Midsummer Common).

The ecological setting

Statutory and non-statutory designated areas

Within Cambridge there are a range of areas designated for their nature conservation value. These include statutorily designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which are of national significance for the biodiversity and geological features they

support. The statutory sites also include LNRs which are of statutory local significance for both people and wildlife.

Non-statutory sites include County Wildlife Sites (CWS), which represent some of the most important habitats in Cambridgeshire. Within the city itself are a suite of City Wildlife Sites (CiWS) and Protected Road Verges (PRVs). These areas do not meet national or County criteria for statutory designation, but they do meet important criteria at a local level and contain many locally significant habitats and species.

The habitats and species at these locations are varied but typically reflect the wider landscape with woodlands, chalk grasslands and rivers and streams. Some are designated for the species they support, such as water vole. Some habitats and species within Cambridge are listed as Habitats of Principal Importance and Species of Principal Importance, or Priority Habitats and Species. These are listed on the NERC Act (2006) and represent some of the most valued habitats and species in the UK.

Other greenspaces

Cambridge is fortunate to have a host of other greenspaces which all make a significant contribution to our biodiversity. These include country parks, such as those at Milton (just outside the city boundary in South Cambridgeshire) and Trumpington Meadows (which straddles the border with South Cambridgeshire). There are also other accessible natural greenspaces including Grantchester Meadows, Hobson's Park, and new areas of open space at Eddington and Darwin Green in north-west Cambridge.

Cambridge is a 'green' city. Beyond the formal greenspaces such as designated areas and parks, there are also numerous informal greenspaces, including community gardens and orchards, private gardens as well as college grounds, street trees and increasingly, green roofs. Tree canopy covers approximately 17.6% of the city making a significant contribution to the biodiversity resource in Cambridge.

The Cambridge Nature Network

Two priority areas of the Cambridge Nature Network directly interact with the city and surrounding countryside. The Cambridge Nature Network Priority Areas have been identified by grouping core sites based on landscape features, topography, and hydrology. Within these areas, potential extension habitats (or 'steppingstones') are proposed with a view to creating coherent joined up nature networks, which are resilient to the modern-day pressures on our biodiversity. The Cambridge Nature Network target is to achieve a 30% coverage of wildlife rich habitats within each Priority Area.

The River Cam Corridor Priority Area passes right through the heart of Cambridge following the course of the Cam. This Priority Area also includes the tributaries of the Cam which flow from the south, such as Cherry Hinton Brook and Hobson's Brook. This is a critical Priority Area within the network as it provides the connection linking other Priority Areas to the north, south, east and west. Many of these sites and watercourses are managed by Cambridge City Council so we are uniquely placed to help deliver the network through the city.

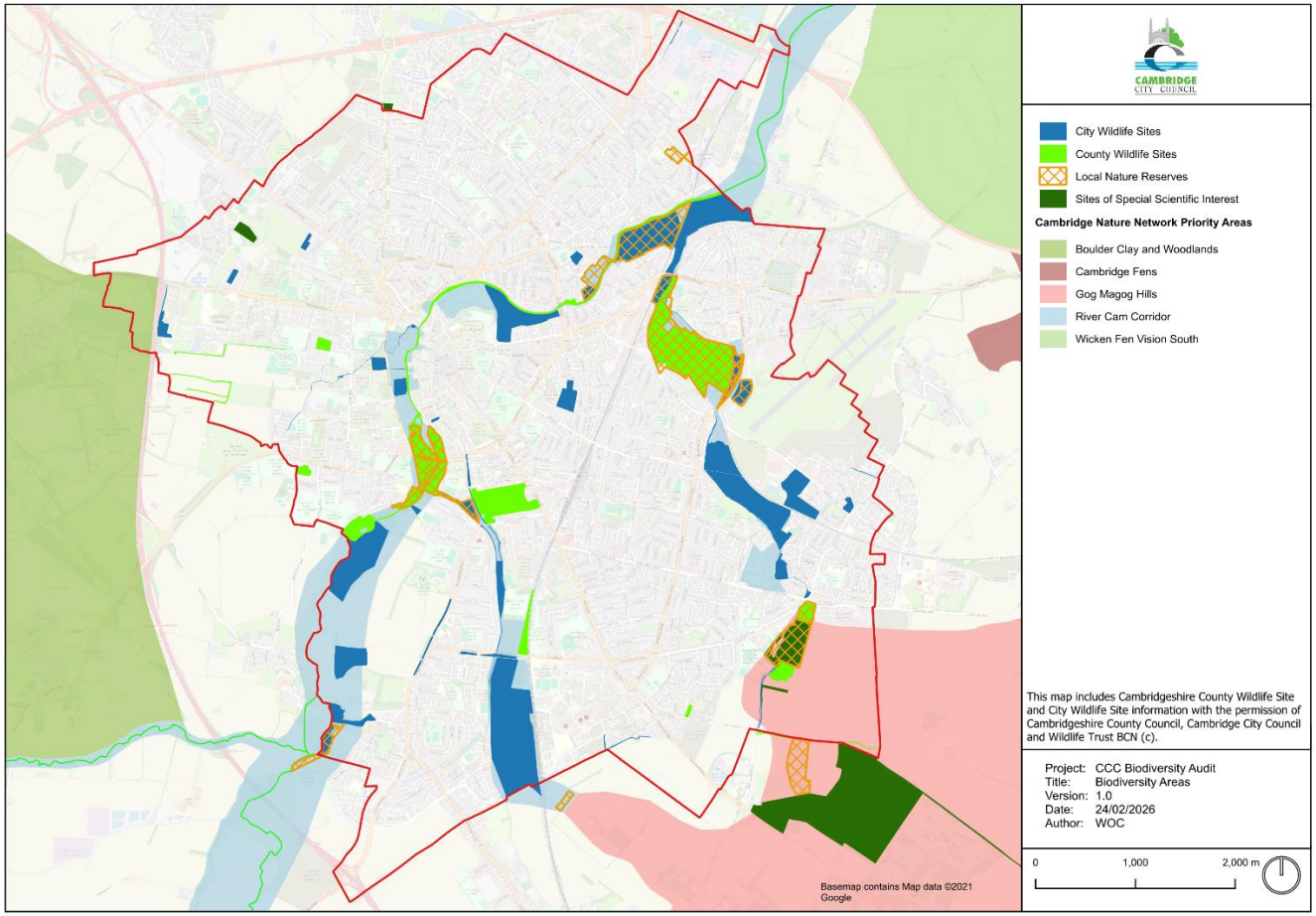
Just south of Cambridge, the Gog Magog Hills Priority Area reaches to the fringe of the city. This Priority Area is characterised by the underlying chalk with the key sites of nature conservation importance located at the Cherry Hinton chalk pit complex at this point on the edge of Cambridge. It stretches further south and east of the city with other important chalk habitats, such as the Roman Road Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

There are four other Cambridge Nature Network Priority/Opportunity Areas. Directly to the north and east are the Cambridge Fens Priority Areas and Wicken Fen Vision South Priority Area. To the west lies the Boulder Clay Woodlands Priority Area and further north is the Fen Edge Orchards and Droves Opportunity Area.

The Cambridge Nature Network has been integrated into the statutory Cambridgeshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy.



Map 1 showing designated biodiversity sites and CNN / LNRS priority areas in Cambridge



Cambridge key habitats

The various sites in the Cambridge Nature Network support several core habitats with distinct species, pressures and management requirements.

Grasslands

Cambridge grasslands range from small areas of rare species-rich lowland calcareous grassland to wide expanses of species poor amenity grasslands, which are widespread throughout the city. Significant grassland habitats are present along the Cam corridor and these run through the centre of Cambridge including Sheep's Green, Midsummer Common and Stourbridge Common. These areas, with their grazing cattle, give Cambridge its unique rural character. Coldham's Common provides further large areas of grassland with a mix of amenity grassland through to more species diverse neutral and calcareous grasslands. There have been significant additions to the species-rich grassland resource in recent years with the creation of Trumpington Meadows Country Park and Hobson's Park to support local developments.

Priority grassland types within Cambridge include:

- Lowland calcareous grassland
- Lowland meadows

Woodland

Woodlands are uncommon in Cambridgeshire with very few areas of ancient woodland remaining. Areas of naturally regenerated woodland are present throughout the city however and include Byron's Pool in Trumpington and the Bird Sanctuary, The Spinney and Limekiln Road LNR, all situated in Cherry Hinton. Several areas of wet woodland occur, primarily at Paradise and Logan's Meadow LNR.

Priority woodland types within Cambridge include:

- Lowland beech and yew woodland
- Wet woodland
- Lowland mixed deciduous woodland

Sheep's Green contains wood pasture habitat which comprises mature trees set within semi-natural grassland habitats. This combination of habitats, and particularly the veteran and ancient pollard willows, is important for numerous invertebrates including the scarce musk beetle. These woodlands and mature trees also provide roosting and

foraging habitats for a range of bat species, such as common pipistrelle and brown long-eared bat

Hedgerows and scrub

Old and mature hedgerows are uncommon in the city with a few remaining examples at King's Hedges and Cherry Hinton. There are significant areas of scrub habitats, particularly around Coldham's Common and Barnwell within the designated sites at these locations.

Priority hedgerow and scrub habitats within Cambridge include:

- Hedgerows

These old hedgerows and scrub habitats provide important habitats through the city and particularly for bird species which use them for breeding during the spring and summer months and for foraging and cover in the autumn and winter months.

Wetlands and watercourses

The River Cam corridor contains a variety of wetland habitats, including wet grasslands, reedbeds, and the chalk streams which form tributaries to the Cam. The chalk streams around and within the city are very scarce habitats of international importance. Other wetland habitats occur away from the River Cam and these include ponds, lakes, and ditches.

Priority wetland habitats within Cambridge include:

- Reedbeds
- Ponds
- Rivers (including Chalk Streams)

The River Cam presents one of our most important wetland habitats, and, combined with its tributaries, forms a network of habitats through the city. To the northeast Teversham and Wilbraham Fen are biodiversity 'hotspots', which are home to a wealth of specialist birds, invertebrates and other species which reside in the reedbed and wetland habitats there.

Our wetland habitats are home to eels, kingfisher, grey wagtail, otter and water vole. Water voles have suffered significant national declines as a species but Cambridgeshire, and Cambridge in particular, remains a stronghold. They thrive in the slow-flowing, well-vegetated ditches found through the city.

Urban

Urban habitats dominate the city and often offer surprising opportunities for wildlife. There are pockets of habitats for species to thrive, including gardens, allotments, and street trees. Increasingly the built environment is purposefully designed to accommodate biodiversity with integrated bird and bat boxes and green roofs.

Priority urban habitats within Cambridge include:

- Open mosaic habitat on previously developed land

The David Attenborough Building on the New Museums Site is an example of how biodiversity can work with the built environment. Here green roofs provide habitats high above street level, and swifts nest in boxes that are built into the towers. Swifts are charismatic birds that form part of the backdrop to a Cambridge summer with squadrons of screaming birds swooping through the streets and nesting within the cracks and crevices of the buildings. Similarly, House Martins use buildings as nesting sites, for example at Addenbrookes Biomedical campus and in the gatehouse at King's College. The buildings of Cambridge also host breeding peregrine falcon, which can regularly be seen surveying the city from the spires of King's College Chapel.

Many species of bat roost in the buildings in the city, and some are specialists that will typically only roost in buildings. This includes serotine bat which can be seen hawking and swooping for prey over Nightingale Recreation Ground. As you move towards the edge of the city where the gardens tend to be bigger you are more likely to encounter other important species such as song thrush, or even part of the thriving urban badger population.

- Gardens

Collectively private gardens form the biggest land use within the city and are therefore vital in providing green space and tree canopy cover. Multiple ownership means that the individual biodiversity value of these spaces varies greatly but there is potential to greatly increase biodiversity value through relatively simple changes to management or initiative such as creating hedgehog highways to link gardens. Studies have shown that sensitively managed gardens can support a wide range of species that are often declining in the wider farmland landscape. The installation of garden ponds can benefit many species include amphibians, particularly when associated with other habitats such as long grass and wood piles that provide areas to forage and shelter.

The cultural setting

Cambridge is a place of naturalists and conservationists and has been for many years. We have perhaps one of the most studied natural histories of any city. It is possible to trace this history through just one plant in the city. The Butterbur patch which grows alongside the River Cam at Paradise LNR was first recorded in that location in the 1600s by the notable botanist John Ray. It has been recorded in that location ever since, its flowers appearing in early spring before the leaves.

Cambridge is home to many individuals, trusts, societies, groups, and institutes with nature conservation at the heart of what they do. Some groups have been well-established in the city for considerable periods of time, such as the Cambridge Natural History Society which has been studying the biodiversity of the area for over 164 years. Other more recently established organisations such as the Cambridge Conservation Initiative, a collaboration of the University and conservation organisations, have a world-wide reach far beyond the perimeter of the city. Whilst these groups are varied and diverse, they each have a shared goal to conserve and promote biodiversity. Collectively they present an enormous opportunity for successful collaboration to help Cambridge lead the way in the world as an example of how biodiversity and communities can co-exist and thrive together in a city geography.

4.7 Local threats and pressures

As with many other urban areas there are pressures and threats in Cambridge which degrade and deplete our biodiversity resource. To understand the opportunities and threats to biodiversity in Cambridge we commissioned the Biodiversity Audit and the Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project Report. These reports also identified several threats and pressures which are specific to our local area. The key pressures on biodiversity within Cambridge include:

- Habitat loss: Direct loss of biodiverse habitats and the species they support
- Habitat fragmentation: Removal of the links between areas resulting in smaller, less resilient habitats
- Habitat degradation: A deterioration in the condition of the habitat, such as reduction in species diversity

The key local causes of these are:

- Urbanisation: This can result in direct habitat loss and fragmentation. It could also lead to a degradation of habitats, for example from the effects of artificial light. Other indirect effects include poor air quality from increasing traffic. Nitrogen from exhaust fumes can over time increase nutrients in greenspaces and alter the composition of these habitats.
- Recreational pressure: As the population grows there is increasing demand on our greenspaces. Many habitats and species in the city are sensitive to disturbance. Impacts include trampling, or disturbance and nutrient deposition from the increasing popularity of dog walking in the city. Dog fouling deposits nutrients in sensitive habitats and this can change the vegetative composition of the area. Dogs off leads can have significant effects on ground nesting birds or disturbance of other animals such as mammals.
- Hydrological change: The Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project identified hydrological change as a major driver for negative impacts on our chalk streams and rivers. This includes channel modification and over-abstraction for domestic, agriculture and commercial use depleting aquifers leading to low flow and poor water quality. These result in habitat loss and degradation.
- Lack of appropriate habitat management: Many of our habitats require some form of human intervention to check ‘succession’ where they mature into less diverse habitats which support a smaller number of species. Examples include periodic coppicing (cutting to near ground level) of scrub and woodland to increase light to the ground or adjoining watercourses and promote new dense growth for bird nesting. Or grazing to prevent scrub encroaching onto rarer grassland habitats.

There are also wider causes, such as climate change which has the potential to alter habitats and species populations, thereby making them more scarce or isolated. These threats and pressures do not recognise the boundaries that we impose as humans. They pass through natural pathways, such as river catchments, and consequently their solutions will lie outside the city too. This requires us to work with stakeholders across a greater area across administrative boundaries



5. Biodiversity Audit

As part of the development of the 2022 Biodiversity Strategy, we established a baseline of habitat types and their condition for the key natural green spaces in our ownership so that we could plan and monitor management and enhancements to deliver a measurable gain in biodiversity. To quantity this we used the Biodiversity Metric tool developed by Natural England in partnership with DEFRA, It uses the size, type, and condition of habitats as a proxy for their importance and value for nature (Crosher *et al.,* 2019b).

The full 2020 baseline Biodiversity audit is available here: https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/9597/biodiversity-audit.pdf

To inform the midterm review and revised site management plans we undertook a sample habitat condition audit on 14 of the original core sites including LNRs, Commons and Mill Rd Cemetery.

Table1 showing 2025 combined habitat condition and direction of travel

Site	Overall condition assessment
Coldham's Common	Moderate - stable
Stourbridge Common	Poor – stable
Sheep's Green, Coe Fen, Lower Vicar's Brook, New Bit and Coe Fen Straits	Moderate - stable
Barnwell East	Moderate - stable
Barnwell West	Moderate - declining
Paradise	Good - stable
Byron's Pool	Moderate – declining
Nine Wells	Moderate - stable
Midsummer Common	Poor - stable
Bramblefields	Moderate – declining

West Pit	Good - stable
Logan's Meadow	Moderate - improving
Mill Road Cemetery	Moderate - stable
Hobson's Park	Moderate – improving

Conditions sometimes varied across habitats on each site and a more detailed breakdown is available in Appendix 2.

To support clearer and more consistent reporting, we will develop a simplified framework for defining "measurable net gain" across all Council managed core biodiversity sites, in line with neighbouring authorities, to ensure comparable reporting. This will include a streamlined methodology for assessing habitat extent, condition and connectivity, aligned with the DEFRA Biodiversity Metric but expressed in a way that is easy for practitioners, partners and the public to understand. This framework will set out how results are calculated, how often assessments are completed, and how progress will be communicated through our annual public reporting.

6. Biodiversity Strategy

Cambridge City Council recognises the global biodiversity emergency and the local impact this will have, and is having, on the city and communities we serve. Therefore, in 2019 we pledged to provide leadership and to ensure that we work with all sections of the community, including schools, community groups, university colleges, businesses and residents to reverse the decline in biodiversity and deliver measurable net gain within Cambridge and the wider sub-region. Within this section we have defined our vision and objectives and set out our proposed actions to enable us to achieve this.

'Our vision is that over the next 5 years Cambridge will see a "measurable net gain" in biodiversity compared with the 2020 Biodiversity Audit baseline, both within the city and the surrounding countryside, including the extent and quality of priority habitats and populations of priority species. Wildlife habitats will be protected, enhanced and where possible expanded and linked. The very best wildlife habitats will form the Cambridge Nature Network that will permeate the whole of the city and link to the wider Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Everyone who lives or works within Cambridge will have access to nature rich greenspaces within walking distance of their home

or place or work, and there will be a greater awareness and understanding of biodiversity with opportunities to be involved and collaborate in local wildlife enhancement projects and monitoring'.

Our aim is to put biodiversity at the forefront of everything that we do. By maximising opportunities for collaboration, we are working in partnership with residents, businesses, and institutions, and building upon existing strategies for climate and trees, to achieve this goal.

We will promote the principles set out in the Lawton Report: bigger, better, more joined up. This will require improvements and enhancements to our core sites in the city to create a biodiverse blue and green thread through the heart of Cambridge. We will see a healthy river and tributaries flowing through their natural floodplain habitats. Areas of existing grasslands will be improved, former wetland features will be restored, and new ones created. This network will help to restore healthy populations of iconic species such as otter, eel, and water vole.

Beyond this core area we will strive to create a city that is more permeable for nature. We have made a commitment to enhance our own estate to maximise the opportunities for biodiversity. And we have also made a commitment to engage and enable others in the city to do the same. Building upon our core network this will help to join the dots and connect people to nature, creating a city where birdsong and buzzing invertebrates can be heard and experienced by everyone, everywhere who lives, works, visits and studies in Cambridge.

The biodiversity emergency is intricately linked with the climate emergency. Many of the proposed actions set out below will also serve to alleviate the climate emergency. The actions set out within our climate change strategy will contribute to resolving the biodiversity emergency. Therefore, our updated Climate Change, Urban Forest and Biodiversity strategies will work together to ensure we do maximise our effort to tackle these threats.

Our strategic objectives are:

1. **To secure a measurable net gain in biodiversity across the city by 2031, compared with the 2020 baseline, in support of the Natural Cambridgeshire Doubling Nature Vision by 2030**

2. **To ensure designated sites and priority habitats are in good / favourable condition, wherever feasible, and that by 2031 no Council-managed LNR, Common or County Wildlife Site remains in poor condition without a management plan in place. Thus enhancing habitat and species resilience**

to a changing climate and contributing to the Cambridge Nature Network and Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy

3. **To engage and promote awareness of biodiversity and wellbeing, supporting and empowering coordinated action in our communities, businesses, and institutions through embedding Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework strategies and principles, with particular focus on wards with high social disadvantage or poor access to natural green space**

4. **To ensure that biodiversity protection and enhancement is considered by all council service functions and projects in line with our statutory Biodiversity Duty**

5. **To maximise the potential of our buildings, parks, open spaces, allotments and community gardens, watercourses and tree stock to support biodiversity, whilst balancing their multifunctional needs**

6. **To harness the wealth of local professional and amateur knowledge and experience in identifying and solving local issues.**

7. **To work with partners to establish long term, species and habitat monitoring to measure the impact of activities and identify new threats and opportunities across the city and publish an annual report on progress**

To meet the objectives, the proposed actions have been grouped within three themes:

Biodiversity mainstreaming: This theme is about embedding biodiversity into everything that we do as a council, whether that is constructing new houses, buying materials, or undertaking our role as a planning authority. We will ensure that biodiversity considerations are integrated into business cases, procurement and asset management decisions and provide practical guidance and training to service managers to support this. Thus, ensuring our actions minimise negative impacts on biodiversity as well as seek opportunities to enhance it. We will aim to develop cross-cutting strategies and solutions between all services that promote biodiversity and focus on nature-based solutions.

Our ambition is to consider the intrinsic value of conserving and enhancing biodiversity, as part of everything that we do. We will take steps to ensure that we review the effects of our activities and decisions on biodiversity and that, wherever

feasible, we can be working to promote and enhance the biodiversity of the city. We will take our objectives concerning biodiversity policy and consider them within all other areas of our work, for example our housing, transport, and economy. We will strengthen internal communication through regular cross service meetings, shared guidance, and clearer governance arrangements to ensure that biodiversity considerations are embedded consistently and that teams are aligned in their approach to site management and project delivery.

We recognise that biodiversity not only has intrinsic value and beauty but also provides our life support system, whilst further contributing to all our lives in Cambridge by generating economic, community, health and well-being benefits.

The mainstreaming approach will also help us to explore sustainable nature-based solutions across the city. This means we can use nature to help us solve some of the biggest issues that face us today including climate change, water and flood management or atmospheric pollutants from vehicles. This process will recognise and value nature as an asset that delivers multiple benefits to us.

The core: This theme is about developing our core of biodiversity sites in Cambridge. This includes reviewing and updating management plans for our most important nature conservation areas and working with partners to ensure a coherent and resilient nature network through Cambridge and beyond.

The Lawton Report encourages ‘bigger, better and more joined up’ habitats. The aim of this theme is to focus on our core sites, many of which are situated within the Cambridge Nature Recovery Network. Here we aim to focus on ‘bigger and better’ by improving biodiversity management of our core greenspaces, and wherever possible making more space for nature at these locations.

Many of these sites fall within the Cambridge Nature Network and Local Nature Recovery Strategy, our work here will help us make a meaningful contribution to these initiatives to deliver a joined up and resilient biodiversity network. The City Council will work to achieve enhanced habitat condition in these core locations to contribute to Natural Cambridgeshire’s vision to double nature.

We will endeavour to ensure that communities are informed in advance of any significant habitat works on our Local Nature Reserves, Commons and other core sites. Clear communication — including on site signage, online updates, and engagement with Friends Groups — will explain the purpose, timing and benefits of the works to help site users understand why temporary changes are necessary and how they will contribute to long term ecological improvement.

Nature in your neighbourhood: This theme is about encouraging nature to flourish across the city through empowerment and collaboration with communities, businesses and institutions. The aim is to ensure nature is not restricted to a few precious locations and that it can be enjoyed, understood, and experienced by all, regardless of where in the city people live, their income, or their housing type.

The biodiversity emergency is too big a problem to solve alone. In this theme we have developed actions which require a collaborative approach to the problem and to help encourage nature on your doorstep. Many of the actions relate to how people interact with nature in Cambridge, and we will provide the means and inspiration to help facilitate and encourage positive steps to be taken at a local level. We have developed actions to promote collaborative working in the city, drawing on the wealth of biodiversity expertise that we are fortunate to have in Cambridge. Other actions provide communities with the information or resources they need to help biodiversity in their neighbourhood. We will continue our commitment to existing initiatives, such as our hedgehog highways and neighbourhood canopy projects.

Our aim is to encourage engagement with nature to ensure that it is pervasive throughout the entire city. It is vitally important that we work hard to ensure that our key sites of nature conservation are protected and managed effectively. However, we need to go beyond these islands of biodiversity and work to create greater connectivity for nature. Within this theme we are focussing on the Lawton's Report 'more joined up'.

We will work with communities to develop ward-based nature priorities, aligned with the LNRS and Cambridge Nature Network, and we will support residents to shape and monitor local projects.

7 Action plan (2026 – 2031)

Since adoption of the strategy in 2022 we have been collaborating on actions to achieve our objectives. Appendix Biodiversity Duty Report summarises our key activities under our 3 themes and celebrates successes to date.

Moving forward to achieve our vision and objectives we will continue to collaborate with partners to deliver the following action plan (2026 – 2031) and monitor our collective outcomes. An annual review of this plan based on monitoring evidence and community feedback will identify actions that are delivered, delayed or require amendment and propose new projects or actions to meet our objectives.

Biodiversity Mainstreaming *'Consider and embed nature in everything we do'*

Actions	Lead & Partners	Outcomes	Timeline
Adopt, support delivery and monitoring of the LNRS. Continue representation on LNRS delivery steering group	City Services, Natural Cambridgeshire, CPCA, Cambridgeshire County Council	Strategic delivery of habitat and species actions within the city and beyond	Adopted December 2025 – Delivery and monitoring Plan 2026 Delivery – 2026 - 2031
Adoption and implementation of Shared Local Plan	GCSPS, SCDC	Robust, evidenced biodiversity policies, aligned with LNRS and BNG delivery to guide sustainable development	Proposed adoption by December 2026
Adoption and implementation of Urban Forest Strategy (2026 - 2036)	City Services, Community Services	Management, protection, planting of and engagement with the urban forest	Adoption March 2026 – Delivery 2026 – 2036
Ensure CIP and other City Council developments achieve a minimum 20% BNG target across all projects	CIP, GCSPS	New development secure high-quality habitats and species enhancement with published long-term management and monitoring in place.	2026 -2031
Implement Environmental Management System to secure ISO14001 accreditation for City	City Services	Improved environmental performance across City Service	March 2026

operation hub and activities			
Explore rainwater harvesting on Council owned properties	City Service, Property Services, Water Resources East (WRE)	Reduced abstraction from aquifer for tree watering and other operation functions	Explore Feasibility and performance metric in 2026, deliver 2027 - 2031
Continue to deliver Herbicide Reduction Plan	City Services, property Services	Continue herbicide free maintenance of our public realm advocate through Cambridge Matters and social media for residents, business and institutes to follow suit	2026 - 2031
Continue biodiversity representation on the existing Environment Policy & Project Group to improve cross service communication,	City Services, Community Services, GCSPS, Housing, Property Services	Integration of biodiversity objectives across all council functions; improved delivery efficiency; stronger alignment between services.	2026 – 2031

The Core '*working with partners to ensure a coherent resilient nature network*'

Actions	**Lead & Partners**	**Outcomes**	**Timeline**
Continued support of Cambridge Nature Network	City Services, CPPF, BCN WT, Cambridge Ahead, National Trust, RSPB, East	Collaborate on funding bids and sharing resource to create 'Bigger, better, more joined	2026 - 2031

	Cambridge Farming Cluster	up' habitats across the CNN	
Local Nature Reserve and Commons management	City Service, Community Services, Volunteers and Corporate Groups	Complete ongoing habitat management of our 12 LNRs, including control of invasive species. Deliver at least one habitats condition improvement (as defined by DEFRA Condition Assessment) in each site by 2031	2026 - 2031
Develop a simplified measurable net gain assessment framework for all Council managed core biodiversity sites	City Services. CPCA, Natural Cambridgeshire, CNN	Clearer reporting of biodiversity improvements; consistent measurement across sites; improved public and partner understanding	Develop 2026; implement 2027 - 2031
Continue our work with the Wildlife Trust to provide advice to private landowners and managers of Local Wildlife Sites to bring into positive management	City Services, BCN WT, private landowners	Increase number of designated Local Wildlife Sites in positive management, monitored annually by CPERC	2026 - 2031
Identification and designation of additional City Wildlife Sites and LNRs. Continue representation on County Wildlife Site Panel	City Services	Secure protection and enhanced management of qualifying sites	2026 -Cowley Road drain CiWS, Church End LNR and Fulbourn Rd LNR

Adopt and deliver new Management Plan Reviews for LNRs and Commons	City Services	New management plans embedded to ensure favourable habitat condition	13 sites reviewed in 2025 to be consulted, adopted and delivered in 2026 to 2031
Conservation Cattle Grazing Review	City Service, CNN, Licensed graziers	Review grazing timescales and number of animals to ensure we meet site management plan conditions and implement on all sites by 2031	Review in 2025 / 2026 Implement 2027 -2031
Trial the use of hardy sheep breeds within temporary fenced compartments on smaller sites.	City Services, CNN, East Cambridge Farmers Cluster	Enhanced grassland management of key sites to improve habitat condition	Consult in 2026, trial in 2027, if successful deliver from 2028 - 2031
Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project (GCCSP)	City Services, South Staffs Water, Cam Catchment Partnership, Anglian Water, Environment Agency, Hobson's Conduit Trust	Deliver and monitor 6 case study sites across City and Sith Cambs. Work with partners to deliver WINEP and other investment in Cambridge chalk streams	2026 - 2028
Cambridge and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre (CPERC)	City Service, GCSPS, CPERC	Continue support through Service Level Agreement and representation on the Steering Group	2026 - 2031
Develop and deliver a communications protocol to inform	City Services, Community Services,	Improved public understanding and support for habitat	Protocol developed 2026;

communities of habitat management works	Communications Team	interventions; reduced confusion or concern; strengthened relationships with site users.	implemented 2026–2031

Nature in your neighbourhood *'ensure nature is not restricted to a few precious locations and can be enjoyed, understood and experienced by all'*

Actions	Lead & Partners	Outcomes	Timeline
Seek support and agree actions to embed Natural England Green Infrastructure principles to achieve Nature City Accreditation	City Services, Community Services, CNN, CCF Community Groups, Business	Strengthened partnership, shared leadership, community engagement, external recognition, increase funding opportunities	2026 Self-assessment. Build Partnership, seek Foundation Accreditation.
Parks Biodiversity Toolkit (publish 2021) promotion	City Services, Community services	Inspire communities to codesign and secure funding for local park biodiversity enhancement.	Seek to deliver at least 3 parks improvements per annum . 2026 - 2031
Nature Recovery 'From the Ground Up' LNRS delivery ward-based community action	City Services, Community Services, Cambridgeshire County Council, Community Groups	4-year Cambridge County Council Project targeting city wide, ward scale delivery of the LNRS.	2026 – 2030 programme to enable communities to develop and deliver LNRS actions locally
Butterfly Friendly Council (BFC)	City Services, Butterfly Conservation	Meet the 5 steps to become an official BFC including adopting ecological	2026 - 2027

		sensitive lighting principles on core sites	
Cambridge Elm diversity Project – *celebrating the unique diversity of Cambridgeshire Elm*	City Services, Community Service, BCN WT	Establish a 'community nursery' of local Elm species for planting in partnership across the CNN	2026 - 2031
Native Black Poplar Project	City Services, Community Services,	Establish a 'community nursery' of local cultivars for planting in partnership across the CNN	2026 - 2031
River Cam CAN, DiversiTree legacy	City Services, Community Services	Seek further funding to secure management and replacement planting for willow pollards	2026 - 2031
Cambridge Nature Festival	City Services, Community Services, CNN	Month long programme of free and low-cost events to connect people with nature	Support events and promotion in 2026, seek funding 2026 - 2031
Environmental Education Spaces Continue to support existing spaces and explore additional site resource, explore partnership working to support the 'Go Green in 15' initiative.	City Service, primary school / nursery license holders	Continued use of 3 spaces, explore at least 1 additional site	2026 - 2031
Environment Improvement Programme (EIP)	City Services	Seek to allocate future budget to projects that meet	2026 - 2027

project selection criteria / prioritisation		strategic biodiversity and urban forest objectives.	
'Wild about Art' projects – continue to support funding bids and provide locations for nature-based art across Cambridge	City Services, Community Services, artist and communities	Innovative education and / or habitat creation temporary and permanent installations exploring the wonders of nature	2026 - 2031
Urban Nature Conservation Evidence	City Services, Cambridge Conservation Initiative, Cambridge Conservation Forum	Facilitate research trials on our urban conservation actions to build a shared evidence base	2026 – Closed Churchyard grass cutting trials and monitoring invertebrate use of climate resilient non-native trees

8 References

Draft Cambridge City Council Urban Forest Strategy

Draft Cambridge City Council Climate Change Strategy

Draft Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan

Draft South Cambridgeshire District Council Climate & Nature Strategy

Cambridgeshire County Council Biodiversity Strategy

Cambridge Nature Network

Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project Report

9 Glossary of Terms

Amenity Grassland – Frequently mown, species-poor grassland.

Biodiversity – Variety of living organisms.

Biodiversity Duty – Statutory requirement to enhance biodiversity.

Biodiversity Emergency – Recognition of rapid decline.

Biodiversity Metric – DEFRA tool to calculate biodiversity units.

Biodiversity Net Gain – Measurable improvement in biodiversity.

Blue Infrastructure – Water-based ecological features.

Calcareous Grassland – Chalk/limestone grassland.

Chalk Streams – Rare freshwater habitats.

Climate Resilience – Ability to withstand climate impacts.

Connectivity – Joined habitats enabling species movement.

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 – Protects key species and habitats.

CRoW Act – Right to roam and strengthened protections.

Dasgupta Review – Review on economics of biodiversity.

Deadwood – Standing or fallen decaying wood providing habitat.

Designation – Formal recognition of biodiversity importance.

Distinctiveness – Rarity/value score in biodiversity metric.

Ecological Succession – Natural habitat change over time.

Ecosystem Services – Benefits provided by nature.

Environment Act 2021 – Major UK environmental legislation.

Garden Biodiversity – Ecological value of private gardens.

Green Infrastructure – Network of natural/semi-natural areas.

Greater Cambridge Local Plan – Joint spatial plan for future growth.

Habitat Condition – Measure of ecological quality.

Habitat Creation – Establishing new habitats.

Habitat Enhancement – Improving existing habitats.

Habitat Fragmentation – Breaking up connected habitats.

Lawton Report – Recommends ‘bigger, better, more joined-up’ nature.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy – Statutory strategy for nature recovery.

Local Nature Reserve (LNR) – Statutory designation for local biodiversity sites.

Measurable Net Gain – Quantified biodiversity improvement.

National Planning Policy Framework – National planning policies.

NERC Act 2006 – Defines Priority Habitats and Species.

Neutral Grassland – Grassland on neutral soils.

Pollard – Traditional tree management.

Priority Habitats & Species – National conservation priorities.

Protected Road Verge – Verge designated for conservation.

Recreational Pressure – Ecological impacts of high public use.

River Restoration – Reinstating natural river processes.

Semi-natural Habitat – Human-influenced yet biodiverse habitat.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest – National statutory designation.

Strategic Significance – Biodiversity Metric value booster.

Urban Forest – All trees in an urban area.

Veteran Tree / Veteranisation – Trees with biodiversity-rich features.

10 Appendices

Appendix 1	National Legislation
Appendix 2	Cambridge City Council, core biodiversity site habitat condition audit 2025
Appendix 3	Biodiversity Duty Report (2022 – 2025)

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Appendices

Appendix 1. **National Legislation**

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 (last updated July 2021)

The revised NPPF was updated on 20 July 2021 setting out the Government's planning policies for England and the process by which these should be applied. The policies within the NPPF are a material consideration in the planning process. The key principle of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, with sustainable development defined as a balance between economic, social and environmental needs.

Policies 174 to 188 of the NPPF address conserving and enhancing the natural environment, stating that the planning system should:

- Contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes.
- Recognise the wider benefits of ecosystem services; and
- Minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity.

Furthermore, there is a focus on re-use of existing brownfield sites or sites of low environmental value as a priority, and discouraging development in National Parks, Sites of Specific Scientific Interest, the Broads or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty other than in exceptional circumstances.

Where possible, planning policies should also "promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity".

Environment Act 2021

The Environment Act 2021 sets out key legislation after the UK's exit from the European Union. With the largest changes to green regulations in decades, the Act includes the establishment of an Office for Environmental Protection, targets on air pollution, water quality and biodiversity, and the enshrinement of the 25 Year Environment Plan in law. The Act also makes provisions for a mandatory 10% net gain in biodiversity for all developments covered by the Town and Country Planning Act, and it also introduces a statutory requirement for Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

Public authorities who operate in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England. This is the strengthened 'biodiversity duty' that the Environment Act 2021 introduced requiring local authorities to:

- Consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on your consideration.
- Act to deliver your policies and achieve your objectives

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) provides legal protection to natives UK species and enhances the protection of SSSIs. In addition to affording protection to some species, The Act also names species which are considered invasive and require control. Section 14 of the Act prohibits the introduction into the wild of any animal of a kind which is not ordinarily resident in, and is not a regular visitor to, Great Britain in a wild state, or any species of animal or plant listed in Schedule 9 to the Act. In the main, Schedule 9 lists non-native species that are already established in the wild, but which continue to pose a conservation threat to native biodiversity and habitats, such that further releases should be regulated.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) is secondary legislation which puts into domestic law the EU Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) and certain elements of the EU Wild Birds Directive (Directive 2009/147/EC). These Directives contain rules for the protection of habitats and species, the proper management of habitats and preventing exploitation of species. The Regulations ensure that the UK will continue to meet international commitments under the Bern Convention and the Bonn convention.

Schedule 2 offers protection to a number of notable species such as great crested newts, hazel dormouse, otter, and all bat species. Schedule 2 protects these species from deliberate capture, death, or injury as well as disturbance both to themselves and their breeding sites or resting places.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

Many of the species covered by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, along with a host of others not afforded additional protection, are listed on Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

Section 41 (S41) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC Act 2006) requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species that are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The list (including 56 habitats and 943 species) has been drawn up in consultation with Natural England and draws upon the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) List of Priority Species and Habitats.

The S41 list should be used to guide decision-makers such as local and regional authorities to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in the exercise of their normal functions – as required under Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006. The duty applies to all local authorities and extends beyond just conserving what is already there, to carrying out, supporting and requiring actions that may also restore or enhance biodiversity.

The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000

The CRoW Act (2000), as well as implementing the "right to roam", also contains changes for nature conservation updating aspects of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 such as strengthening punishment for killing, injuring or disturbing protected species, and extending the regulations to cover reckless behaviour as well as intentional acts against protected species.

Section 74 of the act contains a list of habitats and species of Principal Importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England, which falls in accordance with the 1992 UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

Policy documents (national, regional and local)

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2018) and Cambridge Local Plan (2018) - currently being updated to the Greater Cambridge Shared Local Plan

South Cambridgeshire District Council adopted their Local Plan in 2018, with the overall environmental objectives of: "contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, prudent use of natural resources, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy".

Key policies include:

Policy NH/4, which prevents developments from occurring that result in the loss, deterioration or fragmentation of irreplaceable habitats, and outlines that new developments must aim to maintain, enhance, restore or add to biodiversity.
Policy NH/5, which sets out protection for sites of biodiversity or geological importance; and
Policy NH/6, which encourages proposals that reinforce, link or create new green infrastructure in line with the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011).

Cambridge City Council also adopted their Local Plan in 2018, with a small selection of key policies including:

Policy 4: Green belt - new development in the Green Belt will not be approved except in very special circumstances, in line with Green Belt policy in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Policy 7: River Cam - development proposals that are situated along the River Cam should where possible enhance the natural resources of the river and provide opportunities for re-naturalisation of the river; and Policy 31 f: Any flat roofs should be a green or brown roof, as part of a key measure in Cambridge's climate change adaptation policy.

Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council are preparing a Greater Cambridge Local Plan, which will set out plans for infrastructure, new homes and economic growth in the region over the next 20 years.

Greater Cambridge Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (2022)

Published in January 2022 this document provides guidance on how biodiversity should be addressed through the planning process. The document provides technical guidance to ensure that the biodiversity policies set out in the Local Plans are effectively implemented. The document provides accessible, accurate and up-to-date guidance on the planning regulations surrounding biodiversity, including relevant national legislation. It sets out the information that should be submitted with planning applications to demonstrate how development proposals meet the councils' requirements. The Supplementary Planning Document is a material planning consideration in determining planning applications in both Council areas.

Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services

DEFRA produced the Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services with the strategy mission defined to: "halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people". The first two action areas include developing an integrated landscape-scale approach to conservation on land and at sea, and to "put people at the heart of biodiversity policy". The actions themselves are supported by numerous grants, campaigns and competitions.

Reviews, plans and policy drivers (national, regional and local)

CCC/MKA Biodiversity Audit (2020)

The Biodiversity Audit, released in conjunction with this Biodiversity Strategy, is a report calculating a baseline estimate of biodiversity across several statutorily and non-statutorily designated sites owned by Cambridge City Council. Habitat and condition maps provide the data on the existing value of sites, with opportunities for enhancement and alterations to management regimes also provided. Sites were assessed using the Defra Biodiversity Metric 2.0 (Crosher et al., 2019b) with the intention of providing measurable biodiversity gain in the future.

Making Space for Nature: A review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network (The Lawton Report, 2010)

The Lawton Report (2010) is an independent review of wildlife sites across England, with the key aim of assessing whether these sites are capable of responding and adapting to climate change. Professor Lawton reached this conclusion: "England's collection of wildlife sites are generally too small and too isolated, leading to declines in many of England's characteristic species. With climate change, the situation is likely to get worse... We need more space for

nature". The report outlines 24 recommendations to improve the situation, with key themes of "more, bigger, better and joined".

25 Year Environment Plan 2018

The 25 Year Environment Plan published by DEFRA outlines long term government actions that prioritise environmental health in agriculture, fishing, land use and other areas. One of the six key areas identified for further action include "Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes", under which the development of a Nature Recovery Network (NRN) and the opportunity to reintroduce native species are outlined. Through the NRN, the goal is to provide half a million hectares of additional wildlife habitat to provide linkages and promote connectivity between existing protected areas. Ensuring environmental net gain in housing and infrastructure developments is also discussed as a key method of achieving economic growth whilst providing measurable improvements for the environment.

The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review 2021

The Dasgupta Review was prepared by Professor Sir Partha Dasgupta and released in February 2021. The review's critical message is that nature can no longer be ignored within economic decisions, and that human demands vastly outpace the capacity of the natural environment to provide the "goods and services" required. In direct relation to ecology, the review discusses the importance of biodiversity in increasing the stability of ecosystem functioning, and that the loss of biodiversity reduces the productivity of communities and their ability to produce biomass. The review also outlines a fundamental flaw in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), highlighting its lack of consideration of the depreciation of natural capital, and the economic costs of these losses.

Appendix 2

Cambridge City Council, core biodiversity site habitat condition audit 2025

The following provides a summary of the changes highlighted in the biodiversity audits between 2020 and 2025. A total of 14 sites we reassessed in 2025. Habitat Management and Monitoring Plans have been developed for these locations.

Overall themes

An attempt has been made to provide an overall condition for each site, and the direction of travel, taking a view across all the habitats and conditions at that location. These overall conditions are based on judgement and do not necessarily consider just extent of conditions across the site. Instead, additional weight has been placed on what are perceived to be the most important features of each site. For example, at Nine Wells the site is assessed overall

as moderate – stable even though the most extensive habitat (woodland has moved from moderate to good). This is because the key habitat at this location, the chalk springs have remained stable in moderate condition. Another example is West Pit where the most extensive habitat, woodland, has declined in condition. However, this site has overall been assessed as good – stable because this is the condition of the calcareous grassland at this location, its most important feature.

The table below summarises the overall assessments for each site.

Site	Overall condition assessment
Coldham's Common	***Moderate - stable***
Stourbridge Common	***Poor – stable***
Sheep's Green, Coe Fen, Lower Vicar's Brook, New Bit and Coe Fen Straits	***Moderate - stable***
Barnwell East	***Moderate - stable***
Barnwell West	***Moderate - declining***
Paradise	***Good - stable***
Byron's Pool	***Moderate – declining***
Nine Wells	***Moderate - stable***
Midsummer Common	***Poor - stable***
Bramblefield's	***Moderate – declining***
West Pit	***Good - stable***
Logan's Meadow	***Moderate - improving***
Mill Road Cemetery	***Moderate - stable***
Hobson's Park	***Moderate – improving***

Of the fourteen sites that were reassessed in 2025 two are considered to be in good condition, ten are considered to be in moderate condition and two are considered to be in poor condition. The two sites in good condition are West Pit and Paradise, both with critical and rare habitats in the city (calcareous grassland and wet woodland). It is notable that the two sites in poor condition are significant and extensive locations: Midsummer Common and Stourbridge Common. Whilst these sites are in poor condition their scale and prominence in the city does indicate great potential for improvement if grazing can be appropriately managed, together with recreational impacts.

Of the sites two are thought to be improving, whilst nine are stable and three are declining. The two improving sites are those which have undergone the most significant change in recent years (Logan's Meadow and Hobson's Park). The declining sites - Byron's Pool, Bramblefields and West Barnwell – have seen negative change for a variety of reasons possible maturing habitats with a lack of management, or recreational pressures in the case of Byron's Pool.

The following tables provide summaries for each key habitat type at the 14 locations across the city.

Grasslands

Site	Overall condition assessment
Coldham's Common	***Moderate - stable***
Stourbridge Common	***Poor – stable***
Sheep's Green, Coe Fen New Bit	***Poor – stable*** ***Moderate - improving***
Barnwell East	***Poor – declining***
Paradise	***Poor – declining***
Byron's Pool	***Moderate – improving***
Midsummer Common	***Poor - stable***
Bramblefields	***Moderate – stable***
West Pit	***Good - stable***
Mill Road Cemetery	***Moderate - stable***
Hobson's Park	***Moderate –stable***

This shows that the most significant areas of grassland are stable or improving. However, it also shows that sites which feature important areas of grasslands are in poor condition (Stourbridge Common, Sheep's Green, Coe Fen and Midsummer Common). These areas of poor condition are generally driven by a lack of species diversity and structure in the grasslands. This may be due to a combination of factors but improving grazing regimes and appropriate management of recreational pressures will likely improve condition.

Woodland

Site	Overall condition assessment
Coldham's Common	***Moderate - declining***
Stourbridge Common	***Moderate - declining***
Sheep's Green, Coe Fen, Lower Vicar's Brook, New Bit and Coe Fen Straits	***Poor - declining***
Barnwell East	***Moderate – improving***
Barnwell West	***Moderate - declining***
Paradise	***Good - stable***
Byron's Pool	***Moderate – declining***
Nine Wells	***Good – improving***
Bramblefields	***Moderate – stable***
West Pit	***Moderate - declining***
Logan's Meadow	***Moderate - improving***

The key woodland sites of Paradise, Byron's Pool, Nine Wells and West Pit show mixed results. Both Byron's Pool and West Pit woodlands are declining, but potentially for different reasons, with recreational impacts at Byon's Pool and ash dieback and invasive species impacting West Pit. Paradise and Nine Wells are both now in good condition, with Nine Wells showing improvement in condition in this monitoring period.

Scrub

Site	Overall condition assessment
Coldham's Common	***Moderate - stable***
Stourbridge Common	***Moderate - stable***
Sheep's Green, Coe Fen, Lower Vicar's Brook, New Bit and Coe Fen Straits	***Moderate - stable***
Barnwell East	***Good - stable***
Barnwell West	***Moderate - declining***
Bramblefields	***Poor – declining***
West Pit	***Moderate - stable***
Logan's Meadow	***Poor – declining***
Mill Road Cemetery	***Moderate - declining***
Hobson's Park	***Moderate – improving***

Areas of well-established scrub at Barnwell West, Bramblefield, Logan's Meadow and Mill Road Cemetery are declining and this may be a result of lack of management resulting in maturing scrub with few clearings or glades and little regrowth and structure. However, some areas have remained in stable condition and the new areas of scrub at Hobson's Park are improving.

Aquatic habitats

Site	Overall condition assessment
Coldham's Common	***Moderate - declining***
Stourbridge Common	***Moderate - stable***
Sheep's Green, Coe Fen, Lower Vicar's Brook, New Bit and Coe Fen Straits	***Moderate - declining***
Barnwell East	***Moderate - stable***
Barnwell West	***Poor - stable***
Paradise	***Good - declining***
Byron's Pool	***Moderate – declining***
Nine Wells	***Moderate - stable***
Bramblefields	***Moderate – declining***
Logan's Meadow	***Moderate - improving***
Hobson's Park	***Moderate – stable***

Many of the aquatic habitats, which includes ditches and ponds, across the assessed sites are in moderate condition, however a significant number are declining in condition. This decline is for a number of reasons, for example overgrazing resulting in poaching at Coldham's Common and Coe Fen. The ponds at some sites, Byron's Pool and Bramblefields have declined in condition for varied reasons such as shading or invasive species but Logan's Meadow has seen improvements due to recent restoration works and slowly maturing habitats.

Site summaries

***Coldham's Common** Moderate - stable*

Habitat types and extents have remained broadly similar between 2020 and 2025. The exceptions are the woodland has now been classified as w1f7 Other lowland mixed deciduous woodland rather than w1g7 Other broadleaved woodland types, and the g2a Lowland calcareous grassland is classified as g2c Other calcareous grassland. This change is not a

result of changes in the habitat, instead it is the result of more rigorous grassland assessments in the newer UK Habitat Classification methodology.

The majority of the grasslands are in a stable condition, with the exception of the modified moderate and good condition, passing the majority of criteria with the exception of the playing fields which fails essential Criterion A. Some small areas of woodland south of the railway, have also declined in condition, however, this is likely as a result of updated methodologies in the Statutory Metric. The areas of scrub overall are in good or moderate condition. However, a small area is in poor condition, failing the majority of criteria. Coldham's Brook has declined in condition from good to moderate and it is likely this is a result of overgrazing and damage to the banks of the watercourse and the rigorous criteria for floristic diversity. All other habitat types are broadly in a similar condition to the 2020 audit and considered stable.

Stourbridge Common Poor – stable

Habitat types and extents have remained broadly similar between 2020 and 2025. The exception being is that the woodland has now been classified as w1f7 Other lowland mixed deciduous woodland rather than w1g7 Other broadleaved woodland types. Overall conditions for the majority of habitats have remained stable, with only some areas of woodland declining from moderate to poor. This change is likely due to a change in the condition assessment criteria. The site does experience overgrazing and high levels of recreational pressure. Changes in management would help to improve the condition of the grassland present.

Sheep's Green, Coe Fen, Lower Vicar's Brook, New Bit and Coe Fen Straits Moderate - stable

Habitat types and extents have remained broadly similar between 2020 and 2025. The exception being is that the woodland has now been classified as w1f7 Other lowland mixed deciduous woodland rather than w1g7 Other broadleaved woodland types. New Bit is also developing into wood-pasture and parkland.

Updated methodologies of UKHab and the Statutory Metric have led to changes in some habitat and condition across the site, in particular Sheep's Green. The grassland, scrub and freshwater habitats at Sheep's Green are in a moderate stable condition. However, the site does experience overgrazing and excessive trampling due to recreational pressure and should be managed appropriately to improve the conditions and grassland types present. Habitats at New Bit are overall in a stable condition, with only the grassland improving condition from poor to moderate. Grasslands at Coe Fen remain poor. The ditches as this location are now in poor

condition, failing criteria relating to species richness, duckweed and damage due to cattle poaching.

***Barnwell East** Moderate - stable*

Updated methodologies of UKHab and the Statutory Metric have led to changes in habitat and condition across the site. The calcareous grassland is at risk from vigorous invasive species including Canadian goldenrod. The scrub habitats are in good condition and improving, changes to the condition assessment methodology now mean that only mixed scrub requires a condition assessment. The woodland is also improving; it is now classified as a priority habitat and will continue to improve as it matures; invasive species management is necessary in this habitat also.

***Barnwell West** Moderate - declining*

Habitat types and extents have remained broadly similar between 2020 and 2025. The exception being is that the woodland has now been classified as w1f7 Other lowland mixed deciduous woodland rather than w1g7 Other broadleaved woodland types. This is a positive change as w1f7 is a Habitat of Principal Importance.

There has been a reduction in condition of the habitats. The woodland has declined in condition due to a lack of understorey/vertical structure and deadwood. This may be a result of lack of management and impacts of browsing. Scrub has declined in condition in part due to a lack of structure and glades, with the northern parcel lacking good species diversity.

***Paradise** Good - stable*

Habitat types and extents have remained broadly similar between 2020 and 2025. Small sections of the modified grassland have been subsumed into the wet woodland habitat. All other habitats have remained at the same extent, or slightly increased in the case of wet woodland.

The wet woodland, a Habitat of Principal Importance and key feature of the site is retained in good condition, albeit with continued pressures from recreation and anti-social behaviour. The grassland clearing in the north has decreased in condition from moderate to poor which may be a result of increasing dominance of ruderal species which is decreasing the overall species richness. However, the ruderal species continue to provide resource for various species, particularly nectar and foodplants for invertebrates, which in combination with the sheltered glade environment provides good habitat.

Byron's Pool Moderate – declining

Habitat types and extents have remained broadly similar between 2020 and 2025. The exceptions being that the woodland is now classified as w1f7 Other lowland mixed deciduous woodland rather than w1g7 Other broadleaved woodland types. This is a positive change as w1f7 is a Habitat of Principal Importance. The area of cropland in the north of the site is now classified as other calcareous grassland.

There has been a reduction in condition of some of the habitats. The woodland has declined from good to moderate condition, likely as a result of increased recreational pressure, low diversity in age structure and lack of a recognisable ground flora. The ponds have also declined from overall from good to moderate, this change is likely due to a change in the condition assessment criteria with ponds failing one or more of the following: A – water quality; C – duckweed cover, D – connectivity and F – non-native invasives. An assessment of the fish pass was not undertaken during the 2025 survey, as this beyond the scope of the assessment. However, the fish pass appears to be in a stable condition.

Nine Wells Moderate - stable

Habitat types and extents have remained broadly similar between 2020 and 2025. The small area of grassland in the south-west has been reclassified as modified grassland from *Arrhenatherum* neutral grassland. This change is not a result of changes in the habitat, instead it is the result of more rigorous grassland assessments in the newer UK Habitat Classification methodology.

The woodland has improved in condition from moderate to good, now having better levels of deadwood and reduced impacts from grazing. A condition assessment of the chalk streams at Nine Wells was beyond the scope of the assessment however, they appear to be in a stable or slightly improved condition thanks to recent works to improve sinuosity and flow diversity. The small area of grassland has reduced from moderate condition to poor condition, largely in part due to the changing methodologies in the biodiversity metric. The hedgerows have remained stable or improved and are now all in good condition.

Midsummer Common Poor - stable

There has been little change at Midsummer Common with no significant changes in habitat type or extent. The only minor change that has occurred has resulted from the translocation

of grassland turves from Hobson's Park. This has created a new area of other neutral grassland. In addition some areas of bramble scrub have been cut back.

The conditions at Midsummer Common have remained stable, albeit poor. The new area of other neutral grassland is in moderate condition.

Bramblefields Moderate – declining

The habitats and their extents at Bramblefields have remained similar. Two notable habitats at the site have declined in condition (ponds and scrub) but the other have remained stable (with minor changes likely a result of changing condition assessment methodologies in the different biodiversity metrics that have been applied). The ponds have declined from good to moderate and this is because of the presence of invasive species, shading and lack of open water. The scrub has declined in condition from good to poor because it has become dominated by a single species; they lack good edge habitat and some younger plants. Littering and human activity are also having impacts.

West Pit Good - stable

The extents of habitats at West Pit have largely remained stable. There has been a slight decrease in coverage of woodland although this is results of a mapping error in 2020. Continued scrub clearance has occurred around the edges of the calcareous grassland at the cliff top which has led minor changes in the coverage of these habitat types. The grassland that is present on the cliff face in the south of the site has been reclassified as modified grassland, rather than calcareous grassland. This is likely due to more rigorous grassland classifications in the new UKHab methodology. This grassland lacks both the species diversity and the calcareous indicators to be considered calcareous grassland.

The key habitat at this location is the calcareous grassland and this remains in good condition. The other major habitat at West Pit is the woodland. This has declined in condition from good to moderate. Whilst this change in condition may be partly a result of changing condition assessment methodologies is it clear that the woodland has also declined in condition. The lower condition value is a result of failing criteria concerning invasive species, disease (ash dieback) which is having a significant impact on the canopy, lack of proper NVC community, lack of veteran trees and significant nutrient enrichment. The extent of the ash dieback and the risk from falling rocks makes this area particularly unsafe and it is proposed that no public access is allowed. Due to the state of the woodland, and the likely continued decline it is proposed that this area is managed with a target habitat of calcareous scrub.

Logan's Meadow ***Moderate - improving***

Logan's Meadow has undergone many changes in the past, with new habitats being created. The recent wetland creation will lead to higher condition and value habitats, currently they are lacking vegetation and structure, however this will change over time and the current assessment of condition (and habitat type to some extent) is likely not representative. The wet woodland is potentially improving in condition as are the woodland ponds that have now been established for 20 years.

Mill Road Cemetery ***Moderate - stable***

The former calcareous grassland within one of the quadrants has now been reclassified as other neutral grassland which has a lower distinctiveness. This change is not a result of changes in the habitat, instead it is the result of more rigorous grassland assessments in the newer UK Habitat Classification methodology. Otherwise, the extent and types of habitats have remained largely stable.

The neutral grassland, the key habitat feature at Mill Road Cemetery, has remained in moderate condition. The scrub has reduced in condition and this is likely to be a result of maturation of this habitat with poor edges and a lack of glades and clearings.

Hobson's Park ***Moderate – improving***

The extent of the 2025 survey was significantly larger than the 2020 survey with several additional areas assessed. In addition to this, several habitats included within the scope of the 2020 survey had been removed and/or were inaccessible during the 2025 survey due to the development of Cambridge South station, mostly along the eastern boundary. An area previous classified as *g3c5 Arrhenatherum neutral grassland* is now classified as *g2c other calcareous grassland* due to the calcareous grassland indicator species present. The condition of this grassland has also changed from 'good' to 'moderate'. However, this is likely to reflect the change in condition assessment criteria rather than an actual decline in the condition of the grassland. The grassland appears to be significantly more species-rich than previously. Other grassland areas remain in the same condition or were excluded from either the 2020 or 2025 surveys.

An area assessed as woodland in the 2020 surveys has been assessed as scrub to reflect the true nature of the habitat currently present. The 2020 woodland condition was 'poor' and would remain 'poor' if the woodland condition assessment had been applied in 2025, with a score of

22 points. However, the current scrub habitat has been assessed as being in ‘moderate’ condition.

The hedgerow surrounding the allotments and the line of trees along the western boundary have improved in condition from ‘poor’ to ‘moderate’. Hobson’s brook has also increased in condition from ‘moderate’ in 2020 to ‘good’ in 2025.

Table of condition changes at each site

Habitat	2020 Condition and direction of travel	2025 Condition and direction of travel	Reasons for change if any	Proposed actions in new management plans
Coldham's Common				
Other calcareous grassland (East)	Poor declining because of recreational management and scrub encroachment around the rifle butt	Poor - stable	Whilst the species composition and structure have largely remained the same the 2023 version of UKHab methodology has more rigorous selection criteria for grassland types, meaning this grassland now qualifies as g2c other calcareous grassland.	
Other calcareous grassland (The Triangle)	Moderate/good stable due to ongoing sympathetic management	Moderate - stable	Increased scrub encroachment.	Rotational clearance to reduce scrub encroachment in grassland areas.
Other neutral grassland	Moderate declining. Formerly more indicator species recorded in this area, potential overgrazing	Poor - stable	Stable condition however grassland has low floristic diversity and fails essential Criterion A.	Grazing strategy to be developed. Creation of scrapes in grassland areas.
Arrhenatherum neutral grassland	Moderate declining. Formerly more indicator species recorded in this area, potential overgrazing	Moderate - stable	N/A	Grazing strategy to be developed. Creation of scrapes in grassland areas.
Modified grassland	Poor stable. Pitches under regular management with close mowing, grassland dominated by tall fescue with heavy grazing	Moderate/ good condition improving	Change in condition likely driven by changing assessment methodologies in biodiversity metric.	On going management as appropriate for amenity areas. Grazing strategy to be developed. Creation of scrapes in grassland areas.
Line of trees	Good condition stable	Good condition stable	N/A	On going management as appropriate
Other broadleaved woodland	Moderate or good improving due to maturation of areas of planting	Moderate or poor declining.	Changes in the assessment methodology are likely the reason the woodland is no longer 'good' condition.	On going management as appropriate
Native hedgerow with bank or ditch	Moderate condition and stable with regular management	Moderate condition stable	N/A	On going management as appropriate
Native species-rich hedgerow with trees	Good condition and stable	Good condition stable	N/A	On going management as appropriate.
Mixed scrub	Good declining due to over maturation in parts	Moderate/ good condition declining	The areas of scrub overall are in good or moderate condition. However, a small area is in poor condition, failing the majority of criteria.	On going management of scrub as appropriate. Reduce scrub encroachment in grassland areas
Reedbed	Poor stable	Moderate condition and improving	Changes in the assessment methodology are likely the reason the reedbed has improved in condition. The reedbed passed the majority of the criteria, failing only presence of bare ground and a diverse structure.	Keep reedbed open and reduce scrub encroachment.

Habitat	2020 Condition and direction of travel	2025 Condition and direction of travel	Reasons for change if any	Proposed actions in new management plans
Ditch (Coldham's Brook)	Good condition and improving, formerly banks of nettles but now increasing in floristic diversity	Moderate condition and declining	The watercourse has declined in condition likely as a result of increased damage from cattle and its floristic diversity which failed exceed 10 sp / 20m.	Chalk stream project objective to improve light along the watercourse.
Ditch (East Main Drain)	Poor stable	Poor stable	N/A	Scrub clearance to improve light and floristic diversity along watercourse.
Stourbridge Common				
Grassland	Poor declining condition	Poor condition and likely stable	N/A	Grazing strategy to be developed. Creation of scrapes in grassland areas. Increase structural diversity of grassland.
Woodland	Good condition which is likely stable	Moderate condition and declining	Changes in the assessment methodology are likely the reason the woodland is no longer 'good' condition.	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Lines of trees	Good condition and stable	Good condition and stable	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Scrub	Moderate condition and likely stable	Moderate condition and stable	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Ditch	Poor declining condition	Poor and likely stable	N/A	Ditch is dry for long periods, aspiration to create more hollows or channels along water line
Coldham's Brook	Moderate condition and likely stable	Moderate condition and stable	N/A	Invasive management, scrub clearance to improve light and floristic diversity along watercourse.
Sheep's Green, Coe Fen, Lower Vicar's Brook, New Bit and Coe Fen Straits				
Grassland (Sheep's Green)	Poor and likely to be declining.	Moderate / poor and likely to be in a stable condition.	Change in condition likely driven by changing assessment methodologies in biodiversity metric.	Ongoing management as appropriate. Grazing strategy to be developed.
Woodland (Sheep's Green)	Moderate stable.	Poor declining.	Changes in the assessment methodology are likely the reason the woodland is no longer 'good' condition.	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Scrub (Sheep's Green)	Moderate stable.	Moderate stable.	The majority of the scrub patches are in a similar condition to the 2020 audit, as they lacked a well-developed edge.	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Freshwater habitats (Sheep's Green)	Moderate declining.	Moderate and likely in a stable condition.	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate. Consideration to incorporate new waterways across grassland. Enhance and new ditch works adjacent to Darwin College, bank reinforcements at Laundress Green, naturalisation of banks near Snob's brook.
Grassland (Coe Fen)	Poor- declining.	Poor –stable.	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate. Grazing strategy to be developed.

Habitat	2020 Condition and direction of travel	2025 Condition and direction of travel	Reasons for change if any	Proposed actions in new management plans
Ditches (Coe Fen)	Moderate – improving.	Poor – declining.	These ditches fail on criteria relating to species richness, duckweed and damage due to cattle poaching.	Ongoing management as appropriate. Appropriate grazing strategy to be developed.
Grassland (New Bit)	Poor condition which is likely to be stable	Moderate condition and likely to be improving	Change in condition likely driven by changing assessment methodologies in biodiversity metric. However, grassland had improved floristic diversity. Grassland is developing into wood pasture and parkland.	Ongoing management as appropriate. Grazing strategy to be developed.
Scrub (New Bit)	Poor condition which is likely to be stable	Poor stable	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Ditch (New Bit)	Poor condition which is likely to be stable	Poor stable	N/A	
Vicar's Brook (New Bit)	Moderate condition which is likely to be stable	Moderate stable	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Barnwell East				
Grassland (calcareous)	Moderate – declining. More diverse swards are present as described in 2005, but invasive species remain present at similar levels, with early growth scrub also apparent.	Poor – declining. The calcareous grassland has been re-classified to an alternate habitat type due to differences in UKHab methodology. The condition remains poor, invasive species presence remains a problem throughout.	Invasive species presence, poor structure and lack of diversity.	Invasive species management.
Grassland (modified)	Poor – declining. Low species diversity.	Good – improving. The condition has increased since 2020, largely due to increased species diversity.	Change in condition likely driven by changing assessment methodologies in biodiversity metric, as well as higher recorded species diversity.	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Scrub	Good – stable. Areas of scrub within the centre of the site are as described in 2005, with several glades and varied structure	Good – stable. Changes in methodologies lead to only mixed scrub requiring a condition assessment, it remains in good condition. The areas of other scrub types remain in similar conditions to that of 2020.	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate. Consideration to removing areas of scrub.
Pond	Good – stable.	Moderate – stable. The only criterion failed relates to presence of invasive species.	Change in condition likely driven by changing assessment methodologies in biodiversity metric.	Ongoing management as appropriate. Potential for desilting.
Woodland	Moderate – improving. Characteristics of the understorey indicate the development of a woodland character.	Moderate – improving. The condition will continue to improve as the woodland matures and understory develops.	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Barnwell West				
Woodland	2020: Good – improving. Whilst previously recorded	2025: Moderate – declining.	The woodland has declined in condition due to a lack of	Potential for woodland management is resources available.

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Habitat	2020 Condition and direction of travel	2025 Condition and direction of travel	Reasons for change if any	Proposed actions in new management plans
	as scrub, the overall condition compared with 2005 appears to be improving.		understorey/vertical structure and deadwood.	Non-priority work across the city.
Freshwater Coldham's Brook	2020: Moderate – stable. Conditions in and along Coldham's Brook are largely as described in 2005.	2025: Poor – improving. Whilst the condition is now lower than recorded in 2020, the recent improvements to flow and habitat in Coldham's Brook will likely lead to an uplift in condition over time.	Poor due to a lack of aquatic plant species diversity and a lack of aquatic plant species structure. This is largely driven by high levels of shade.	Open canopy around the brook to allow for greater diversity of aquatic plant species.
Freshwater East Cambridge Main Drain	2020: Poor – stable. Conditions in and along Coldham's Brook and East Cambridge Main Drain are largely as described in 2005.	2025: Poor – stable. The condition of this drain is very similar to that recorded in 2020, and will likely remain so.	N/A	Retain as is for drainage purposes and for fern communities on banksides.
Scrub (south)	2020: Good – stable. Where present, conditions largely as described in 2005.	2025: Moderate – declining. The scrub will require management to improve condition, if left as is it will likely be subsumed into the adjacent woodland.	Poor structure.	Potential scrub management if resources available. Non-priority work across the city.
Scrub (north)	2020: Moderate – declining. Reduction in extent.	Poor – declining. Without management to encourage additional species diversity and diversity of age, this habitat will likely remain in poor condition.	Poor species diversity and structure.	Potential scrub management if resources available. Non-priority work across the city.
Paradise				
Grassland	2020: Poor/moderate condition which is likely to be stable.	2025: Poor condition, declining, potentially as a result of tall ruderal and herbs becoming dominant.	Increased prevalence of tall ruderal species in the grassland to the north likely to be contributing to a low species diversity.	Ongoing cutting regime.
Woodland	2020: Good condition which is likely to be stable.	2025: Good condition which is likely to be stable.	N/A	Ongoing woodland management programme.
Pond	2020: Good condition which is likely to be stable.	2025: Good condition which is likely to be stable.	N/A	Manage surrounding scrub and woodland to allow continued light to pond.
Aquatic marginal vegetation	2020: Good condition which is likely to be stable	2025: Moderate condition, declining, potentially as a result of drying and scrub encroachment.	Encroachment from scrub and low water levels resulting in lower condition.	Manage surrounding scrub and woodland to reduce encroachment.
Byron's Pool				
Grassland (other neutral)	Moderate stable	Moderate stable	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Grassland (other calcareous)	N/A	Moderate improving	Area of grassland was originally the cropland in the north of the site and had previously been seeded, it has developed well into calcareous grassland.	Ongoing management as appropriate. Use green hay in meadow
Woodland	Good declining	Moderate – declining	Change is likely as a result of increased recreational pressure, low diversity in age structure and lack of a recognisable ground flora	Ongoing woodland management programme

Habitat	2020 Condition and direction of travel	2025 Condition and direction of travel	Reasons for change if any	Proposed actions in new management plans
Hedgerow	Good - improving	Good - stable	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate
Ponds	Good - declining	Moderate - declining	Change is likely due to a change in the condition assessment criteria	Non-native invasive and scrub management
Fish pass	Moderate - stable	Moderate - stable	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Nine Wells				
Woodland	2020: Conditions match the site description from the 2004 management plan (Friends of Nine Wells LNR, 2004).	2025: Good – improving. Better instances of deadwood and reduced impacts of browsing.	Improved deadwood and reduced browsing.	Ongoing woodland management programme.
Freshwater (chalk stream)	2020: Moderate – stable. Conditions match the site description from the 2004 management plan (Friends of Nine Wells LNR, 2004).	2025: Moderate – stable. Assumption based on habitat descriptions rather than condition assessments.	N/A	Ongoing management to improve flow diversity and conditions for aquatic plants. Thinning of canopy over streamheads to reduce leaf litter and sediment build up. Management of visitors and dogs to reduce negative impacts on banks and water quality.
Hedgerows	2020: Moderate and poor – stable.	2025: Good – improving. All hedgerows in good condition with few criteria missed.	Improvement over time.	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Grassland	2020: Moderate – stable.	2025: Poor - stable.	Change in condition likely driven by changing assessment methodologies in biodiversity metric.	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Midsummer Common				
Grassland (modified)	Poor – stable.	Poor – stable.	N/A	Update grazing regime to improve grassland structure and possibly diversity. Recreational management.
Grassland (other neutral)	N/A	Moderate – stable.	This is a new grassland type at Midsummer Common as a results of translocation from Hobson's Park.	Consider further translocation if opportunities arise.
Line of trees	Good/moderate – stable.	Good/moderate – stable	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Bramble scrub	Poor – improving.	N/A (no condition assessment in new metric) likely stable.	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Bramblefields				
Grassland	Moderate – stable – because of recreational management	Poor/moderate – stable. The modified grassland areas remain similar to 2020. One area of other neutral grassland is now present, with a good diversity of forbs, it is in moderate condition.	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Woodland – w1f7	Good – stable	Moderate – stable. The woodland in the west of the site has good age and species diversity.	Changes in the assessment methodology are likely the reason the woodland is no longer 'good' condition.	Ongoing management as appropriate.

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Habitat	2020 Condition and direction of travel	2025 Condition and direction of travel	Reasons for change if any	Proposed actions in new management plans
Woodland (central hawthorn dominated)	Moderate – declining	Moderate – stable. The central woodland has little succession and does have impacts from recreation.	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Ponds	Good – stable	Moderate – declining. The ponds are becoming dominated with vegetation, limiting open water. Crassula is present in both.	Presence of invasive species, shading and lack of open water.	Invasive species removal, management to increase open water
Scrub	Good – stable	Poor – declining. Areas of scrub have become dominated by a single species; they lack good edge habitat and some younger plants. Littering and human activity are also having impacts.	Dominance of single species, physical damage and human impacts.	Ongoing management as appropriate
West Pit				
Woodland	Good – stable	Moderate – declining.	Now failing criteria concerning invasive species, disease (ash dieback) which is having a significant impact on the canopy, lack of proper NVC community, lack of veteran trees and significant nutrient enrichment.	Managed decline of woodland as ash dieback removes most of canopy. Target calcareous scrub habitat. No public access due to safety concerns.
Calcareous grassland (cliff top)	Good – stable	Good - stable	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Calcareous grassland (cliff face)	Poor - improving	Poor – stable	Recently cleared in 2020 and with annual cuts to 2025. This grassland was reclassified as modified grassland due to a lack of species richness and calcareous indicators in the sward, it now being dominated by false oat-grass.	Continued management as habitat in the form of cleared glade/slope of ecological value although it is not classified as calcareous grassland.
Scrub	Good, moderate, poor	Moderate – stable	The scrub fail criteria relating to lack of age classes and also lack of glades. This scrub passes the criteria relating to invasive species because, although they are present (*Cotoneaster horizontalis*), they do not reach the 5% threshold.	Ongoing management as appropriate, including continued cutting back to keep grassland habitats open.
Hedgerows	Good - stable	Poor – probably stable Good – probably stable	One hedgerow is now classified as being in poor condition due to the fact that it fails two functional groups (damaged/nutrient enriched ground flora and presence of archaophytes and damage).	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Logan's Meadow				
Woodland	Moderate – stable. Conditions reported in 2005, particularly with regard to ground flora indicate a strong	Moderate – stable/improving. The woodland is largely the same as recorded in 2020. The condition assessment is one point away from	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate

Habitat	2020 Condition and direction of travel	2025 Condition and direction of travel	Reasons for change if any	Proposed actions in new management plans
	nutrient influence from the River Cam.	reaching good condition		
Pond (woodland)	Poor – stable. Ponds in 2005 were newly dug	Moderate – improving. The woodland ponds are improving in condition as they mature.	The ponds have good vegetation structure, and have improved in condition since they were dug.	Ongoing management as appropriate
Scrub	Good – stable. No formal survey of this area.	Poor – declining. The mixed scrub is in poor condition; it has a lack of a well-developed edge and no clearings as well as few younger plants.	Changes in assessment methodology likely have an impact on the change in condition.	Management to increase regrowth of saplings and young plants, and reduce the density of the scrub to introduce clearings.
Mill Road Cemetery				
Calcareous grassland	2020: Moderate declining due to scrub encroachment	2025: No calcareous grassland was recorded on site. Whilst, similar species were recorded to those identified in the 2020 surveys, the criteria to meet certain types of grassland i.e. calcareous has is more precise in the updated UK Hab v2.0 definitions. This area of grassland therefore does not meet the definitions for Lowland calcareous or other calcareous grassland and has been included in the other neutral grassland below.	Change in assessment methodology.	N/A
Neutral grassland	2020: Moderate condition and likely to be stable	2025: Moderate condition and no change. The condition of this grassland is very similar to that recorded in 2020, and will likely remain so.	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate. Long-term aspiration for grazing to improve sward.
Scrub	2020: Good condition and improving	2025: Moderate condition and declining.	Change is likely considered due to the management and the scrub maturing and not passing condition assessment criteria for developed edge (D and E) within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric.	Management of scrub to improve glades or rides and to reduce the density of the scrub.
Hobson's Park				
Neutral grassland	Good condition stable.	2025: Moderate condition and stable. Habitat type changed from neutral grassland to other calcareous grassland.	Change in condition likely to result from change in condition assessment criteria.	Continued appropriate management should allow grassland to return to 'good' condition.
Neutral grassland	Moderate condition and likely to be stable	2025: Moderate condition and no change. The condition of this grassland is similar to that recorded in 2020, continued management should allow this grassland to also be classified as *g2c other calcareous grassland*.	N/A	Continued appropriate management should allow grassland to also be classified as *g2c other calcareous grassland*.

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Habitat	2020 Condition and direction of travel	2025 Condition and direction of travel	Reasons for change if any	Proposed actions in new management plans
Calcareous grassland	Poor condition, stable.	N/A	N/A	Not assessed in 2025 survey effort.
Scrub	Poor condition woodland and likely to be stable	2025: assessed as scrub to reflect current habitat; in moderate condition likely to be stable/improving as the habitat matures.	Change in habitat type	Ongoing management will depend on whether woodland habitat or scrub habitat desired.
Pond	Moderate condition stable	2025: remains in moderate condition and likely to be stable. Area of open water has decreased since previous assessment.	N/A	Unlikely to be able to change condition due to being connected to Hobson's brook. Although may benefit from management to reduce cover of reedmace.
Hedgerows	Poor condition stable	2025: improved to moderate condition	Improved due to hedgerow becoming more mature and passing additional criteria.	
Line of trees	Poor condition stable	2025: Improved to moderate condition	Improved due to maturing trees but also may be due to change in condition assessment criteria.	
Ditch	Poor condition stable	2025: Poor condition stable	Dry ditch at time of survey, significant amount of scrub covering the ditch as well as areas of aquatic marginal vegetation	
Honson's brook	Moderate condition stable	2025: Good condition	Passes all condition assessment criteria, may be due to location of condition assessment	

Appendix 3 Biodiversity Duty Report

Published November 2025

Biodiversity Duty Report (2022 – 2025) and Action Plan (2026 – 2031)

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Introduction

What is Biodiversity

Biodiversity is the variety of life on Earth, including all living organisms, the genetic differences within species, and the ecosystems they form. It covers:

Species diversity – the range of different species.

Genetic diversity – variation within species.

Ecosystem diversity – different habitats and ecological processes.

What is a Biodiversity Duty Report?

The statutory Biodiversity Duty was first introduced by Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act in 2006 which required that:

'***Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, as far as is consistent with the proper exercise of these functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity'***.

In 2021, the Environment Act (Section 102 and 103) strengthened this duty by amending Section 40 of the NERC Act and by requiring all public authorities in England to take steps to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England.

As a public authority and local planning authority, the government guidance requires Cambridge City Council (CCC) to:

- Consider what we can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on our consideration.
- Act to deliver our policies and achieve our objectives.

To evidence the above we are required to publish a Biodiversity Report to communicate what we are doing to improve the environment and to show the positive changes that have been made. The first reporting period must end by 1st January 2026, and the report must be published within 12 weeks (by the end of March 2026).

This report follows the government guidelines and covers actions undertaken in the period from adoption of our Biodiversity Strategy in 2022 through to November 2025.

Our role in nature recovery

Management of streets and open spaces

Cambridge City Council manages more than 80 parks and open spaces, such as play areas, allotments, community gardens and orchards, totalling over 742 hectares. Some of these sites, such as our 12 Local Nature Reserves, are designated and managed primarily for nature and form part of the core Cambridge Nature Network, whilst others provide valuable predominantly recreational open space for residents and visitors to enjoy.

Whatever the primary purpose and size of these spaces, combined they provide a huge potential for increasing the extent, quality, and connectivity of habitats within the city. Therefore, we have an obligation and opportunity to ensure that all sites maximise their potential for biodiversity, provide good examples of habitat management and creation and hopefully encourage other landowners to do the same.

We manage approximately 23 kilometres of awarded watercourses, including some of our precious chalk streams, by ensuring management is sensitive to biodiversity, whilst providing our statutory drainage functions, we can protect such iconic species as water vole,

kingfishers and brown trout in the city. We are also riparian owners of a significant stretch of the main riverbank through the city.

Wherever possible we are seeking to ‘naturalise’ previously engineered banks such as at Stourbridge Common, creating new backwaters and wetland such as on Logan's Meadow Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and providing passage for fish around artificial obstructions, such as the weir at Byron’s Pool LNR and ‘The Rush’ fish pass at Sheep’s Green LNR.

We are custodians of our precious common land and oversee the historic grazing management practice that retains flood meadow landscapes and iconic cattle grazing in the heart of the city. These grasslands form a key part of the network of Cambridge spaces and offer potential for enhanced management to benefit biodiversity and capture carbon emissions.

Through implementation of our tree strategy, we manage over 30,000 trees, contributing to the urban forest that provide both wildlife and communities with a range of ecosystem services, making our neighbourhoods cooler, cleaner and more attractive places to live. Street trees provide habitat and ‘stepping stones’ for species living in or moving through the built environment.

Management of our estate

Our property estate includes rental units, iconic buildings such as the Guildhall, and council housing properties with gardens and communal open spaces. Decisions on how we manage, renovate, and invest in these assets will impact upon existing species present and provide huge opportunities for restoring nature where people live and work. Energy efficiency Investment towards net zero will contribute to reducing the impact of climate change on the natural world, whilst increased water efficiency measures and rainwater capture will reduce abstraction pressure on the chalk stream aquifer.

Community Empowerment

Through our Community Services Engagement Team, we offer support to local Friends Groups, providing opportunities for volunteering in our parks and open spaces, and work closely with local community action groups including On the Verge Cambridge, promoting new wildflower meadows and Action for Swifts, with swift box provision on our estate such as on Queen Ann Terrace car park and at Edgecombe Flats.

As a local authority we are often a key partner in many local initiatives and projects with links to community groups. By promoting biodiversity through raising awareness in communities we can ensure that opportunities for people to connect with, protect, enhance, and appreciate nature are realised.

Planning and Growth

Through our Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service we shape and implement policies that guide sustainable development seeking to protect, restore and enhance nature across administrative boundaries.

Section 1: Our policies, objectives and actions for biodiversity

In 2019 we declared a Biodiversity Emergency in recognition of the global loss of biodiversity and the local impacts this could have on the communities and business we serve.

To address this, we have recognised and incorporated the importance of conserving and enhancing local biodiversity across numerous strategies, policies, partnerships and actions.

1.1 Our corporate and partnership strategies and policies for biodiversity

Relevant strategies are summarised below, followed by further information on 4 key strategies:

Strategy or policy document	Summary of relevance to biodiversity
Internal strategies	
Cambridge City Corporate Plan (2022 – 2027)	Sets out our 4 key priorities including: Priority 1: Leading Cambridge's response to the climate change and biodiversity emergencies
Biodiversity Strategy (2022 – 2030)	Our key biodiversity document that includes our vision, objectives and actions to meet the biodiversity emergency declaration and Biodiversity Duty.
Tree Strategy (2016 – 2026)	Sets out policies and actions to manage the City tree stock, plus increase and diversify tree canopy for the benefit of people and nature.
Climate Change Strategy (2021 – 2026)	Includes actions to reduce and mitigate the impacts of climate change on biodiversity.
Cambridge Local Plan (2018)	Includes hierarchical policies to ensure development protects and enhances biodiversity.
Greater Cambridge Biodiversity SPD	Provides technical guidance on how to comply with Local Plan policies to protect and enhance biodiversity.
Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan (a 20 year plan for Greater Cambridge Area)	Includes a key theme of 'Biodiversity and Green Spaces' and proposes polices to protect and enhance biodiversity and

	improve the network of green spaces in Greater Cambridge.
External / partnership strategies	
Draft Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recover Strategy (LNRS)	A proposed regional statutory plan that identifies local biodiversity priorities and maps areas for habitat restoration.
Natural Cambridgeshire's 'Doubling Nature' Vision for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough	Our Local Nature Partnership vision for doubling the current area of wildlife rich habitats by 2050.
Cambridge Nature Network vision	Sets out a shared vision for nature recovery in and around the city for collective delivery by partners.
BIG Chalk	A shared vision for supporting nature recovery projects across the chalk and limestone landscapes of southern England.
Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) - BNG Strategy	Commits to a minimum 20% BNG across the transport programme covering on and offsite delivery.

1.2 Our visions and objectives for biodiversity

Biodiversity Strategy (2022 – 2030)

'Our vision is that over the next 9 years Cambridge will see a "measurable net gain" in biodiversity, both within the city and the surrounding countryside, including the extent and quality of priority habitats and populations of priority species. Wildlife habitats will be protected, enhanced and where possible expanded and linked. The very best wildlife habitats will form part of a much wider Cambridge Nature Network that will permeate the whole of the city and beyond. Everyone who lives or works within Cambridge will have access to high quality natural greenspaces close to their home or place of work, and there will be a greater awareness and understanding of biodiversity with opportunities to be involved and collaborate in local wildlife enhancement projects and monitoring.'

To deliver this vision we have been delivering on 7 strategic objectives:

1. To secure a measurable net gain in biodiversity across the city by 2025 and support the Natural Cambridgeshire Doubling Nature Vision by 2050

2. To ensure designated sites and priority habitats are in good / favourable condition and connected, where possible, to increase resilience to a changing climate and contribute to the Cambridge Nature Network

3. To promote awareness of biodiversity and wellbeing, supporting coordinated action in our communities, businesses, and institutions

4. To ensure that biodiversity is considered by all council service functions and projects

5. To maximise the potential of our buildings, parks, open spaces, allotments and community gardens, watercourses and tree stock to support biodiversity, whilst balancing their multifunctional needs

6. To harness the wealth of local professional and amateur knowledge and experience in identifying and solving local issues.

7. To establish long term, species and habitat surveys and monitoring to measure the impact of activities and identify new threats and opportunities across the city

To meet the objectives, the proposed actions have been grouped within the three main themes:

1. **Biodiversity mainstreaming:** This theme is about embedding biodiversity into everything that we do, whether that is constructing new houses, buying materials, or undertaking our role as a planning authority. We will ensure that our actions minimise impacts on biodiversity as well as seek opportunities to enhance it. We will aim to develop cross-cutting strategies and solutions between all services that promote biodiversity and focus on nature-based solutions.
2. **The core:** This theme is about developing our core of biodiversity sites in the city. This includes reviewing and updating management plans for our most important nature conservation areas and working with partners to ensure a coherent and resilient nature network through Cambridge and beyond.
3. **Nature in your neighbourhood**: This theme is about encouraging nature to flourish across the city through collaboration with communities, businesses and institutions. The aim is to ensure nature is not restricted to a few precious locations and that it can be enjoyed, understood, and experienced by all.

Natural Cambridgeshire 'Doubling Nature' Vision

'Natural Cambridgeshire' is the Local Nature Partnership for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough. A partnership of leaders from businesses, local authorities, the health sector, farming, wildlife and environmental organisations that exists to champion, influence and enable the fulfilment of the 'Doubling Nature' vision:

'Our Vision is that by doubling the area of rich wildlife habitats and natural green-space, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will become a world-class environment where nature and people thrive, and businesses prosper'

The key objective is to double the area of rich wildlife habitats and green space from 8.5% to 17% by 2050.

Cambridge Nature Network

The Cambridge Nature Network is a landscape scale biodiversity initiative led by the Bedfordshire Cambridgeshire & Northamptonshire Local Wildlife Trust (BCN WT) and Cambridge Past Present and Future with support from the City Council and other key landowning partners.

'Our vision is for Cambridge to have significant areas of downland, fens, meadows, waterways and woodlands around it, where nature can recover and thrive and where people can experience a wilder countryside and nature on their doorstep.'

The initiative is founded on an evidence based spatial plan for protecting and enhancing nature, focused on the best of the remaining habitats within 10km of the city and key opportunities and locations for creating new habitats and associated linkages.

Through collaboration with landowners and communities it represents an ambitious but achievable vision for local nature recovery. The Cambridge Nature Network has steered our actions over the past 5 years and forms a critical part of the emerging statutory LNRS.

Draft Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

The LNRS is a spatial strategy mandated by the Environment Act 2021. It identifies locations to improve nature and provide other environmental benefits including carbon sequestration, flood risk mitigation, accessibility to green space to promote social well-being.

The LNRS covering Cambridge City is being developed by Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA), who are the government appointed 'Responsible Body' working with our Local Nature Partnership (Natural Cambridgeshire) and Cambridgeshire County Council.

As a supporting authority, we have contributed to the development of the LNRS through representation on the Steering Group and at technical workshops and approving the draft document for consultation. We have advocated for inclusion of the existing Cambridge Nature Network (CNN) vision within the LNRS to ensure existing plans and projects are recognised, celebrated and link to the wider ambitions.

Key objectives identified for Cambridge City within the draft LNRS include:

Theme	Objective	Action
Ecological Connectivity	Enhance and expand chalk downland, fens, meadows, and woodlands within the CNN	Prioritise habitat creation and enhancement across CNN corridors
Chalk Stream Restoration	Restore stream flow, water quality, and habitat	Implement restoration works on urban chalk streams

Urban Forest	Increase and diversify tree canopy building on the successful Cambridge Canopy Project	Coordinate protection and planting across public and private land

A Public consultation on the draft LNRS ran from July to September 2025 and the subsequent revised documents are awaiting final Supporting Authority approval before submission to the Secretary of State, planned for late December 2025.

1.3 Our partnerships for biodiversity

We recognise that nature recovery cannot be delivered without working in collaboration with others. The table below summarises some of our key partnerships for nature.

Key partnerships and groups	Relevance to our biodiversity work
Natural Cambridgeshire	Helping steer sustainable development, nature recovery and community engagement with nature and coordinating an annual Actions for Nature Report
Cambridge Nature Network	Through the Steering Group we help guide strategic decisions, joint funding bids and project delivery, including the annual Cambridge Nature Festival
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Environmental Records Centre (CPERC)	Through the steering group and a service level agreement we support the work of the centre to collate, validate and supply habitat and species data across the County.
Cambridge Conservation Forum	Strengthen links and developing collaborations across the diverse community of conservation practitioners and researchers based in Cambridge
Cambridge Conservation Initiative – Urban Nature	A collaborative partnership which brings together the biggest names in international biodiversity conservation with the University of Cambridge and local conservation practitioners.
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Wildlife Site Partnership	We guide selection and monitoring of public and private Local Wildlife Sites to protect and enhance these critical habitats and the species they support
BIG Chalk	Both the Cambridge Nature Network and Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Projects are recognised project partners sharing knowledge and expertise with the wider partnership
Local Friends and community groups	We consult and offer support and guidance to numerous, passionate, diverse groups across the city to protect, enhance and celebrate our chalk streams, commons, parks, community orchards and gardens.

1.4 Our actions for biodiversity (2022 – 2025)

Through implementation of the above strategies with our partners, we have collectively delivered many actions for nature over the reporting period. These are summarised in the table below under our 3 Biodiversity Strategy Themes.

Biodiversity Mainstreaming *'Consider and embed nature in everything we do'*

Action	Services & Partners	Outcome
Updated project 'Climate Change Rating Tool' to include a Biodiversity Assessment	All services	All corporate projects and programmes are assessed as to how they may impact or could enhance biodiversity prior to approval
Herbicide Reduction Plan for phased transition to cease herbicide use on our estate	City Service, Pesticide Free Cambridge,	Ceased use of herbicide across all council owned sites, including parks, car parks and housing areas in March 2024
Ceased the use of Peat in all landscape schemes	City Services, City Homes	Reduced demand for unsustainable harvesting of rare peat habits and associated carbon emissions.
City Services Operatives Biodiversity Training	City Services, BCN Wildlife Trust, Cambridge University / colleges	Delivered 3 bespoke training events alongside university college gardening teams to increase understanding and skills around Biodiversity, grassland and watercourse management
Great Crested Newt Pond Restoration at Bar Hill Crematorium	City Services, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Amphibian & Reptile Group	2 Great Crested Newt breeding ponds restored under Natural England license
Delivering 20% BNG on all our developments	City Investment Partnership	16 sites have delivered or secured minimum 20% BNG
Development of Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan	GCSPS	'First Conversation' consultation in 2020, 'First Proposals' consultation in 2021, January 2025 update of the Loal Plan timetable to submit Local Plan by December 2026.
Adopted Greater Cambridge Biodiversity SPD	GCSPS, SCDC, City Services	Adopted in 2022 to ensure planning applications meet best practice and comply with Local Plan policies

The Core '*working with partners to ensure a coherent resilient nature network*'

Action	Partners	Outcome
Local Nature Reserve and Commons management	City Service, Community Services, Volunteers and Corporate Groups	Completed ongoing habitat management of our 12 LNRs, including control of invasive species
Open Mosaic Habitat (Brownfield) Creation trials at Bramblefield's LNR	City Services, Cambridge University	Ongoing project continued with 3 new substrate mounds installed and studied.
Invertebrate banks and stumpery habitat trials	City Services, Anglia Ruskin University, Friend's of St. Thomas Park	Ongoing project being studied, with 8 new habitats installed.
'No Fence' Collar Trials	City Services, Licensed graziers	Positive demonstration of new technology that supports adopting conservation grazing on key sites
Logan's Meadow Wetland	City Services, CPCA, Friends of Logan's Meadow	Over 1 hectare of new urban wetland habitat created
Cambridge Nature Network - Green Recovery Fund delivery	City Services, CNN, Natural England	Over 20 partnership projects delivered. 7 City Services projects included: Sheep's Green LNR Veteran Willow Restoration and community engagement, Logan's Meadow LNR community tree planting, 'Artscaping' in Bramblefield's LNR, Stourbridge Common LNR habitat improvement, Commons grassland restoration trials
Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project	City Services, CPCA, City Services, Hobson's Conduit Trust, Anglia Ruskin University, Keele University, SCDC, Anglian Water, South Staffs Water, Environment Agency	Secured funding to deliver 6 evidence driven, case study restoration and demonstration sites. Engaged over 50 Citizen Scientist in baseline and ongoing monitoring
Coldham's Brook enhancements, Abbey Ward	City Services, Abbey People South Staffs Water	500m of in-channel habitat restoration with volunteers, 2 interpretation panels installed

Dog Control Orders to reduce disturbance to breeding birds	City Services	Seasonal Dogs on Lead Orders in place for 6 Local Nature Reserve (2023)
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy	CPCA, City Services, Greater Cambridge Shared Planning, Natural Cambridgeshire, Natural England, all neighbouring Local Authorities	Draft plan approved at CPCA Board, due for submission by December 2025, subject to 'Supporting Authority' Approval
Woodland Management Plans for Byron's Pool and Nine Wells LNRs	City Services, Forestry Commission (FC)	Plans consulted and approved by FC for phased delivery between 2025 and 2027
Hobson's Park County Wildlife Site designation	City Service, County Wildlife Site Panel, BCN WT	35.7 hectare of recently created grassland and wetlands designated for their value to breeding birds
Introduced conservation grazing at Netherhall School chalk slope	City Services, OTV, Netherhall School, Local grazier	1.5 hectare of chalk grassland under favourable management
Byron's Pool Fish Pass enhancement	City Services, Wild Trout Trust, Environment Agency	Fish pass redesigned to better guide fish around the weir

Nature in your neighbourhood *'ensure nature is not restricted to a few precious locations and can be enjoyed, understood and experienced by all'*

Action	**Partners**	**Outcome**
Supported the Cambridge Citizen UK Young Person's Assembly	Community Services, City Services, Kings College, Cambridge Citizens - UK, local schools	Decision makers heard from young people about their concerns for local biodiversity and pledged to act
Cambridge Canopy Project	City Services, Community Services, Nature Smart Cities	Developed a business model for the incorporation of more green infrastructure solutions in towns and cities. Launched the i-Tree Eco project and the Neighbourhood Canopy Campaign.
Happy Bee Streets	City Services, Community Services	Active groups on 14 streets across 8 wards

Declaration of Butterfly Emergency in 2024, Cambridge Butterfly Trail	City Services, Butterfly Conservation (BC)	Creation of Cambridge Butterfly Trail covering 30 green spaces across the city and surrounds.
Hedges for Kings Hedges	City Services, Community Services, Trees are Good, Tree for Cities	Volunteers planted 100 m of new mixed native hedge and fruit tree planted in the ward parks. Included a fruit tree grafting workshop.
Free Trees for babies' scheme	City Services	878 trees donated over the reporting period to increase canopy cover. This has been running for over 30 years to incentivise tree planting in the city.
Neighbourhood Canopy Campaign	City Services, Community Services	Residents claimed 309 trees and shrubs over the reporting period to reduce inequality in canopy cover across wards.
Cambridge Nature Festival	City Services, CNN	City-wide month-long festival running for 3 consecutive years. Multiple organisations delivering a month of over 100 free events for all ages. Voted as one of the best free festivals in 2023 by the i-news.
River Cam CAN, DiversiTree	City Services, Community Services, Community Fund for Lottery	23 artist-led workshops in 20 different spaces in the City. 8 public events attended by an estimated 6,000 people. x5 public walks and talks on the cultural and biodiversity significance of veteran trees in Cambridge City. x4 workshops for landowners and members of the public on how to manage veteran trees sustainably. Charter for sustainable veteran tree management being created.
Environmental Improvement Program	City Services	28 biodiversity focused projects delivered on parks and public realm across the city including new meadows, stumperies, bird and bat boxes
Parks Biodiversity Toolkit	City Services	Promotion of our toolkit inspired a local community to design, consult and deliver enhancement to St Thomas Park, Queen Edith's ward
S106 funded park enhancement schemes	City Services	Five Trees Park meadow and tree planting, Jesus Green stumpery, 700m^2 'pictorial meadow' at Parkside Pool to provide pollinator 'steeping

		stone' through the urban environment
Environmental Education Spaces	City Service, primary school / nursery license holders	Licenses in place for 2 City owned spaces delivering access to nature for local pupils
Community Engagement Team Biodiversity Assembly / School visits	Community Services	Approximately 35 school session held over the reporting period
Investment in new Cut and Collect machine	City Services	Enhanced management of long grass and meadow areas across our parks and road verges
Hobsons Conduit Bioblitz	City Services, Hobsons Conduit Trust	3 x Annual community event recording wildlife along the brook over 24hrs

1.5 Condition of Cambridge Local Wildlife Sites

Local Wildlife Sites (including 3 designations: County Wildlife Site, City Wildlife Sites & Protected Road Verges) are non-statutory designations for areas identified locally as having high biodiversity value, supporting important species or habitats at a city or County scale.

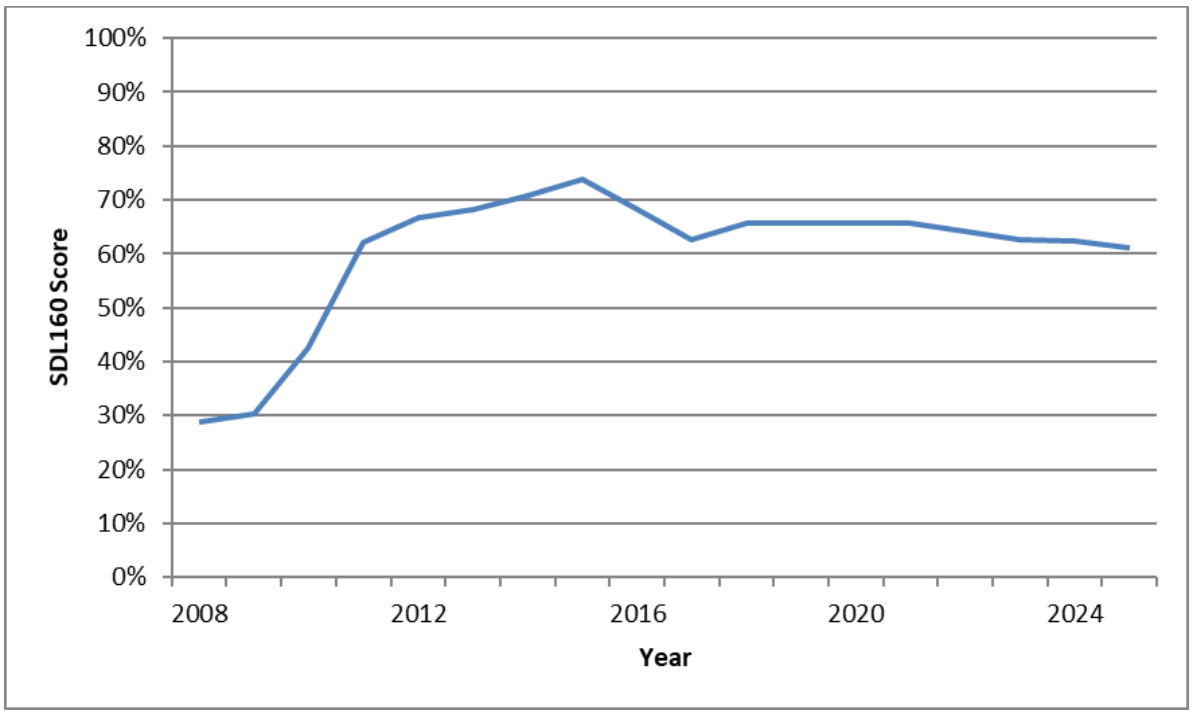
These sites can be on both private and public land. Through our annual monitoring to central government, we report on how many are in favourable management to support the habitats and species for which they are recognised.

Cambridge City Local Wildlife Sites in positive management (public and private)

Results for the 2024/25 reporting year

Total number of Local Sites where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented within the last five years	44
Total number of Local Sites	72
% of Local Sites where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented within the last five years	**61.1%**

Appendices



Results over time, SDL160 scores 2008 – 2025

Cambridge City Council (CCC) owned and/or managed sites only
Results for the 2024/25 reporting year

Total number of Local Sites (CCC owned and/or managed) where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented within the last five years	29
Total number of Local Sites (CCC owned and/or managed)	32
% of Local Sites (CCC owned and/or managed) where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented within the last five years	**90.6%**

Section 2: Our future actions for biodiversity (2026 – 2031)

In 2026 we will review and consult on our Biodiversity Strategy, Climate Change Strategy and Tree Strategy.

Proposed updated actions have been included in the table below, grouped by theme. Please note these may be subject to change following consultation, prior to formal adoption**.**

'Our vision is that over the next 5 years Cambridge will see a "measurable net gain" in biodiversity, both within the city and the surrounding countryside, including the extent and quality of priority habitats and populations of priority species. Wildlife habitats will be protected, enhanced and where possible expanded and linked. The very best wildlife habitats will form the Cambridge Nature Network that will permeate the whole of the city and link to the wider Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Everyone who lives or works within Cambridge will have access to high quality natural greenspaces within walking distance of their home or place or work, and there will be a greater awareness and understanding of biodiversity with opportunities to be involved and collaborate in local wildlife enhancement projects and monitoring'.

Biodiversity Mainstreaming *'Consider and embed nature in everything we do'*

Actions	**Partners**	**Outcomes**	**Timeline**
Adopt, support delivery and monitoring of the LNRS	NC, CPCA, Cambridgeshire County Council	Strategic delivery of habitat and species actions	Adoption: December 2025 – Delivery ongoing
Adoption and implementation of Shared Local Plan	GCSPS, SCDC	Robust biodiversity policies, aligned with LNRS and BNG delivery to guide sustainable	Proposed adoption by December 2026
Adoption and implementation of Urban Forest Strategy (2026 - 2036)	City Services, Community Services	Management, protection, planting of and engagement with the urban forest	Adoption March 2026 – Delivery 2026 – 2036
Ensure CIP and other City development achieve a minimum 20% BNG target across all projects	CIP, GCSPS	New development secure high-quality habitats and species enhancement with long term management and monitoring in place.	Ongoing
Implement Environmental Management System to secure ISO14001 accreditation for City operation hub and activities	City Services	Improved environmental performance across City Service	March 2026 - ongoing
Explore rainwater harvesting on Council owned properties	City Service, Property Services,	Reduced abstraction for aquifer for tree	Feasibility 2026, deliver 2027

	Water Resources East (WRE)	watering and other operation functions	

The Core '*working with partners to ensure a coherent resilient nature network*'

Actions	Partners	Outcomes	Timeline
Continued support of CNN	City Services, CPPF, BCN WT, Cambridge Ahead, National Trust, RSPB, East Cambridge Farming Cluster, CU Botanic Garden, South Cambs DC, Magog Down, Natural Cambs, Cambridge Sports Lake Trust	Collaborate on funding bids and sharing resource to create 'Bigger, better, more joined up' habitats across the CNN	Ongoing
Local Nature Reserve and Commons management	City Service, Community Services, Volunteers and Corporate Groups	Complete ongoing habitat management of our 12 LNRs, including control of invasive species	Ongoing
Continue our work with the Wildlife Trust to provide advice to private landowners and managers to bring sites into positive management	City Services, BCN WT, private landowners	Increase number of designated Local Wildlife Sites in positive management	Ongoing
Identification and designation of additional City Wildlife Sites and LNRs	City Services	Secure protection and enhanced management of qualifying sites	2026 -Cowley Road drain CiWS, Church End LNR and Fulbourn Rd LNR
Adopt and deliver new Management Plan Reviews for LNRs and Commons	City Services	New management plans embedded to ensure favourable habitat condition	13 sites reviewed in 2025 to be adopted and delivered in 2026 to 2030

Conservation Cattle Grazing Review	City Service, CNN, Licensed graziers	Review grazing timescales and number of animals to ensure we meet site management plan conditions	Review in 2025 / 2026
Trial the use of hardy sheep breeds within temporary fenced compartments on smaller sites.	City Services, CNN, East Cambridge Farmers Cluster	Enhanced management of key sites	Triall in 2026, if successful deliver from 2027 onwards
Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project (GCCSP)	City Services, South Staffs Water, Cam Catchment Partnership, Anglian Water, Environment Agency, Hobson's Conduit Trust	Deliver and monitor 6 case study sites. Work with partners to deliver WINEP and other investment in Cambridge chalk streams	2026 - 2028
Cambridge and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre (CPERC)	City Service, GCSPS, CPERC	Continue support through Service Level Agreement and representation on the Steering Group	Ongoing

Nature in your neighbourhood *'ensure nature is not restricted to a few precious locations and can be enjoyed, understood and experienced by all'*

Actions	**Partners**	**Outcomes**	**Timeline**
Seek support and agree actions to achieve Nature City Accreditation	City Services, Community Services, CNN, CCF Community Groups, Business	Strengthened partnership, shared leadership, community engagement, external recognition, increase funding opportunities	2026 Self-assessment. Build Partnership, seek Foundation Accreditation
Parks Biodiversity Toolkit (publish 2021) promotion	City Services, Community services	Inspire communities to codesign and secure funding for local park biodiversity enhancement	Ongoing
Nature Recovery 'From the Ground Up' LNRS	City Services, Community Services, Cambridgeshire	4-year Cambridge County Council Project targeting	2026 – 2030 programme to enable

delivery ward-based community action	County Council, Community Groups	Parish scale delivery of the LNRS. Selected wards: Cherry Hinton, Abbey, East Chesterton, Market & Trumpington	communities to develop and deliver LNRS actions.
Butterfly Friendly Council (BFC)	City Services, Butterfly Conservation	Meet the 5 steps to become an official BFC	2026
Cambridge Elm diversity Project – *celebrating the unique diversity of Cambridgeshire Elm*	City Services, Community Service, BCN WT	Establish a 'community nursery' of local Elm species for planting in partnership across the CNN	2026 - 2030
Native Black Poplar Project	City Services, Community Services, Forest Research, Tree Council,	Establish a 'community nursery' of cultivars of known provenance for planting in partnership across the CNN	2026 - 2030
River Cam CAN, DiversiTree legacy	City Services, Community Services	Seek further funding to secure sustainable management and replacement planting for willow pollards, continue with engagement	2026 - 2030
Cambridge Nature Festival	City Services, Community Services, CNN	Month long programme of free and low-cost events to connect people with nature	Support events and promotion in 2026, seek funding 2026 onwards
Environmental Education Spaces Continue to support existing spaces and explore additional site resource	City Service, primary school / nursery license holders	Continued use of 3 spaces, explore at least 1 additional site	2026 - 2031
Environment Improvement Programme (EIP) project selection criteria / prioritisation	City Services	Seek to allocate future budget to meet strategic biodiversity and urban forest objectives.	2026 - 2027

'Wild about Art' projects – continue to support funding bids and provide locations for nature-based art across Cambridge	City Services, Community Services, artist and communities	Innovative education and / or habitat creation temporary and permanent installations exploring the wonders of nature	2026 - 2030
Urban Nature, Conservation Evidence	City Services, Cambridge Conservation Initiative, Cambridge Conservation Forum	Facilitate research trials on our urban conservation actions to build a shared evidence base	2026 – Closed Churchyard grass cutting trials and monitoring invertebrate use of climate resilient non-native trees – Ongoing

Section 3: Biodiversity net gain information

We deliver our local planning authority function through the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service (GCSPS) in partnership with South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC).

3.1 Actions we have carried out to meet BNG obligations

From 12 February 2024, we have been applying a mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain Pre-Commencement Condition to all relevant (except exempted) planning applications coming forward. This data has been captured and entered the corporate BNG tracking software (Verna's Mycelia), as well as being tracked through the corporate planning software (Uniform).

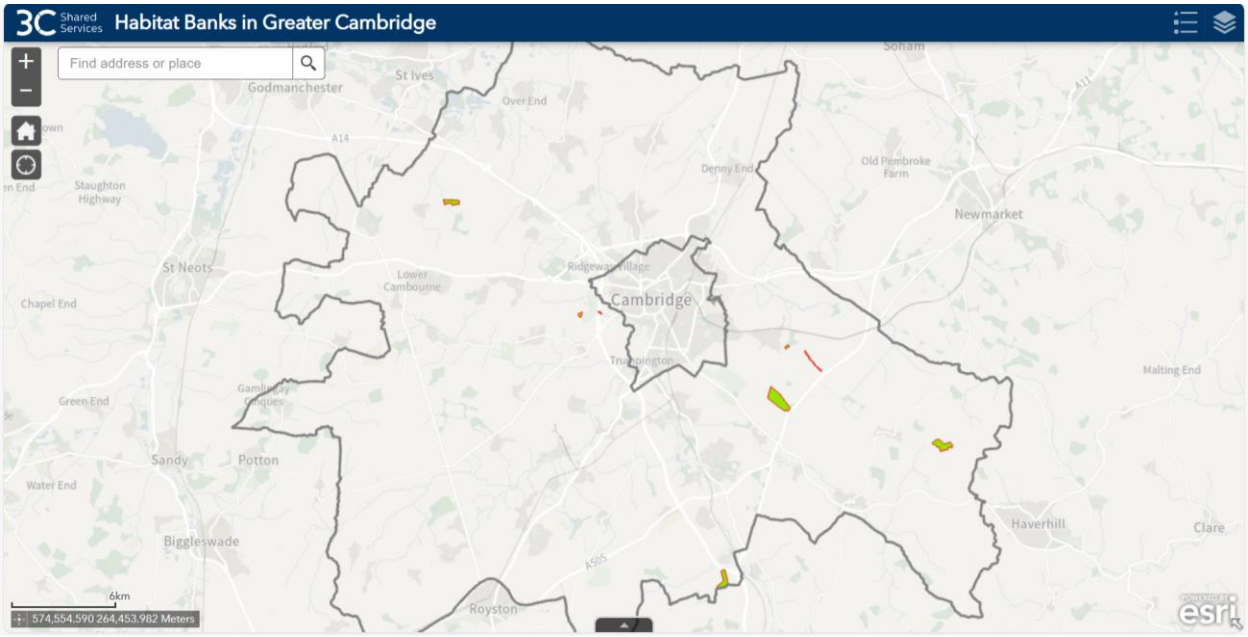
In Greater Cambridge, we have also facilitated the creation of **8** offsite advance habitat creation offset sites which cover a total land area of approximately **200** hectares. These sites are either already listed on DEFRA's Biodiversity Register, or are in the process of finalising the Section 106 Agreements and registering.

These BNG Offset sites are where developers can purchase BNG credits to mitigate habitat loss from developments taking place in Greater Cambridge. For our work facilitating the creation of these sites, we won the Planning for the Natural Environment category at the June 2025 Planning Awards.

Through the negotiation and creation of Section 106 Agreements, we have put in place a chargeable monitoring regime for the offsite BNG Providers to cover the costs of LPA monitoring of BNG on their recovery sites by our ecology team.

GCSP have also agreed **twelve** Section 106 Agreements for onsite delivery of BNG and as of October 2025 approximately **125** planning applications for which the mandatory BNG Condition has been applied for onsite BNG.

BNG offset provider sites in Greater Cambridge



3.2 BNG resulting, or expected to result, from biodiversity gain plans you've approved

The BNG resulting or expected to result from these collected activities both on and offsite is difficult to quantify at present as we have just begun to receive offsite reports and the process for collating and tracking onsite BNG is still emerging, but we can report that as of September 2025 the offset providers in Greater Cambridge have provided 177 BNG Units to developers in order to offset damage to the natural environment as a result of development.

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning has through the set-up of these offset sites enabled the creation of new habitats and thus new opportunities for biodiversity to thrive here.

BNG unit sales from offset sites created in Greater Cambridge

BNG Provider/Agent	Site	BNG unit sales as at 09/10/2025
Cambs County Council	Lower Valley Farm	64.46
Wildlife Trust BCN	Flack Field, Fulbourn	19.62
Groundworks	Devana Centre	7.4
The BNG Partnership	Boxworth	85.99
Cheffins	Coploe Hill,	0 (S106 being finalised)
Cambridge Past Present & Future	Coton Reserve	0 (S106 being finalised)

Total Units	-	**177.47**

We are in concept stage of developing a watercourse offsite BNG credit option at pour Sheep's Green Local Nature Reserve in Newnham to ensure that any offsite watercourse habitat requirements resulting from development can be delivered to the benefit of local habitats and communities.

Section 106 Agreements which include BNG Provision in Greater Cambridge

App No	Site Address	Decision	Ward	District	Type	Deed Date
21/00660/FUL	Land Adj 129 - 131 Ditton Fields Cambridge Cambridgeshire	Granted	Abbey	Cambridge City Council	BNG - Provision	05/11/2021
22/01384/FUL	Beech Farm Church Street Harston Cambridgeshire CB22 7NR	Granted	Harston & Comberton	South Cambridgeshire District Council	BNG - Provision	23/02/2023
22/02088/FUL	Bourn Golf Club, Health and Fitness Club Toft Road Bourn Cambridgeshire CB23 2TT	Granted	Caldecote	South Cambridgeshire District Council	BNG - Provision	18/11/2022
22/05549/OUT	TWI Granta Park Great Abington Cambridgeshire CB21 6AL	Granted	Linton	South Cambridgeshire District Council	BNG - Provision	18/01/2024
23/01335/OUT	Land East Of Ermine Street Caxton Cambridgeshire	Granted	Caxton & Papworth	South Cambridgeshire District Council	BNG - Provision	26/07/2024
23/04233/FUL	Fitzwilliam College Storeys Way Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB3 0DG	Granted	Castle	Cambridge City Council	BNG - Provision	09/08/2024
23/04590/OUT	Land South Of Coldhams Lane Cambridge Cambridgeshire	Granted	Cherry Hinton	Cambridge City Council	BNG - Provision	31/01/2025
23/04687/FUL	Barnwell Local Centre Barnwell Road Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB5 8RG	Granted	Abbey	Cambridge City Council	BNG - Provision	26/11/2024
23/04952/FUL	19 - 35 Regent Street Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB2 3AS	Granted	Market	Cambridge City Council	BNG - Provision	18/12/2024
24/01080/OUT	Land At Green End/Heath Road Gamlingay Sandy SG19 3JZ	Granted	Gamlingay	South Cambridgeshire District Council	BNG - Provision	10/04/2025
24/01354/FUL	137 And 143 Histon Road Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB4 3HZ	Granted	Arbury	Cambridge City Council	BNG - Provision	06/03/2025
24/03285/OUT	Land Southwest Of Lanacre 86 Chrishall Road Fowlmere Cambridgeshire SG8 7RY	Granted	Foxton	South Cambridgeshire District Council	BNG - Provision	31/07/2025

3.3 How we plan to meet BNG obligations in the next reporting period

We will continue to support applicants and habitat bank providers through the planning system with the provision of expert advice from our team of three full-time in-house ecologists and the systems and process that we have put in place to record and report on BNG.

To track, monitor and report on our BNG data, we have purchased a specialist software package (Verna's Mycelia), which will be used to collate data from other corporate systems

(Uniform, Exacom) to provide greater detail of BNG delivery in future Biodiversity Duty reports.

Our draft shared Local Plan proposes that all Major development in Greater Cambridge must provide a minimum 20% biodiversity net gain (BNG), unless exempt under the Environment Act 2021, to be provided onsite where this is feasible and effective. If adopted, we will implement this policy to ensure that our large developments deliver above mandatory 10% net gain. Where this requires offsite delivery, we will ensure that sites support the emerging LNRS.

ENDS

Biodiversity and urban forest strategies

End of survey report

Which of our strategies would you like to feed back on?

256/256 - Multiple choice - choose one - required

Both	83.2% (213 choices)
Urban Forest Strategy	8.6% (22 choices)
Biodiversity Strategy	8.2% (21 choices)

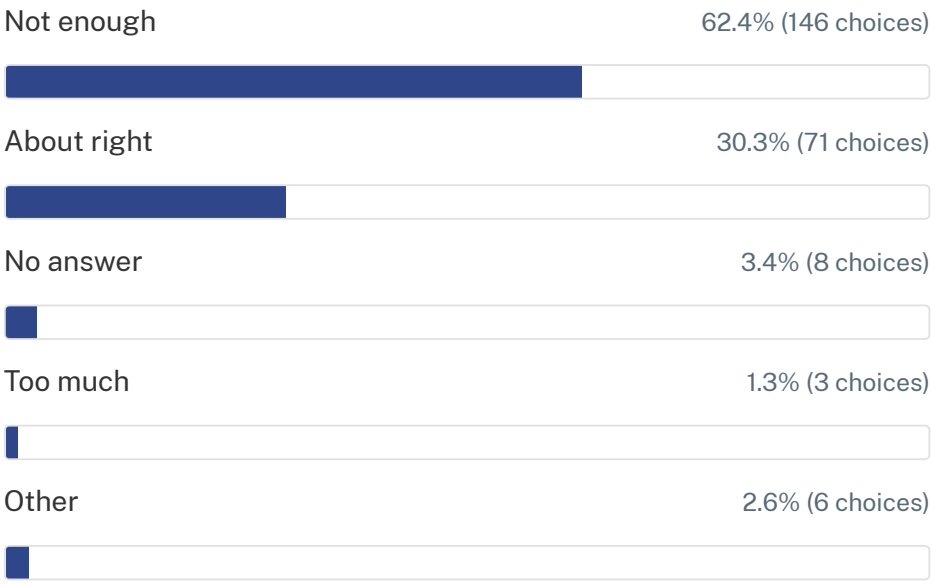
Do you support the Biodiversity Strategy vision?

233/234 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional

Strongly support	76.9% (180 choices)
Support	15.4% (36 choices)
Neutral	3.4% (8 choices)
Oppose	3% (7 choices)
Strongly oppose	0.9% (2 choices)
No answer	0.4% (1 choice)

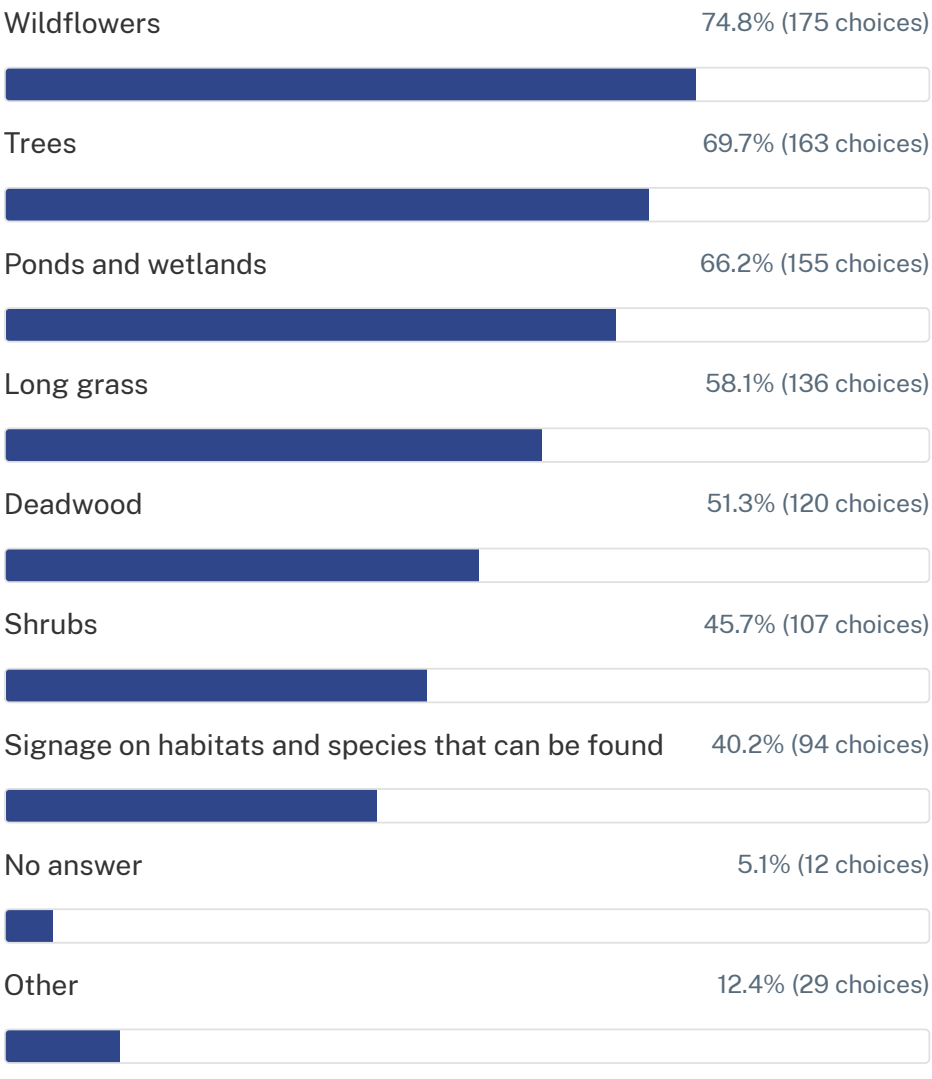
Do you feel our parks currently provide enough space for nature in the city?

226/234 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional



What if any additional things should we be including for nature in our parks?

222/234 - Multiple choice - choose many - optional



Which of our proposed strategic objectives should be prioritised?

221/234 - Multiple choice - choose many - optional

Ensure designated sites and priority habitats are in good/favourable condition and connected, where possible, to increase resilience to a changing climate and contribute to the Cambridge Nature Network and Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy — 64.1% (150 choices)



Maximise the potential of our buildings, parks, open spaces, allotments and community gardens, watercourses and tree stock to support biodiversity, whilst balancing their multifunctional needs — 50.9% (119 choices)



Secure a measurable net gain in biodiversity across the city by 2031 in support of the Natural Cambridgeshire Doubling Nature Vision — 46.2% (108 choices)



Ensure that biodiversity protection and enhancement is considered by all council service functions and projects in line with our statutory Biodiversity Duty — 40.2% (94 choices)



Harness the wealth of local professional and amateur knowledge and experience in identifying and solving local issues — 32.1% (75 choices)



Engage and promote awareness of biodiversity and wellbeing, supporting and empowering coordinated action in our communities, businesses, and institutions — 26.5% (62 choices)



Work with partners to establish long term, species and habitat surveys and monitoring to measure the impact of activities and identify new threats and opportunities across the city — 23.5% (55 choices)



No answer — 5.6% (13 choices)



What if any additional objectives would you like to see included in the strategy?

90/234 - Long answer - optional

Many respondents emphasised the need for ongoing maintenance and monitoring of green spaces and newly planted trees, with several noting that trees often die due to lack of follow-up care. There was strong support for integrating biodiversity and green spaces into all new developments, rather than relocating them elsewhere. Many called for stricter enforcement and measurable targets for biodiversity net gain, with some suggesting specific percentages or compulsory standards for developers.

A recurring theme was the importance of reducing pesticide and herbicide use, with several respondents urging the council to reinstate and strengthen its herbicide-free commitment and promote this approach city-wide. Linked to this, some highlighted the need to measure both positive and negative impacts of council activities to accurately demonstrate net biodiversity gain.

Engagement and accessibility were frequently mentioned, including calls for improved access to green spaces, better public transport, and inclusive engagement across all demographics and ages. Community involvement, citizen science, and support for local groups and community-led projects were also widely supported.

Many respondents wanted greater protection for existing mature habitats and wildlife, especially in the face of urban development, with some advocating for rewilding, wetland creation, and prioritising native species. Concerns about the impact of construction, light pollution, and loss of wildlife due to development were raised repeatedly.

Several respondents highlighted the need to link biodiversity objectives with wellbeing, health, and social prescribing, suggesting that green spaces should support both wildlife and human use. Education and awareness-raising, especially among young people, were also frequently mentioned.

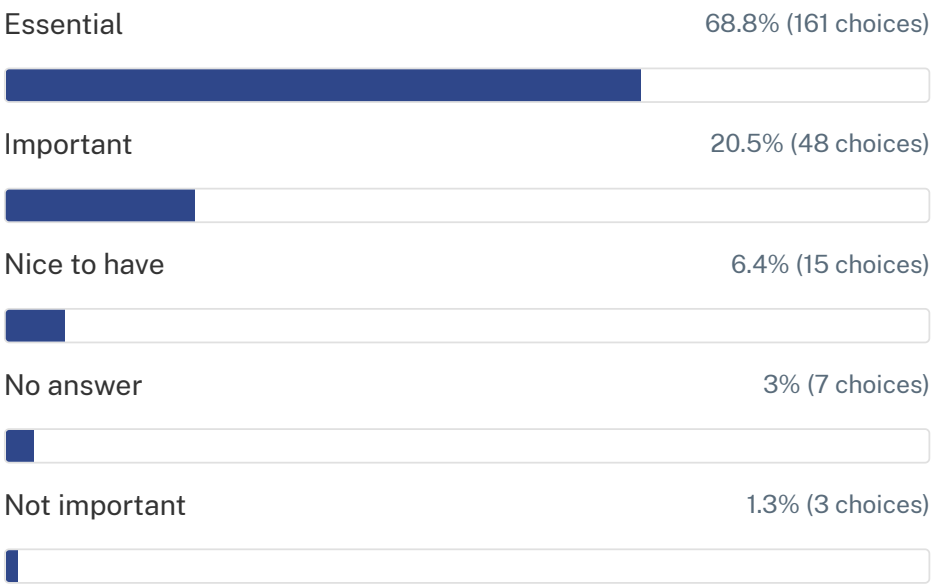
Other notable suggestions included improving water management and creating rain gardens protecting building-dependent bird species and ensuring green spaces are safe and accessible after dark.

A minority of responses expressed concerns about increased pests or opposed certain environmental measures.

Overall, the strongest trends were calls for robust maintenance and monitoring, integration of biodiversity into all development, reduction of pesticide use, measurable targets, community engagement, and linking biodiversity with wellbeing and accessibility.

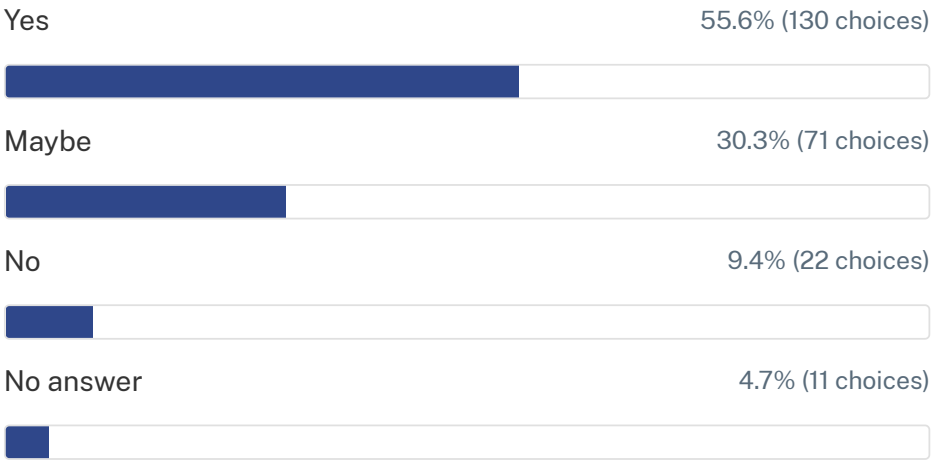
How important is it for every resident to have access to high-quality natural greenspace within 15 minutes walking distance?

227/234 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional



Should resources be directed first to communities who currently have the poorest access to nature and lowest tree canopy cover?

223/234 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional



What local habitats or species should be the focus of future projects?

144/234 - Long answer - optional

Wildflower meadows, native trees, ponds, wetlands, and chalk streams are the most frequently mentioned habitats for future focus. Many respondents highlight the importance of supporting pollinators (especially bees and butterflies), birds (including swifts, house martins, sparrows, and songbirds), bats, hedgehogs, foxes, and other small mammals. Insects are repeatedly cited as a foundation for wider biodiversity.

There is strong support for prioritising endangered or declining species and habitats, and for connecting fragmented green spaces to create wildlife corridors. Many urge a shift away from manicured lawns and frequent mowing, advocating for more natural, less managed spaces, including urban meadows, scrubland, hedgerows, and deadwood habitats. Several mention the need to halt pesticide and herbicide use.

Water habitats, especially rivers (notably the Cam), ponds, and wetlands, are repeatedly highlighted for restoration and maintenance, including concerns about silt, pollution, and the need for clear water and healthy banks. Chalk streams are specifically mentioned as under threat and in need of protection.

Many respondents stress the need to protect and enhance existing commons, parks, and open spaces, with several naming Stourbridge Common, Midsummer Common, Coldham's Common, and Coton Orchard as priorities. Some call for more street trees and planting in residential areas, especially in less green-rich neighbourhoods.

There is also concern about the impact of new developments, with calls to protect habitats from building, integrate nature into new housing, and avoid further loss of green space. Several suggest focusing on areas where biodiversity is most degraded, and on habitats near residential housing.

Other recurring themes include the need for habitat connectivity, community involvement in local planting, and adapting to climate change with drought- and heat-resistant species. Some mention specific sites (Mill Road Cemetery, Paradise, Hodsons Park, Logan Meadows) and species (badgers, water voles, kingfishers, skylarks, swallows, amphibians, reptiles) as deserving attention.

Overall, the strongest trends are: prioritising native and endangered species, restoring and connecting diverse habitats (especially meadows, wetlands, rivers, and trees), reducing intensive management and chemical use, and ensuring nature is accessible and integrated throughout the city, including in new developments and less green-rich areas.

How should we balance recreational access and people's enjoyment of our parks with protecting sensitive habitats?

134/234 - Long answer - optional

Most respondents emphasised the need for clear zoning or separation between recreational areas and sensitive habitats, often suggesting fencing, signage, and designated paths to protect wildlife while allowing people to enjoy green spaces. Many called for some areas to be permanently or periodically off-limits to the public, especially for the most sensitive habitats.

Education and awareness were frequently mentioned as crucial, including information boards, campaigns, workshops, and school programmes to help people understand the importance of biodiversity and how their actions affect habitats.

Several respondents highlighted the importance of thoughtful design, such as providing benches, bins, and well-maintained paths to guide movement and reduce disturbance, as well as landscaping features like hedges and buffer zones.

Dog management was a recurring theme, with many suggesting dog-free zones, dogs on leads, or restrictions during sensitive periods (e.g. bird nesting season).

Some respondents prioritised wildlife and biodiversity over recreation, arguing that urban parks should provide undisturbed habitats and that people's wellbeing benefits from nature. Others felt recreation should take precedence, especially in dense urban areas, and cautioned against restricting access too much.

There was broad support for a balanced approach, with many suggesting a mix of accessible and protected areas, and some advocating for seasonal restrictions or adaptive management depending on wildlife needs.

Other points raised included the impact of major events, fireworks, and urban development on habitats the need for more and larger green spaces and the value of community involvement and engagement.

In summary, the strongest trends were support for zoning and separation, education and awareness, thoughtful design, dog management, and a balanced approach between recreation and habitat protection. There was some disagreement about whether wildlife or recreation should be prioritised, but most respondents favoured solutions that allow for both, with careful management and communication.

If there are children or young people in your household, what do they want from existing and future green spaces?

82/234 - Long answer - optional

Respondents most frequently highlighted the importance of natural, biodiverse, and varied green spaces where children and young people can freely explore, play, and connect with nature. Many want spaces with trees to climb, wild areas, water features, and opportunities to observe and interact with wildlife such as birds, insects, and small mammals. Climbable trees and places to build dens or hide were specifically mentioned by several respondents.

A strong theme was the desire for green spaces to be safe, clean, and free from litter, needles, and antisocial behaviour. Safety and the ability to explore without fear were repeatedly emphasised, both for younger children and for teenagers seeking places to socialise.

Learning about nature and opportunities for environmental education were also common requests, including information boards, signage, and school visits to wildlife sites. Some suggested that green spaces should be accessible for school activities and that events like bioblitzes are valuable.

Respondents want a mix of open spaces for running and sports, as well as wilder, less manicured areas for adventure and discovery. Some noted that playgrounds are less appealing than natural areas with shrubs, woods, and features like stumperies. There were also calls for more wildflowers, ponds, and spaces for ethical angling.

Facilities such as toilets, drinking water, picnic benches, bins, and shelter from rain or sun were mentioned as desirable. Some respondents highlighted the need for spaces that exclude dogs for safer play, and for areas suitable for a range of ages.

Concerns were raised about the impact of urban development on green spaces, with some expressing frustration at loss of biodiversity and inadequate protection from authorities. A few also mentioned the importance of making green spaces accessible by different modes of transport.

Finally, several responses noted the importance of balancing spaces for play, sports, relaxation, and quiet enjoyment, and ensuring that green spaces are inclusive and welcoming for all ages and genders.

Do you support Fulbourn Road Local Nature Reserve designation?

201/234 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional



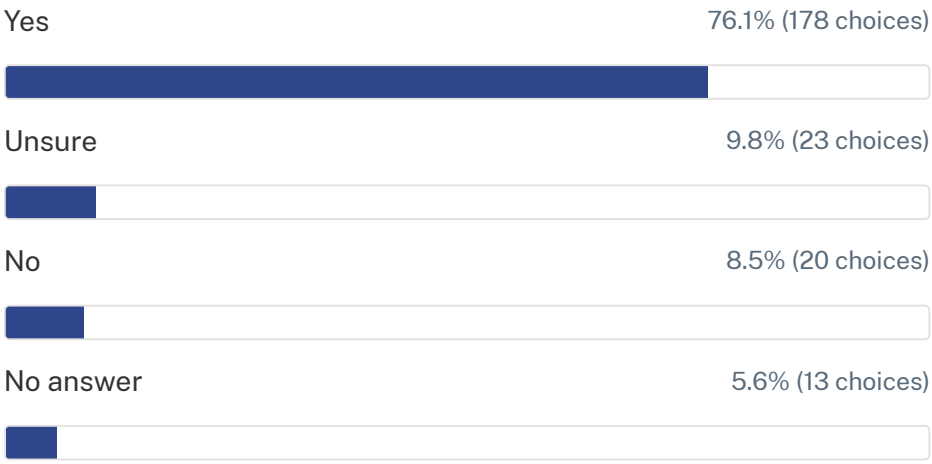
Do you support Church End Local Nature Reserve designation?

188/234 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional



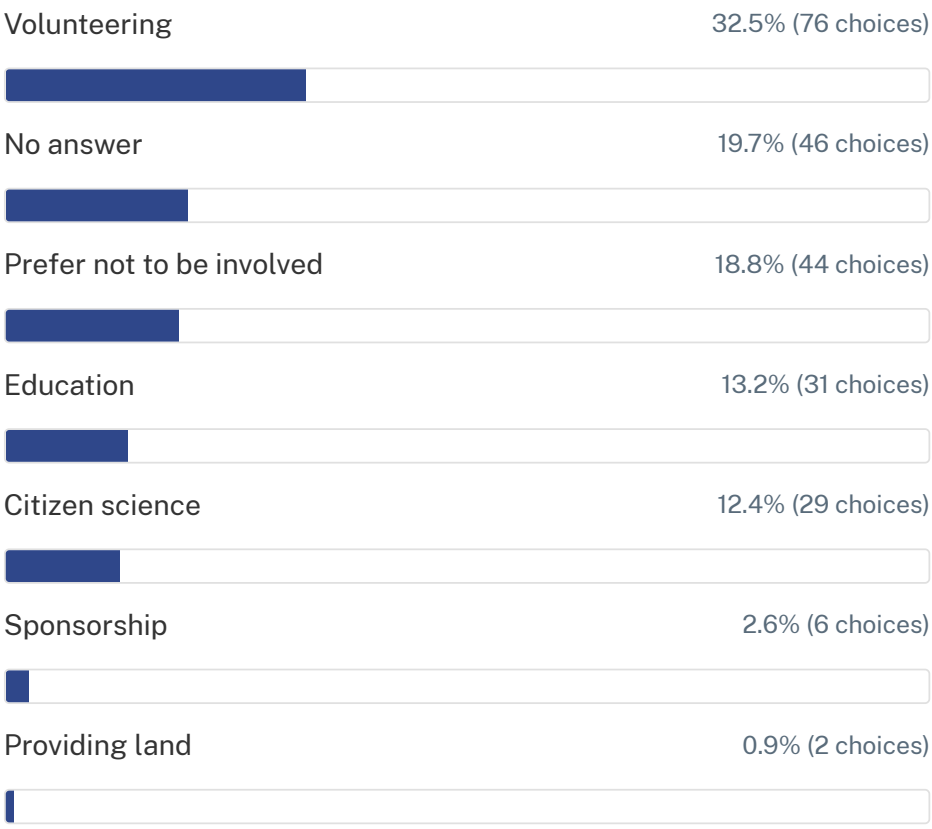
Do you support Cambridge seeking Nature City Accreditation?

221/234 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional



How would you or your organisation like to collaborate on biodiversity projects and engage with Nature City accreditation?

188/234 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional



What barriers might prevent you from participating in nature activities such as exploring a Local Nature Reserve or volunteering to help with a nature project in your local park?

113/234 - Long answer - optional

The most common barrier mentioned by respondents is lack of time, often due to work, family, or other commitments etc.]. Many people also cite physical barriers such as disability, poor health, age, or limited mobility etc.].

Accessibility and transport are also recurring issues, including distance from sites, lack of public transport, poor cycle routes, and parking difficulties etc.]. Several respondents highlight the need for activities to be local and accessible by foot or bike.

A lack of information or communication about opportunities, events, and how to get involved is another common theme. Some also mention a lack of family-friendly or child-inclusive activities.

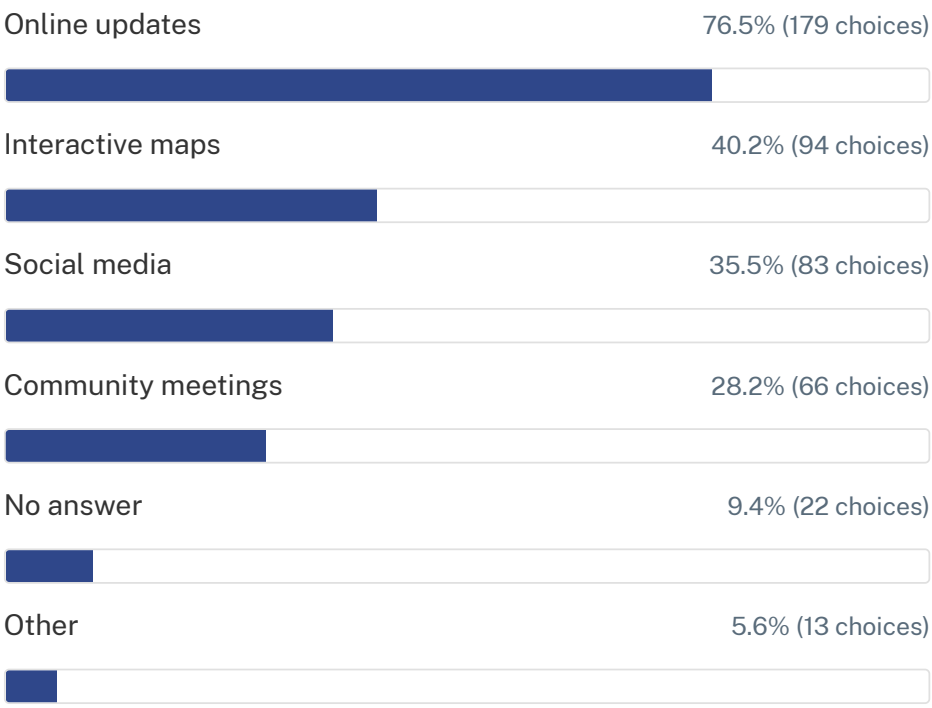
Other barriers mentioned include safety concerns (especially in secluded areas or due to anti-social behaviour) poor facilities (such as toilets), and the physical quality of sites. A few respondents express distrust in council motives or frustration with bureaucracy and the political nature of such projects.

A minority of respondents say they face no barriers or are already actively involved.

In summary, the main barriers are lack of time, physical and health limitations, accessibility and transport issues, insufficient information, and the need for more family-friendly and flexible [illegible]. Safety, facilities, and trust in organisers are also concerns for some.

How would you like us to share progress and decisions on biodiversity actions?

212/234 - Multiple choice - choose many - optional



Do you have any innovative ideas that could help make Cambridge a leader in urban biodiversity and meet our Nature City accreditation aspiration?

100/234 - Long answer - optional

The most common themes across responses are the need for greater community engagement and education, including involving schools, colleges, and local residents in biodiversity projects. Many suggest expanding volunteering networks, citizen science, and making biodiversity culturally visible through signage, art, and public campaigns.

A strong emphasis is placed on rewilding, reducing mowing and chemical use, and allowing verges and green spaces to become more natural, with wildflowers, scrubland, and less intensive maintenance. Several respondents highlight the importance of protecting existing green spaces from development and prioritising biodiversity over city growth.

Many mention the need for more trees, shrubs, and wildflower planting in parks, streets, and neglected spaces, including replacing failed plantings and increasing tree cover in areas like Parker's Piece and Mill Road. Suggestions include vertical planting, green roofs, and water gardens for climate resilience.

There is repeated concern about pesticide and herbicide use, with calls to maintain and promote the city's herbicide-free commitment and educate residents and businesses about alternatives.

Water and river habitats are frequently mentioned as priorities, including protecting chalk streams, the River Cam, and creating more ponds and wetlands.

Other recurring ideas include creating wildlife corridors, hedgehog highways, and pollinator patches to connect habitats incentivising garden ponds and rainwater collection and using technology for monitoring biodiversity.

Several respondents urge the council to listen to local experts, Friends groups, and environmental organisations, and to mainstream nature-based solutions in all planning decisions.

There are also calls for more funding, personnel, and incentives for biodiversity projects and for improved communication and visibility of biodiversity efforts.

Less frequently, respondents mention limiting cars, improving public transport, and managing tourist impact as well as unique ideas like supertrees, urban food forests, and orchard parks.

Overall, the strongest trends are: prioritising community involvement and education, rewilding and naturalising green spaces, protecting existing habitats from development, increasing tree and wildflower planting, maintaining a pesticide-free approach, and enhancing water and river habitats. Respondents want biodiversity to be embedded in everyday life and city planning, with visible, accessible, and well-communicated actions.

Are there any other comments or suggestions you'd like to make regarding the Biodiversity Strategy or Nature City accreditation?

62/234 - Long answer - optional

Many respondents emphasised the need for **urgent, ambitious, and practical action** rather than focusing solely on accreditation or strategy documents. There is a strong call for **measurable targets, robust monitoring, and enforcement** to ensure real outcomes for biodiversity.

Development pressure and loss of habitat are major concerns, with several respondents urging limits on new building until infrastructure and biodiversity protections are in place. Many want **nature and biodiversity to be prioritised above profit and unchecked growth**.

Pesticide and herbicide use is a divisive issue. Several respondents demand a pesticide-free city and criticise the omission of this commitment in the latest strategy while one suggests limited herbicide use for safety and drainage reasons.

Community engagement, education, and inclusivity are widely supported. Respondents want clear communication, opportunities for volunteering, and education to be central to the strategy. There is also a call for **better public awareness campaigns** and more accessible information.

Protection and enhancement of existing habitats is a recurring theme, with many stressing the importance of preserving what remains, improving green corridors, and ensuring developments deliver on-site biodiversity gains. There are also calls for **better management of mowing, invasive species, and pollution**.

Trees and urban greening are highlighted as vital for climate resilience and urban wellbeing. Respondents want more tree planting, green corridors, and adaptation to changing climate conditions.

Collaboration with local experts, universities, and community groups is encouraged to leverage existing knowledge and resources.

Other points raised include the need to address **light pollution** improve **litter management** ensure **inclusive design** and avoid over-bureaucratisation. Some respondents also highlighted the **mental health benefits** of green spaces.

A minority expressed scepticism about the strategy's effectiveness or the value of accreditation.

Overall, the responses show strong support for urgent, ambitious, and practical biodiversity action, with a focus on measurable outcomes, community involvement, and the protection and enhancement of existing nature in the face of development pressures.

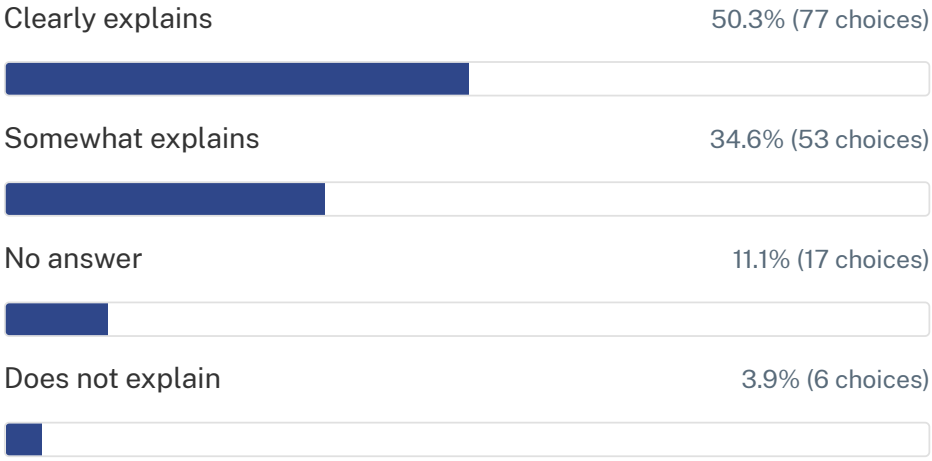
What would you like to do next?

234/234 - Multiple choice - choose one - required



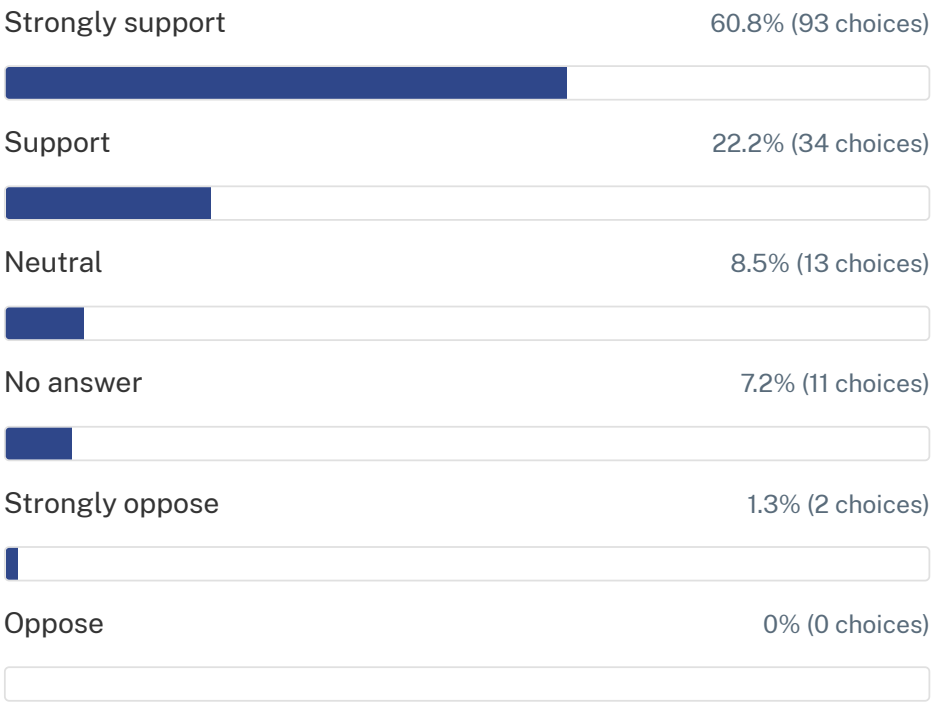
Does the strategy clearly explain the concept of Urban Forestry?

136/153 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional



Do you support the overall vision, principles and aims of the Urban Forest Strategy and the direction of travel for the next decade?

142/153 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional



What level of ambition should Cambridge adopt for future canopy cover and overall tree legacy?

148/153 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional

Adopt an ambitious long-term target above current levels (~25%), supported by major investment — 60.1% (92 choices)



Aim for modest canopy growth, prioritising areas with the lowest canopy cover — 22.9% (35 choices)



Aim for modest canopy growth (~20%) over the next 10-15 years — 11.1% (17 choices)



No answer — 3.3% (5 choices)



Maintain the current canopy cover (no major change at ~17%) — 2.6% (4 choices)



What approach should the council take to selecting tree species in a changing climate?

143/153 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional

Prioritise climate-resilient species (including non-native) where evidence supports it — 28.8% (44 choices)



Actively diversify the species mix for long-term resilience, even if this means major shifts from historic species — 24.2% (37 choices)



Use a mix of native and non-native species, with careful site-based selection — 20.9% (32 choices)



Prioritise traditional native species wherever possible — 19.6% (30 choices)



No answer — 6.5% (10 choices)



How should the council balance mature tree retention with public safety?

149/153 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional

Retain mature trees wherever reasonable, accepting some residual risk, to preserve public benefits — 43.1% (66 choices)



Retain mature trees where risks are tolerable and can be managed proportionately — 33.3% (51 choices)



Balance safety with retention, using pruning before removal — 15.7% (24 choices)



Prioritise safety above all; remove trees where risk is identified — 5.2% (8 choices)



No answer — 2.6% (4 choices)



What level of responsibility should developers have for new and existing trees?

148/153 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional

Provide full funding for establishment/aftercare (for example, at least three years), long-term protection and enhanced canopy delivery — 60.8% (93 choices)



Deliver high-quality tree retention, planting and aftercare as a standard requirement — 29.4% (45 choices)



Meet minimum national requirements — 3.3% (5 choices)



Protect existing trees of value and plant replacements where feasible — 3.3% (5 choices)



No answer — 3.3% (5 choices)



How should the council prioritise where new trees are planted?

147/153 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional

Where canopy cover is lowest or heat risk is highest 54.2% (83 choices)



Strongly prioritise areas with the greatest environmental inequalities, even if this means fewer new trees elsewhere 22.9% (35 choices)



Evenly across the city 11.8% (18 choices)



Where new development is happening 7.2% (11 choices)



No answer 3.9% (6 choices)



What approach should the council take to replacing and establishing new trees?

145/153 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional

Increase replacement ratios and invest in high-quality watering and formative care 66% (101 choices)



Treat young-tree establishment as a high-priority investment, even if it means planting fewer trees 17.6% (27 choices)



Replace trees 1:1 and provide basic establishment 8.5% (13 choices)



No answer 5.2% (8 choices)

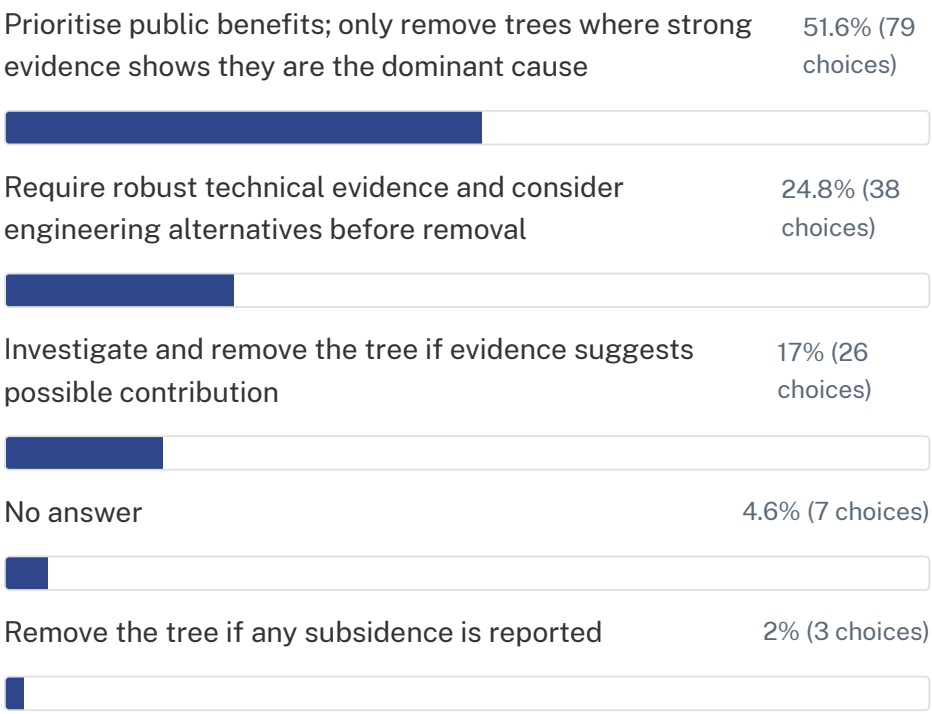


Replace removed trees 1:1 where possible 2.6% (4 choices)



What approach should be taken when subsidence is alleged to be caused by a public tree?

146/153 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional



How would residents like to be involved in supporting Cambridge's urban forest?

132/153 - Multiple choice - choose many - optional



If resources are limited, what should the Council prioritise?

146/153 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional

Maximising long-term benefits (biodiversity, shade, climate) even if it means difficult trade-offs (like what) 35.9% (55 choices)



Maintenance and aftercare of existing trees 24.2% (37 choices)



Planting fewer trees but with proper establishment 18.3% (28 choices)



Engagement, education and partnerships to expand capacity 11.8% (18 choices)



Tree safety work 5.2% (8 choices)



No answer 4.6% (7 choices)



What would you like to do next?

148/153 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional

Go to cross-cutting questions 80.4% (123 choices)



Go to end 16.3% (25 choices)

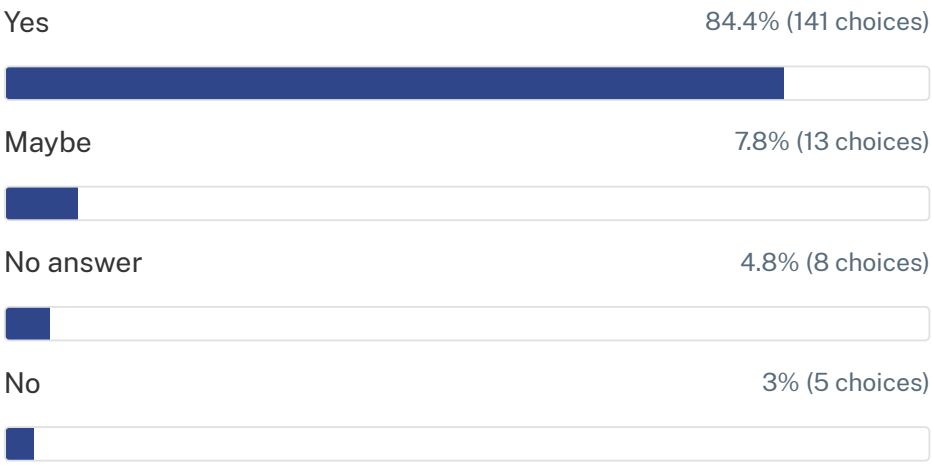


No answer 3.3% (5 choices)



Do residents support a more integrated approach to canopy cover, habitat connectivity and species recovery?

159/167 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional



How should the city adapt habitats and planting practices to hotter, drier summers and increased climate risks?

93/167 - Long answer - optional

Respondents most frequently emphasised the need to plant more trees, especially those that are resilient to hotter, drier conditions and future climate scenarios. Many called for prioritising the protection and maintenance of existing mature trees, which are seen as more resilient and valuable for shade and biodiversity.

A strong trend was the recommendation to diversify planting, using a mix of native and climate-resilient species, to hedge against uncertainty in future weather patterns and pests. Some stressed the importance of focusing on native species for biodiversity, while others argued for including non-natives if they are better adapted to future conditions.

Water management was another key theme: respondents suggested rainwater collection, rain gardens, ponds, and mulching to support plant survival and reduce reliance on mains water. Several also highlighted the need for improved soil health as a foundation for resilient planting.

Community involvement in watering and caring for new plantings was widely supported, with suggestions for volunteer schemes, public awareness campaigns, and involving schools.

Many respondents advocated for increasing shade through tree avenues, green walls, and roofs, and reducing hard surfaces to mitigate urban heat. There was also support for creating and maintaining wetlands, wildflower meadows, and less intensively managed green spaces.

A number of responses stressed the importance of evidence-based, expert-led approaches, learning from other cities, and adapting strategies as more is learned.

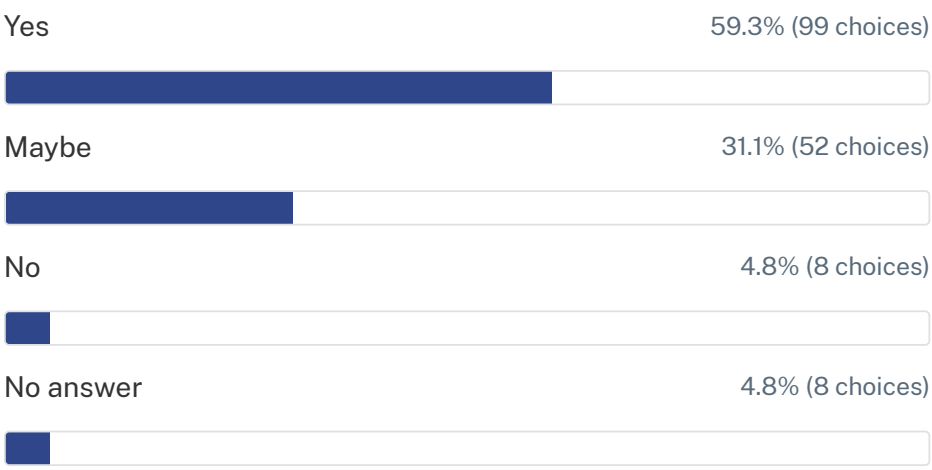
Some respondents raised concerns about the unpredictability of future climate (including wetter winters), and the need to avoid over-reliance on any one approach. A few questioned the premise of climate adaptation or the urgency of intervention.

Overall, the main trends were: prioritising tree planting and protection (especially shade and resilient species), diversifying plantings, improving water and soil management, involving the [illegible]d taking an evidence-based, flexible approach.

English

Should reasonable resources be directed first to communities with the lowest canopy cover and poorest access to wildlife?

159/167 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional



What role could communities play in both tree and biodiversity?

82/167 - Long answer - optional

Most respondents emphasised the importance of community involvement in both tree planting and ongoing care, particularly watering and maintenance of young trees. Many suggested schemes such as ‘adopt a tree’ or ‘guardian’ roles for residents, schools, or local groups.

Education and awareness were frequently mentioned, especially through schools and community events. Several respondents highlighted the benefits of involving children and families, both for biodiversity and for fostering stewardship.

Volunteering opportunities, monitoring, and reporting issues were also common themes. Respondents noted the need for accessible and well-publicised volunteering, with some suggesting family-friendly sessions and community events.

Many stressed the value of local knowledge and input, including species selection, site suggestions, and everyday stewardship. Some respondents called for more support, training, and genuine decision-making roles for communities.

Private gardens were identified as a major issue, with suggestions to encourage retention and replacement planting, and to promote biodiversity-friendly gardening. Hedgerows, leaf litter, and wildlife corridors were also mentioned as ways to boost biodiversity.

Some respondents noted barriers such as lack of time, unclear information, or insufficient council support, and called for easier access to resources, clearer communication, and practical help (e.g. watering equipment, rainwater collection hubs).

Overall, the strongest trends were calls for community-led planting, care, and monitoring; education and engagement through schools and families; accessible volunteering; and support for biodiversity in private gardens.

How can we best present evidence, decisions and trade-offs to build public confidence across both strategies?

65/167 - Long answer - optional

Transparency, honesty, and clear communication were the most frequently emphasised themes. Respondents repeatedly called for open explanations of decisions, evidence, and trade-offs, using plain language and avoiding spin. Regular updates and feedback loops, such as email newsletters, were suggested to keep the public informed about progress and outcomes.

Many respondents stressed the importance of using a wide range of communication channels, including social media, local press, leaflets, noticeboards, public events, and community meetings, to reach diverse audiences. Visuals such as maps, diagrams, artist impressions, and short videos were recommended to make information more accessible and engaging.

Demonstrating real-world results and successful case studies, both locally and from other cities, was seen as important for building trust and showing the impact of strategies. Several responses highlighted the need for baseline data, measurable targets, and transparent reporting on progress, costs, and benefits.

Active public engagement and collaboration were also recurring themes. Respondents wanted opportunities for feedback, influence, and involvement, with some suggesting support for local champions, schools, and community groups. Listening to public opinion and showing how it shapes outcomes was seen as key to building confidence.

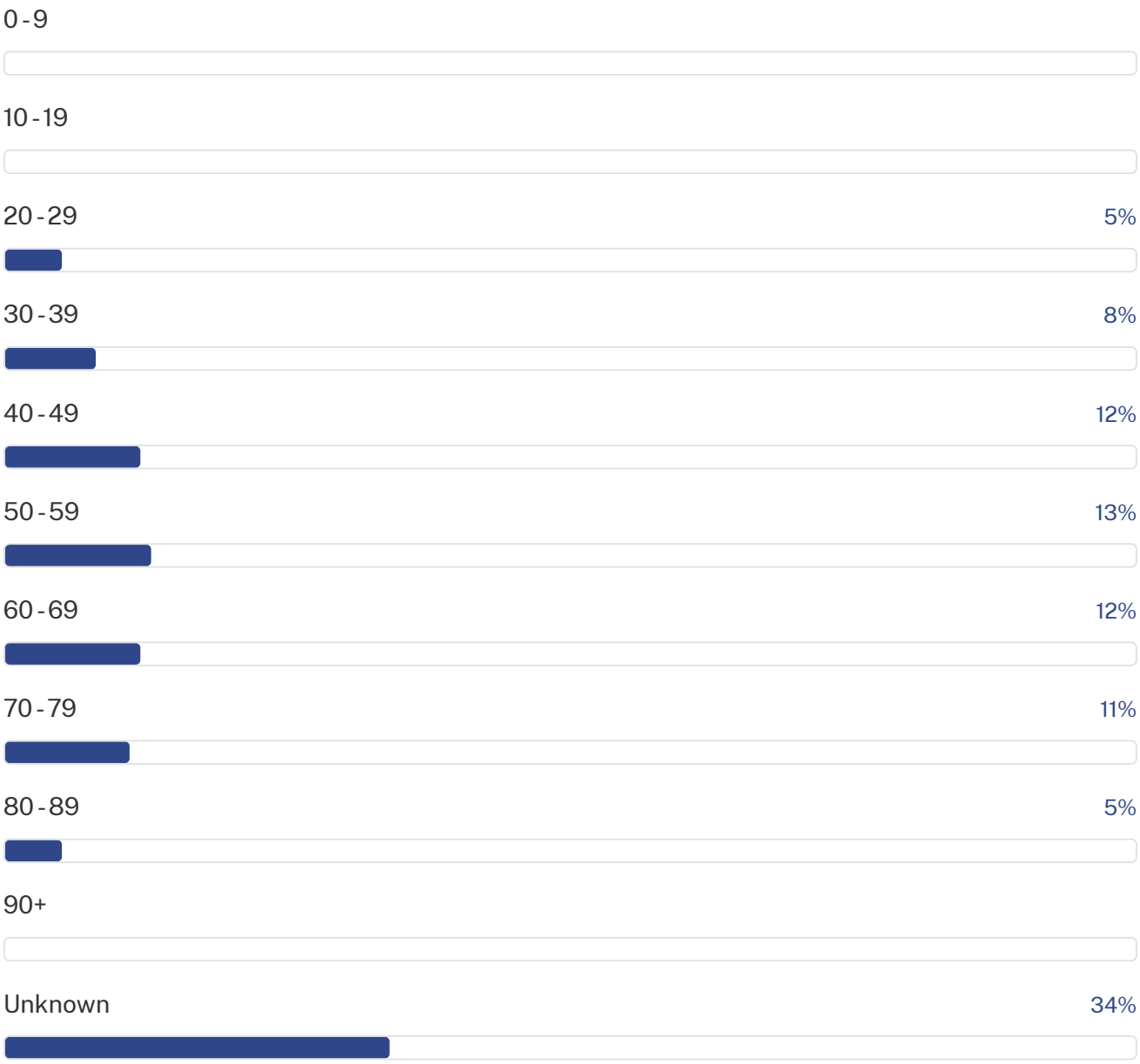
A minority of responses expressed scepticism or opposition to the strategies or questioned the council's priorities

Demographic of respondents

Respondents are invited to share some details about themselves as part of the registration process on our online engagement platform. This helps us better understand how representative the responses are of the people who live and work in Cambridge.

To ensure that the survey is accessible to as many people as possible, we do not make it compulsory to provide this data. The online engagement platform is continually working to improve how it presents this data.

Year of birth



Place of residence



Somewhere else 2%



Unknown 67%



Which of the following describes how you think of yourself? (please select one response from the following)

Male 25%



Female 31%



In another way

Prefer not to say 4%



Unknown 40%



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Cam Valley Forum - 17 February 2026

Response to consultation on

Cambridge City Council Draft Biodiversity Strategy 2026-2031

Overall, we think the draft Biodiversity Strategy is good. Our comments are as follows.

1. **Need for greater emphasis on protection of *in-situ* biodiversity**

The draft Biodiversity Strategy correctly calls for protection and enhancement of wildlife and biodiversity, but there is little specific mention of the need for protection of the remaining *in-situ* biodiversity. The BNG legislation allows for biodiversity in a location to be "lost to development, if the latter is considered sufficiently important, on the basis that it can be re-created elsewhere". We feel that this opens up a considerable risk of loss of key biodiversity, and would like to see stronger emphasis on protecting current remaining in-situ biodiversity.

2. **Strategic objectives**

Reflecting the above general point, we would like to see the first two of the strategic objectives (summarised on page 5 and worded in full on page 43) re-ordered and the text adjusted as follows:

1. **Strengthen protection of, and** improve condition and connectivity of designated sites and priority habitats **in-situ**.
2. Secure a measurable biodiversity net gain across the city. ….

The strategic objective on BNG should perhaps also mention the targets (the statutory target which is 10%, and the City Council's laudable desire to reach 20%)

The summary objectives on p 5 need editing to reflect more closely the fully worded strategic objectives on p.43.

3. **Section 4**

4.3. Special mention is made of The Big Chalk Partnership, Butterfly Conservation, and Nature Town and Cities. We would like to see mention of the following national initiative as this is specifically relevant to Cambridge's biodiversity and key habitats:

> CABA (the Catchments Based Approach - https://catchmentbasedapproach.org/) which has a strategy specifically for chalk streams, the key recommendation of which is to develop '*an overarching level of protection and priority status for chalk streams and their catchments*', and its closely associated partner, the Rivers Trust https://theriverstrust.org/our-work

4.4. We are pleased to see mention of the "*Draft South Cambridgeshire Climate & Nature Strategy 2026–2030*" but we understand this is to be a joint strategy with Cambridge City Council. This may need correcting or clarifying.

4.5. Bottom of page 16/top of page 17: the paragraph on actions underway on chalk streams does not mention the GCCSP. This project should be mentioned, along with future work on the city's chalk streams that is expected to build on the results of the case study work currently underway through the GCCSP.

4.6. The importance of designated City Wildlife Sites is acknowledged but there appears to be little in the draft to indicate how their biodiversity will be safeguarded. Some are already under significant threat from development. The very small area covered by designated LNRs is clearly illustrated in

Map 1. The overlay, on Map 5, of designated sites with the Cambridge Nature Network priority areas looks very good and positive until one realises that the majority of the area of designated sites is non-statutory protection.

Section on "Wetlands" (p.29): it would be useful if this could be termed 'Wetlands ***and Watercourses***" to make it clear that river and streams are included here, not just fenland and marshes, which some might initially think of as wetlands. We appreciate the attention given to chalk streams.

4.7. (p. 32). – Local threats and pressures. This section needs specific mention of 'over-abstraction' of water for both household and non-household use. Over-abstraction is a major contributor to both 'urbanisation' and 'hydrological change'. There is a mention of 'depleted aquifers' but not of what is causing these.

4. Section 5. Biodiversity Audit

The biodiversity audit, on which the strategy is based, was undertaken in 2020, over 5 years ago. At that time, as noted "*Overall, 123 ha (63%) of the total area of the audit is in poor condition*". We wonder if there might already be some significant changes to the baseline? We note the more recent figures for particular sites in 2025 (Table 3, p.40) but it is difficult to get an overall picture.

We think that the biodiversity audit should include at least some measure of the health of the City's river and chalk streams, given the efforts that have been put into gathering data on water quality and quantity, and other metrics relevant to this key habitat type. We are aware the BNG metrics do not specifically address this, but think it is essential that the local biodiversity strategy should do so. As far as we are aware there is no requirement for a local authority biodiversity strategy to focus specifically on the BNG approach.

Somewhere there needs to be a specific commitment or action on improving communication with local residents about the City Council's management of biodiversity and why certain apparently 'damaging' actions (e.g tree felling, in-channel stream work etc) are necessary. Public awareness of the natural environment and the need to protect biodiversity is fortunately high in Cambridge but the complexity of its management in the face of development pressures is not always well understood.

General comment

The draft text needs some good editing as some of the sentences are ambiguous and not always easy to interpret.

Overview

The revised Biodiversity Strategy keeps the overall direction of the current Strategy – while constructively tightening the focus, updating to address new law and policy, and reshaping both the action plan and monitoring framework. The earlier Strategy set a vision of achieving measurable net biodiversity gain across Cambridge, structured around seven Objectives under three Themes. The revised Strategy explicitly retains the overall vision and high-level Themes, while refining and sometimes replacing individual Actions and indicators, in light of what has (and has *not*) worked since 2022.

The revised Strategy constructively places much more emphasis on measurable progress with updated baselines, clearer indicators, and reporting arrangements that track delivery of actions and outcomes. It is well integrated, clarifying how e.g., the Cambridge Nature Network priority areas, Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) and the Council's emerging Urban Forest Strategy will feed into site selection, planning decisions and investment.

➡️**This is all positive** 👍

However, a number of weaknesses should be addressed, to strengthen this draft Strategy.

- Less clear sense of urgency and milestones By stretching delivery into a second phase, treating 2022–25 more as a 'ramp-up', sometimes **blurs near-term urgency** by reducing pressure for early, transformational change.
- More complex governance is not always clearer Delivery in the draft Strategy accommodates new layers [e.g., LNRS, statutory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), the Urban Forest Strategy, Greater Cambridge Planning]. This complexity requires consistent and clear explanation of *who* is responsible for *what*, by *when*, and, above all, ***how*** they can be **held to account**.
- Over-reliance on statutory BNG and spatial frameworks? The current Strategy relies on BNG, Cambridge Nature Network and 'Doubling Nature', but also features proactive projects that go *beyond* minimum planning requirements. The draft Strategy aligns more closely with national BNG and the LNRS – risking **choking off** locally driven, discretionary projects (in e.g., smaller sites, where statutory tools are less pertinent).
- Weaker focus on concrete neighbourhood-level benefits The current Strategy emphasises 'Nature in your Neighbourhood', access to local green spaces, and working with 'Friends groups' and volunteers. This enables residents to see easily how the Strategy impacts them. The draft Strategy is expressed in more technical terms ('targets', 'networks', 'indicators', 'compliance'). This risks **local, site-specific and equality-focused benefits** being less visible, relevant and accessible to residents and – further – makes such benefits plainly secondary to more abstract regulatory alignments.
- Monitoring needs better focus on measurable ecological outcomes Under the current Strategy, the Council delivered on many actions **without** achieving the hoped-for scale of nature recovery. There is a clear need to monitor progress *better* against a biodiversity baseline. While this draft Strategy improves the indicator framework, it leans too much toward counting actions and outputs (projects delivered, hectares in management, trees planted) **rather than ecological outcomes** (habitat condition, species trends, connectivity). It is essential for residents, partners, Councillors and Officers all to be able to assess whether Cambridge **is or is not** genuinely on track for 'measurable net gain'.
- Dilution of community voice The 2021 public consultation on *that* draft Biodivresity Strategy enabled significant partnership with residents, local groups and conservation organisations. However, this draft Strategy's consultation has been *deliberately* bundled with the 'parallel' Urban Forest Strategy (while *entirely* overlapping with other major and challenging public consultations), despite the two documents lacking parallel or inter-linked structures. Meanwhile the ostensibly equally 'parallel' Climate change consultation had come and gone before these two had even begun. Together, this has

dramatically reduced residents' ***capacity*** to provide meaningful input. The consequent built-up frustration of local residents is obvious in e.g., this **29/1/26** comment found on a local discussion board, (posted by a person I have never previously come across):

> "I suppose it's possible this "consultation" will be different, but all the council consultations I've responded to in the past have been a sham, constructed to get a particular answer, although perhaps, if enough people band together, something could be done. (Methods of manipulation regularly used: 1. consulting on a very limited predetermined choice, major decisions already made; 2. listing benefits no one would say no to, eg more youth services, which never get delivered/will be delivered anyway even if scheme the council wants to "sell" doesn't go ahead/without warning of the sometimes extremely high costs (eg demolitions) the benefit depends on, potentially making the "benefit" a bad choice; 3. questions so vague they're pretty meaningless and the council can draw whatever conclusions they want 4. compelling the respondent to agree to at least one option whether they agree with any of them or not; 5. not accurately transferring responses from surveys into the following report, eg one report cast doubt on whether anyone in my situation existed, although I reported it clearly in the survey.)"

- Therefore the finalised Strategies must demonstrate clearly how meaningful, relevant and thoughtful public input **does** alter the drafts' focuses, approaches and priorities – so community influence is not seen to be manifestly weaker than previously.

With all of these concerns in mind, and aiming to maintain and retain the strengths of this draft Biodiversity Strategy, the following pages offer commentary as well as detailed suggested amendments to the draft text.

These are intended throughout to:

- tighten accountability and align with emerging standards;
- boost visible and *essential* urgency; and
- optimise neighbourhood-level desirable outcomes.

For clarity, proposed new wording is preceded by a → symbol and designated with green text.

1. Foreword

Issue: The tone is celebratory and process-heavy; urgency and accountability for delivery 2026–31 are understated.

Re: "When we adopted our 2022 Biodiversity Strategy, we pledged to undertake a midterm review on progress and direction. This draft revised strategy for consultation seeks to update changes in national legislation and recognise new regional strategies, partnerships and local projects." Replace with:

→ When we adopted our 2022 Biodiversity Strategy, we pledged to undertake a midterm review on progress, direction **and delivery**. This draft revised strategy for consultation seeks **not only** to update changes in national legislation and recognise new regional strategies, partnerships and local projects, **but also to set out clear, time-bound actions and measures of success for the period 2026–2031.**

Re: "It provides an opportunity to reflect on and celebrate the many successful projects and partnerships working to protect and restore nature across the city and beyond." Replace with:

→ It provides an opportunity to reflect on and celebrate successful projects and partnerships, **and to be honest about where progress has been too slow or uneven so that we can correct course quickly**.

Add at end of the second paragraph:

→ We are now halfway through the decade in which the UK has committed to halt and reverse nature loss; failure to act decisively between 2026 and 2031 would lock in further decline in Cambridge's habitats and species.

In the final paragraph, strengthen accountability and demonstrate that aims will be consistently translated into results, replace "We propose to take a lead on this and I hope you will feel inspired to respond to the consultation and join us in whatever way you are able." with:

→ We propose to take a lead on this, and commit to publishing annual public reports on progress against this strategy – so that residents, partners and communities can hold us to account.

2. Vision

Issue: Strong long-term vision, but lacks sufficiently explicit reference to: 2030/2031 milestones; equity between neighbourhoods; and accountability. The draft Strategy focuses mainly on land management and planning within the city boundary; could more weight be given to value-chain management, financial actors and the redirection of harmful subsidies and investments?

At the start of the section, add a short framing sentence:

→ This strategy translates our long term corporate vision into specific outcomes that must be achieved in every neighbourhood by 2031.

At the draft's 1st paragraph, add:

→ The Council will aim for local and global supply chains linked to the city (e.g., in construction materials, food, research inputs) to reduce their negative biodiversity impacts.

<Aligns draft Strategy with IPBES' messages on value chains and trade (A6, B10); cf the Report cited at end of list on p. 6 of this feedback >

In the quoted biodiversity vision, to add explicit timing and equity:
'Our Biodiversity Strategy vision is that over the next 5 years Cambridge will see a "measurable net gain" in biodiversity, both within the city and the surrounding countryside, including the extent and quality of priority habitats and populations of priority species. Replace by:

→ 'Our Biodiversity Strategy vision is that over the next 5 years Cambridge will see a "measurable net gain" in biodiversity that will be demonstrable – both within the city and in the surrounding countryside (including the extent and quality of priority habitats and populations of priority species) **with no ward left behind in access to nature and in improvements to local habitats.**

Add a final sentence to the paragraph:

→ Progress towards this vision will be tracked through publicly reported indicators, including: 'biodiversity units' on Council-managed land; on the condition of key sites; and on meaningful public access to natural green space within an average 10–15 minute walk from residents' homes.

3. Executive Summary

Issue: Good structure, but lacks explicit neighbourhood-level framing, baselines and targets.

The 'Vision' paragraph

By 2031, Cambridge will achieve a measurable net gain in biodiversity, ensuring priority habitats and species are protected, enhanced, and connected. Replace by:

→ By 2031, Cambridge will achieve a measurable net gain in biodiversity **compared with the 2020 baseline set out in our Biodiversity Audit**, ensuring priority habitats and species are protected, enhanced, and connected. We will also have piloted business-relevant metrics (e.g. biodiversity units, habitat condition, species trends) for local businesses to use.

<The latter aligns the draft Strategy with IPBES' calls for standardized, decision-relevant indicators and scenarios (C5–C6, Table SPM.7); cf IPBES, cited on p.6 of this feedback. >

And also add:

→ We will publish updated biodiversity unit scores for our core sites in 2028 and 2031, and aim to use these to demonstrate at least a 20% increase in units across Council-managed natural green spaces by 2031 – subject to available resources.

The 'Strategic Objectives' list

Make objectives clearly testable by adding text to three of the six bulleted items:

• Deliver measurable biodiversity net gain across the city. Replace by:

→ • Deliver measurable biodiversity net gain across the city, including a minimum 20% net gain on all Council-led developments and a net increase in biodiversity units across Council-managed natural green spaces by 2031.

• Improve condition and connectivity of designated sites and priority habitats. Replace by:

→ • Improve condition and connectivity of designated sites and priority habitats, so that by 2031 at least 75% of Local Nature Reserves and Commons are in moderate or good condition and no site remains in poor condition without a published recovery plan.

• Embed biodiversity considerations across all Council services and developments . Replace by:

→ • Embed biodiversity considerations across all Council services and developments and local economic policy and business-support programmes. Furthermore: support local businesses to adopt biodiversity accounting and reporting and encourage firms to set science-based nature targets aligned with the LNRS and global goals.

<Align draft Strategy with IPBES' whole-of-government approaches (KM3, B1; setting nature targets aligns with IPBES B8–B9; cf the Report cited at end of list on p.6 of this feedback >

Consider also citing Logan's Meadow and Hobson's Park schemes (mentioned at p.2–3 & p.8 of the Draft Strategy) as examples of how planning, S106, and public–private co-funding offer a prototype enabling-environment, for net-gain-positive, business-led development.

• Empower communities, businesses, and institutions to act. Replace by:

→• Empower communities, businesses, and institutions to act, with a particular focus on neighbourhoods currently lacking high quality natural greenspace, and support at least one LNRS-aligned community nature project in every ward by 2030.

The 'Key Themes' bullets

Under 'Biodiversity Mainstreaming':

Signal the city's role in shifting financial flows at local scale (in line with IPBES B3), with:

→ Develop and pilot biodiversity-weighted procurement criteria for major public realm and housing projects by 2028.

Under 'Nature in Your Neighbourhood':

Promote community-led projects, Nature City Accreditation, pollinator-friendly initiatives, and biodiversity education. Replace by:

→ Promote community-led projects, Nature City Accreditation, pollinator-friendly initiatives, and biodiversity education, **with targeted support for wards with lower canopy cover, fewer wildlife-rich sites, or greater social disadvantage**.

The 'Action Plan' paragraph

Add to the end:

→ Each action in the plan specifies a lead service, partners, intended outcomes and timescales, and we will use these to report transparently on delivery each year through our Biodiversity Duty Report.

Consider adding a *Resident-focused Executive Summary* (plain-language version)

Provide a boxed 'Summary for residents and neighbourhood forums', alongside or immediately after the formal Executive Summary, with text along the following lines:

→ **Summary for neighbourhoods and residents**

Nature in Cambridge is under real pressure. Many of our commons, parks and rivers are still in poor or only moderate condition for wildlife, despite volunteers and community groups having worked hard to improve them. This updated Biodiversity Strategy sets out what the Council and its partners will do between 2026 and 2031 to turn that around – street by street, and neighbourhood by neighbourhood.

By 2031, we want to see clear improvements that residents can experience close to home. That means: more wildflower areas and richer grasslands in our parks and Commons; healthier chalk streams and riverbanks; more trees and shade on streets and in housing estates; and more places for birds, bats, insects and other wildlife to thrive. We also want every resident to have a good quality natural greenspace within a short walk of where they live, work or study.

To achieve this, the Strategy focuses on three main areas:
• **Embedding nature in *everything* we do** – making sure Council services, new developments and day-to-day decisions all evaluate the short- and long-term impacts on nature, and securing at least 20% biodiversity net gain in Council-led developments.
• **Looking after our core nature sites** – improving how we manage Commons, Local Nature Reserves and rivers so that our most important habitats move from poor or moderate condition towards good, while also creating better links for wildlife across and beyond the city.
• **Nature in your neighbourhood** – supporting community-led projects in parks, streets, schools and housing areas, prioritising places that currently have less-than-average access to nature, and helping residents shape and monitor unfolding local action.

We will publish clear information each year on what has been done, where, with its results. A mid-term review in 2028 will check whether we are on track and also evaluate where and what needs to change.

This is not a strategy the Council can deliver alone: it depends on local groups, businesses, schools, colleges and residents becoming involved. Neighbourhood forums and community organisations will be key partners in identifying local priorities, co-designing projects, and holding the Council to account in the delivering of changes that nature – and our communities – need.

4.1 Why we need a strategy

Issue: Good narrative, but the declared biodiversity emergency needs to be translated more clearly into "what must change by when"; furthermore, neighbourhood equity is implicit rather than explicit. For 'emerging standards' cf the Tables in the IPBES Report (its pp 7& 8) cited on my p. 6.

First paragraph – add urgency:
"In 2019, we declared a biodiversity emergency in recognition of the pressures facing our natural world, both locally and internationally"; Replace by:

→ In 2019, we declared a biodiversity emergency in recognition of the accelerating pressures facing our natural world, both locally and internationally, **and acknowledged that 'business as usual' in the way we plan, manage and use land in Cambridge is not compatible with nature recovery.** It is clear that local firms, institutions and supply chains (e.g., construction, life sciences, tourism, higher education, finance) *both* depend on functioning ecosystems (water quality, flood regulation, liveability for skilled workers) *and* contribute to biodiversity decline through land-take, resource use and pollution. These impacts create systemic risks for economies and societies, not just local environmental issues.

Add a short commitment paragraph after the first paragraph:

→ From 2026, we will treat the 742 hectares that the Council manages as a single, connected nature network for which we are collectively responsible. We will set site-level objectives for habitat condition and for biodiversity units, prioritising improvements on larger Commons and parks that serve multiple neighbourhoods and that currently perform only poorly for nature.

After the 3rd paragraph on p. 7, about working with Friends Groups etc., add:

→ Despite these efforts, our 2020–2025 audits show that many of our most visible Commons and recreation spaces remain in poor or only moderate ecological condition; furthermore, recreational pressure and urbanisation continue to erode wildlife value. This strategy therefore focuses on changing how we manage land and support more environmentally attuned behaviour in every neighbourhood. The Council will encourage and (where possible through planning conditions or

procurement) encourage businesses and institutions to measure and publicly disclose their biodiversity impacts and dependencies in line with emerging standards. *<cf IPBES, below>*

After the final paragraph on p. 8, about the use of S106 contributions etc., add:

→ We will continue to seek S106 contributions, targeting their deployment also in areas with relatively poor access to nature – even if this means small-scale initiatives due to the lack of obvious large-scale opportunities.

4.3 Legislation and policy

Issue: Current policy, legal, financial and cultural conditions tend to make harmful business practice profitable, and beneficial practice unprofitable; changing this 'enabling environment' is essential. The draft Strategy is strong on habitat projects but much weaker on these systemic levers. Section 4.3 outlines many key Policies and national initiatives on page 11. After these lists it should note:

→ These Policies and National initiatives build a local enabling environment for businesses. Under this Strategy, the Council will use its levers (planning conditions, procurement, fiscal tools where available) to align profitability with positive biodiversity outcomes. This aligns with IPBES KM2, KM3 and B2–B3. *<cf the Report from IPBES, in the list, below >*

I recommend that the following (especially the 7th of these) should be included in the bullet-point lists on pp 11–12; where agreed, these should also be added to Appendix 1 (pp 53–59).

→ • **Environmental Improvement Plan 2025** (EIP 2025) – the latest legal, regularly updated delivery plan for the 25 Year Environment Plan, which raises the interim target for wildlife-rich habitat restoration, and places a stronger emphasis on delivery for LNRS 'responsible authorities';

→ • **Local Nature Recovery Strategies** statutory guidance and regulations – Defra guidance and the **2023** Procedure Regulations, which set out how LNRSs must be prepared, consulted on and used (see this and this);

→ • **Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework (2023** see here**)** and its 2024–2025 supporting blogs, case studies, and mapping-tool updates (see here, here. and here). These provide nationally recognised benchmarks for e.g., 15-minute access, trees and greening levels, which should serve as a reference in the Local Plan, the Biodiversity Strategies and design guides;

→ • The developing **Environmental Land Management schemes** (ELMs) as a major driver for land-use change around Cambridge (picked up via LNRS/EIP but not named) see this or this;

→ • **The Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (2022)**, the UN's current global 'deal' to halt and reverse nature loss by 2030, that is intended to guide national and local strategies – including Biodiversity and Nature-recovery plans – to encourage local actions collectively to add up to global recovery as adopted in the COP15 decision (the full text is here);

→ • **Global biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and national security (published 20.1.26)** via HM Government, examining global ecosystem degradation and collapse and their threat to both UK national security and prosperity – highlighting that those countries best placed to adapt are those that invest in ecosystem protection and restoration.

→ • **IPBES Business and Biodiversity Assessment: Summary for Policymakers** (published **08.02.26**) from the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), a global independent research body comprising 150+ member states governments. This concludes that the business-as-usual model this is heavily focused on ***growth at the expense of nature*** is not only unsustainable, it threatens our extinction, unless reversed. It reframes the often-destructive relationship between nature and commerce, showing not only how business impacts and **depends** on biodiversity, but also how nature contributes to people's and society's wellbeing.

4.4 Local Initiatives

Issue: Section 4.4 captures several of the big landscape-scale and institutional initiatives shaping nature recovery around Cambridge, but should address ***local*** initiatives. It leans too heavily towards broader strategic plans, but should demonstrate how – together – local initiatives can also relate to the spatial, policy and community framework for this Biodiversity strategy. Local and wider-scale initiatives should be clearly aligned, without duplicating precious effort and resources.

On page 14, before introducing Natural Cambridgeshire, Cambridge Nature Network, LNRS etc., add to the initial paragraph:

→The following are not only conservation initiatives but also the spatial and policy framework within which businesses and financial institutions can invest, disclose and manage impacts on biodiversity.

Add a clear subheading for **'community-focused initiatives'** that includes the following important local programmes. For each element, include at least one sentence on what it contributes (e.g., "provides the evidence base for landscape-scale targeting", or "offers a long-term vision for fenland expansion and access" or "creates a framework for ward-based community projects aligned with LNRS"):

→ • **River Cam CAN** (Climate Action through Nature) – a grant-funded project led by Cambridge Past, Present & Future, working with communities along the Cam on nature and climate actions that directly links biodiversity, climate resilience and social equity in river-adjacent neighbourhoods.

→ • **State of Nature in Cambridgeshire** reports – Natural Cambridgeshire's county-level "State of Nature" assessments provides evidence, priorities and case studies that underpin local action.

→ • **Cambridgeshire County Council Biodiversity Strategy** is already implicit via LNRS, but this could be named to show alignment with the County's wider policy framework.

→ • **The Green Infrastructure** work, associated with the Cambridge Nature Network and Doubling Nature (GI opportunity mapping, Cambridge Nature Festival), emphasises access to greenspace and health.

Furthermore, the Strategy should add a subheading to highlight **the desirable principles** underlying small-scale, hyper-local biodiversity projects such as:

→ • Planting street trees, hedges, planters and rain gardens with a variety of resilient or wildlife-friendly species.

→ • Creating continuous or "stepping-stone" habitat along streets or arteries (trees, shrubs, climbers, pollinator planting), instead of isolated ornamental tubs.

→ • Designing features such as rain gardens or pocket planting that manage runoff and improve water quality as well as providing nectar, cover and nesting opportunities.

To make 'Nature in your neighbourhood' a meaningful reality, add another subheading and include text to focus on **examples** of hyper-local biodiversity projects that should be nurtured under the new Biodiversity Strategy (a few suggestions follow):

→ • Ideas from 'Mill Road For People' to **'green' Mill Road**, in Cambridge – a nature-poor but population-dense area, where relatively small interventions could deliver disproportionate benefits for both people and wildlife, (echoing current initiatives in Brussels, London, Walton-on-Thames, Arnhem, Lorquí, Potenza, Dunaújváros, Vienna and Amsterdam) - see e.g. https://www.dw.com/en/how-one-city-won-over-its-residents-to-turn-parking-into-green-space/a-75017286

→ • Creation of **micro-corridors linking green spaces** (e.g., along Petersfield side streets, in Mill Road Cemetery, along the Chisholm Trail)

→ • any project that supports **climate resilience** (by enhancing shade or cooling, and by improving air-quality) and boosts residents' daily contact with nature — all tying in with the draft Biodiversity Strategy's 'Nature in your neighbourhood' theme

→ • the Biodiversity enhancements (initially EIP-funded), in and around **St Matthew's Piece**, in Petersfield Cambridge that included the establishment of a small volunteer-supported new urban community orchard with a substantial rain garden, designed to boost foraging opportunities for insects, birds and mammals.

A further, cautionary, subheading should address **predictable hurdles for such initiatives** that need to be addressed structurally and strategically. Some pilots for hyper-local biodiversity projects struggle to be maintained or grow, even when well designed. The most successful initiatives treat 'greening' initiatives as a both *permanent and mainstream*. Preventing these obvious problems should be explicitly built into the new Biodiversity Strategy, seeking to **avoid**:

→ • Lack of long-term funding or ownership – where temporary greening is wastefully installed for a 'project', and then removed or left poorly maintained once the grant period ends;

→ • Weak community buy-in – due to residents experiencing changes being imposed 'from above', thereby *unnecessarily* creating polarisation and opposition (to e.g., loss of car-parking space) that can distract and dominate, resulting in constructive pilots not being repeated or extended;

→ • Failure to integrate a project into wider strategic plans, so they remain isolated rather than becoming the normal or expected approach in e.g., street or development-project design.

4.5 Cambridge City Council role

Issue: Strong *description* of assets, but lacks: explicit commitments, measurable expectations, and neighbourhood focus.

Add a short commitment paragraph after the first paragraph:

→ From 2026 we will treat these 742 hectares as a single, connected nature network for which we are collectively responsible. We will set site level objectives for habitat condition and biodiversity units, prioritising improvements on larger commons and parks that serve multiple neighbourhoods and currently perform poorly for nature. The Council will treat biodiversity loss as a systemic business and economic risk locally (to investment, insurance, and health), aligned with IPBES' framing of biodiversity loss as a systemic risk to financial stability.
<cf the Report listed on my p.6, from IPBES >

Also add several passages with specific and clear *commitments* after the paragraph that runs from page 15 to 16 (on local watercourses); here are seven suggestions:

→ To advocate, through the Cam & Ely Ouse catchment partnership and regulators, for restoring environmental flows on all Council-managed chalk streams to a level consistent with achieving at least "Good Ecological Status" under the Water Framework Directive by 2030.

→ Pledge to oppose major growth or infrastructure proposals that would increase net abstraction from the Cam chalk aquifer unless these demonstrate credibly no deterioration in river flows, with these tests to be explicitly built into both the Council's planning responses and relevant emerging Local Plan policies.

→ Commit to achieve, by 2030, phosphate and nitrate concentrations in Council-managed watercourses that meet "Good" status thresholds, with at least quarterly sampling at fixed points – and results included in the Council's Environmental Improvement Plan monitoring.

→ Commit to support (through planning obligations, partnership projects and land agreements) delivery of nature-based solutions such as wetlands, surface-water separation and attenuation schemes that directly reduce inflows to combined and foul sewers, prioritising catchments feeding the most frequently spilling overflows identified in the 2023–2025 Event Duration Monitoring (EDM) data.

→ Commit to create at least 10 new in-channel or marginal habitat features (backwaters, side channels, woody-debris complexes, or offline ponds) by 2030, in line with national chalk-stream restoration guidance, and to maintain these under a published management schedule.

→ Commit to bringing all Council-managed riparian land along the Cam and chalk streams into a positive management regime for nature (e.g. wild margins, reduced mowing, buffer strips) by 2028, aligned with Local Nature Recovery Strategy priorities and national chalk-stream strategy recommendations.

→ Commit to publish prominently and annually a succinct, balanced and clear ***State of the Cam and Chalk Streams in Cambridge*** report – summarising flows, water-quality metrics, habitat works and key species trends, co-designing the indicators with key local groups (such as the Cam Catchment Partnership and Friends of the Cam). Meaningful contributions to this report from all relevant local water authorities will be sought for inclusion in this report.

To the paragraph on trees (middle of p. 17): "Through implementation of our Tree Strategy (2016 – 2026), we manage over 30,000 trees…" Add:

→The updated Urban Forest Strategy (2026–2036) will include ward-level canopy targets and a clear programme of planting and diversification, prioritising streets and estates with low canopy cover and high vulnerability to either the Urban Heat Island Effect and/or to air pollution.

In the paragraph (p. 17) on Council property and communal Open Spaces, add these concrete pledges:

→For new Council-led housing schemes we will require integrated and sustainable biodiversity enhancements (e.g., swift bricks, bat boxes, rain gardens and wildlife-friendly planting); for existing estates we will work with tenants to identify at least one biodiversity improvement project in each estate by 2031, and continue to enhance these over following years. Further, we will aim to use the Council's procurement and investment policies to favour suppliers and contractors with credible biodiversity performance and disclosure.

<The latter pledge aligns with IPBES B3 & C2; cf the Report on the list of my p.6 >

At the end of the section, add an accountability sentence:

→We will bring together these responsibilities in an internal "nature at home and work" programme, with annual public reporting on changes to habitat quality, canopy cover and community participation across the Council-managed estate.

4.6 Biodiversity in Cambridge

Issue: Provides a strong descriptive baseline but could be strengthened with regard to credibility, usability and 'strategy'.

Although Section 4.6 describes habitats, sites and designations well, it does not distil which elements of the city's biodiversity resource are the top priorities for protection, restoration or investment over 2026–2031 – discussion of which is reserved for later in the Strategy.

How meaningful is it to account for biodiversity ***gains*** without simultaneously monitoring and accounting biodiversity ***losses*** due to any cause with Cambridge, particularly any that are directly attributable to Council-led initiatives? For example, consider the 'blackberry hedge incident', raised in #4 on page 11 of this feedback. To make commitments on improved and more equitable access to nature *more reliable, usable and credible*, add to this section e.g.,:

- a clear **list** of critical habitat types and locations, linking these to the Strategy's objectives and action plan;

- quantitative **baselines** (e.g. total hectares of each priority habitat within the city, or current condition status), to facilitate determining 'measurable net gain' over time;
- **key data** from the separate Biodiversity Audit and Chalk Stream reports should be summarised to support both non-specialist readers and decision-makers;
- clarity on how **unevenly** access to better-quality biodiversity is distributed across Cambridge (highlighting which wards are most nature-deprived or where residents are farthest from high-quality green spaces) … enhancements to biodiversity and social-equity should overlap.

4.7 Local threats and pressures

Issue: Apart from the addition of the pretty photo on p. 33 – this seems to be verbatim the same as the previous Strategy document. Has ***nothing*** improved? changed? deteriorated?

5. Biodiversity Audit (2020–2025)

Issue: Although the evidence presented is strong, the implications for action – especially at site and neighbourhood level – are not sufficiently articulated. Issues relating to Paradise LNR should be addressed explicitly.

To promote transparency and enable businesses, residents, Councillors and Officers to evaluate how neighbourhoods are being monitored and served locally, after the 2nd paragraph on p. 35 add an accessible reference to the baseline habitat audits done across the 32 sites in 2020.

Ongoing monitoring should be designed to support both statutory reporting and local business and community needs (e.g., making city data available through open platforms to allow assessment of location-specific risks and opportunities). Consider pledging after the 1st paragraph on p 34:

> → We will by 2027 publish an open biodiversity data portal for Cambridge, aligned with LNRS mapping, to enable communities, businesses and institutions to assess site- and neighbourhood-level impacts and dependencies.
> *<Aligns with IPBES' call for robust, accessible biodiversity information systems (A.4.4–A.4.6 in Table SPM.1); cf Report cited in the list on p. 6 of my feedback.>*

Before the final sentence of the 3rd paragraph p. 36 (where the text states that 63% of the audited area is in poor condition), add:

> →These findings underline the scale of change required: most of the greenspace that residents see and use daily is still managed in ways that limit its value for wildlife and its resilience to climate change. This Strategy therefore commits to shifting management practices across our largest commons and recreation grounds and to making those changes visible, meaningful and more clearly valuable to local communities.

Add a short paragraph linking to neighbourhood outcomes, before the final paragraph on p. 37:

> → We will communicate management changes through on-site interpretation and ward-level engagement, so that residents understand why some areas may look 'messier' and how this *contributes* to healthier and more resilient green spaces.

In the bullet list on page 39 of common recommendations, make them more directive:

> Add to • Relaxation of grazing pressure or reduced mowing frequency on grasslands…
> → From 2026 we will progressively relax grazing pressure or reduce mowing frequency on priority grasslands identified in the audit, starting with Coldham's Common, Midsummer Common and Stourbridge Common, and will agree clear grazing and mowing regimes for each site with stakeholders while preserving and protecting ancient grazing rights.

> Add to • Restricting or limiting impacts of recreation…
> → We will introduce targeted measures to manage recreational pressure (including dog walking) on sensitive grasslands, woodlands and watercourses, e.g., path rationalisation, seasonal signage,

dog-free zones and improved provision of bins, all co-designed openly with local users and while maintaining or improving public-access rights generally to green open spaces.

There is a glaring absence of content in this Strategy (cf. paragraph 1 on page 41) regarding the obvious **threats** to the condition of Paradise LNR, following the recent commencement of substantial development by Queens' College (not due for completion until mid-2027) along the boundary with Paradise LNR. This approved project includes the felling of 8 mature poplar trees – with expected significant impacts on bats, nesting birds, canopy cover and invertebrate habitat along what will remain of the woodland corridor. Text should be added to the Strategy to make explicit and transparent to residents what monitoring, protective and remedial measures can be expected to be taken to look after this key site – particularly in view of these biodiversity threats being to *one of* ***only*** *two* sites in Table 3 (p. 40) in both "**good**" and "**stable**" condition.

6. Biodiversity strategy (vision, objectives and themes)

Issue: Strong narrative but some objectives and themes are still high level; sharpen them and insert explicit accountability and neighbourhood level expectations.

The introductory wording (pp. 41–43) seems to be essentially identical to the previous Strategy document. Has ***nothing*** improved? changed? deteriorated?

Strategic objectives
On page 43, edit four of the bulleted objectives (#1–3 and #5) to be less 'fluffy', more measurable & more neighbourhood focused:

1. To secure a measurable net gain in biodiversity across the city by 2031 in support of the Natural Cambridgeshire Doubling Nature Vision by 2030. Replace by:
→ To secure a measurable net gain in biodiversity across the city by 2031, **compared with the 2020 baseline,** in support of the Natural Cambridgeshire Doubling Nature Vision by 2030.

2. To ensure designated sites and priority habitats are in good / favourable condition… Replace by:
→ To ensure designated sites and priority habitats are in good / favourable condition **wherever feasible and that, by 2031, no Council-managed LNR, Common or County Wildlife Site remains in poor condition without a funded and time-bound improvement plan.**

3. To engage and promote awareness… Replace by:
→To engage and promote awareness of biodiversity and wellbeing, supporting and empowering coordinated action in our communities, businesses, and institutions, **with particular focus on neighbourhoods with high social disadvantage or poor access to natural greenspace**.

4. To maximise the potential of our buildings, parks… Replace by:
→ To maximise the potential of our buildings, parks, open spaces, allotments and community gardens, watercourses and tree stock to support biodiversity, whilst balancing their multifunctional needs, **and to demonstrate visible improvements in at least one priority site in every ward by 2031**. Biodiversity *destruction* due to the Council-led elimination of the well-established protective blackberry hedge – which had long run along the south side of the New St allotments in Abbey Ward), over-riding vocal and well-reasoned local-community objections – will not recur.

Add an explicit monitoring objective after the 7th (on p. 43):
→ 8. To publish an annual Biodiversity Duty Report and mid-term progress update (2028) that set out progress against each objective, highlight gaps, and propose corrective action where delivery is off track.

Theme descriptions (on pp 44–46)
These are laudably strengthened versus the previous version, but need more.

Under '**Biodiversity mainstreaming'** add the following:
→ From 2026 we will require all major service projects and programmes (e.g., those rated 'high' or above on the corporate-risk matrix for at least one of finance, legal/compliance, health and

safety, environmental impact, or reputation, and therefore tracked through the corporate- risk register rather than only a service-level register), to demonstrate how they will contribute ***positively*** to biodiversity objectives.

This positive biodiversity requirement should also apply to any project that:

- delivers a key corporate priority (e.g., climate and biodiversity, housing, major regeneration, transport or digital transformation), or is needed to meet statutory duties or government targets where failure would have serious consequences; or that
- involves multiple external partners, long timescales (multi-year) and inter-dependencies with other major infrastructure or transformation programmes (e.g., the Market Square/Civic Quarter proposals, and major ICT or depot relocations).

We will integrate biodiversity considerations into business cases, procurement and asset management decisions, and provide practical guidance and training to service managers to support this shift.

Under '**The core'** add explicit site-level ambitions:

→ By 2031 we aim to have moved all City-managed core sites currently in poor condition to ***at least*** moderate condition, and to have demonstrably improved connectivity along the River Cam corridor and between the city and the Gog Magog Hills priority area – as measured through habitat mapping and biodiversity units.

Under '**Nature in your neighbourhood'** strengthen neighbourhood outcomes:

In the first paragraph on p. 45, "The aim is to ensure nature is not restricted to a few precious locations and that it can be enjoyed, understood, and experienced by all." Should be replaced by:

→ The aim is to ensure nature is not restricted to a few precious locations but that it can be enjoyed, understood, and experienced by all – regardless of where in the city people live, their income, or their housing type.

And also add:

→ We will work with communities to develop ward-based nature priorities, aligned with the LNRS and Cambridge Nature Network, and we will support residents to shape and monitor local projects.

➡️ Note also the Appendix to these comments (on the wards selected for LNRS projects).

7. Action plan (2026–2031)

Issue: Actions are mostly clear but lack success metrics and community-visible outcomes; timelines are too-often open ended ("ongoing"); the current Strategy's Action plan was much more detailed (24 pages vs only 5 here) on planned outcomes and especially on **who** would do **what**. The draft Strategy also depends heavily on community and volunteer effort in action plans (especially for managing Local Nature Reserves and other sites, delivering habitat creation and enhancement, and contributing to the Cambridge Nature Network and Doubling Nature ambitions). This reliance is **problematic**. Using volunteers and local groups to enhance and extend professional work may be sensible considering financial constraints, but using them as a *de facto* substitute for baseline Council capacity risks under-delivery if those external inputs weaken (due to predictable risks e.g., funding cuts, volunteer fatigue, or loss of key organisers).

The 1st paragraph on page 47, seems important but is confusing; it reads:

"Since adoption of the strategy in 2022 we have been collaborating on actions to achieve our objectives. Appendix 2 Biodiversity Duty Report summarises our key activities under our 3 themes and celebrates successes to date."

But Appendix 1 runs pp 53–59; this Strategy document ***has no*** Appendix 2. Please address.

General edits: add a short paragraph before the tables and then also implement associated additions to make 'outcomes' more meaningful and useful:

→ For each action we will define a small number of success measures (for example, hectares of habitat restored, number of wards engaged, or condition of specific sites) and report progress annually. Where actions are marked 'ongoing', we will review delivery at least every 2 years to confirm that these actions remain effective and adequately resourced.

Examples of additions to make 'outcomes' more meaningful and useful using specific suggestions (look for where else to mirror this pattern *across all three tables*):

For 'Biodiversity Mainstreaming' table (pp. 47–48):

• Under 'Consider and embed nature in everything we do' (p. 47) **reiterate and embed** the Council's commitment to being herbicide-free. Currently, the draft Strategy lacks any reference to being and remaining herbicide-free – although having gone herbicide-free represents a major step towards biodiversity recovery and improving ecological public health. Commitment to being herbicide-free features heavily in the Biodiversity Strategy 2022-2030 (written prior to the Council having gone fully herbicide-free. For this Biodiversity Strategy to be taken seriously it **must** address pesticide use (including herbicides), as these are a major driver of catastrophic biodiversity loss. So add:

→ The Biodiversity Strategy 2026-2031 will:

- End the use of pesticides in the routine maintenance of the City and County Council's public realm estate in Cambridge
- Bring in other key stakeholders to follow suit in ending the use of pesticides on land under their control.
- Encourage the public to stop the use of pesticides in gardens, allotments and other areas.
- Lead and support in making Cambridge a 'Pesticide-Free City'.

• Also add also the following specific actions to:

→• develop **Cambridge guidance or a toolkit** to help SMEs assess their biodiversity impacts/dependencies *<aligns with IPBES C5–C6, C8>*

→• pilot **voluntary biodiversity-impact disclosure** mechanisms with anchor institutions (University, hospitals, large employers) and linking these to citywide monitoring;

→• engage with local financial institutions (e.g. university endowment, pension funds, local banks) to **explore nature-positive investment** aligned with the LNRS *<aligns with IPBES B2, B3, B12>*

→• develop guidance on **nature-positive procurement** for major city projects *<aligns with IPBES Table SPM.1 Actions A.1.3, on integrating biodiversity into procurement>*

• Ensure CIP and other City Council developments achieve a minimum 20% BNG target across all projects – add a measure:

→ Outcomes: New developments secure high-quality habitats and species enhancement – with long-term management and monitoring in place; **BNG calculations and monitoring reports are published for all Council-led schemes.**

• Implement Environmental Management System… – add:

→ Outcomes: Improved environmental performance across City Service, **including meeting published targets for pesticide reduction, improvements to soil health, and protection of priority species on operational sites.**

• Explore rainwater harvesting ….

Correct the text from "Reduced abstraction for aquifer for tree watering and other operation functions" to "Reduced abstraction from aquifer for tree watering and other operation functions" and expand the text to indicate a metric by which performance of this desirable outcome can be measured.

For 'The Core' table (pp. 48–49)
• Local Nature Reserve and Commons management – specify outputs by adding:
invasive species, and **deliver at least one habitat condition improvement (as defined in the DEFRA metric) in each site by 2030.**

• Conservation Cattle Grazing Review – add:
→Outcomes: Review grazing timescales and number of animals to ensure we meet site-management plan conditions, **and implement revised regimes on at least three priority commons (including Midsummer Common and Stourbridge Common) by 2028.**

• Trial use of…. – Under 'Outcomes', clarify how management would/could/might be enhanced – to make this outcome measurable.

For 'Nature in your neighbourhood' table (pp. 49–51)
The Strategy should add text to explicitly address how to tackle the entirely predictable risks of funding cuts, volunteer fatigue, or loss of key community organisers – particularly insofar as these could negatively impact key objectives such as:

- **Equitable access to nature**: Neighbourhoods with poor green space often also have weaker volunteer capacity, so relying on community projects can widen the gap in access to high-quality natural spaces.
- **Long term condition of key sites**: Maintaining Local Nature Reserves and priority habitats in favourable condition requires consistent management; if volunteer days or NGO capacity fall away, core tasks (e.g., scrub control, invasive-species management) may lapse.
- **Strategic metrics (net gain, Nature Network targets**): Citywide net gain and Nature Network outcomes require reliable, sustained delivery across the whole area. Over-reliance on community and partner capacity – without corresponding professional staffing and funding – makes these goals vulnerable to factors the Council does not control.

In addition, the following suggested changes…

• Nature Recovery 'From the Ground Up' LNRS delivery ward-based community action – make outcomes ward-specific:
→Outcomes: 4 year Cambridge County Council Project targeting parish-scale delivery of the LNRS. Initially selected wards: Cherry Hinton, Abbey, East Chesterton, Market & Trumpington, **with at least one co-designed project per ward and monitoring of ecological and social outcomes.**

➡️ Note here the Appendix to these comments (on the wards selected for LNRS projects).

• Parks Biodiversity Toolkit promotion – add a success metric:
→Outcomes: Inspire communities to co-design and secure funding for local park biodiversity enhancement, **with at least ten parks or recreation grounds incorporating Toolkit-inspired changes by 2030, and revise the 2021 Toolkit (drawing on this experience) by 2031.**

• Environmental Education Spaces – add:
→Outcomes: Continued use of 3 spaces, explore at least 1 additional site, **and engage at least 500 pupils per year (from different schools each year) in hands-on nature learning across the sites.**

At the very end of the Action Plan, on page 51 after the Tables, add a clear accountability sentence:
→We will review and, if necessary, update this action plan in 2028, based on monitoring evidence and community feedback. Furthermore, we will clearly flag any actions that are delayed, re-scoped or not delivered, together with stating clear reasons for this – specifying appropriate remedial steps.

Then add a 'Delivery and Monitoring' sub-section to the Action Plan (i.e, to Section 7) that pulls together and summarises accountability points:

> → **Delivery and Monitoring**
> Delivering this strategy requires clear responsibilities, transparent reporting, and the ability to change course when actions are not working. We will therefore put in place a simple but robust delivery and monitoring framework for 2026–2031.
>
> - **Clear ownership:** Each action in the plan will have a named lead service and senior officer sponsor, with roles agreed annually through service plans.
> - **Measurable outcomes:** For each strategic objective we will track a small number of indicators, including biodiversity units on Council-managed land, condition of key sites, ward-level access to natural greenspace, and community participation in local nature projects.
> - **Annual public reporting:** Progress will be reported each year through our Biodiversity Duty Report and on the Council website, highlighting achievements, delays, and any actions that are no longer fit for purpose.
> - **Mid-term review:** In 2028 we will carry out a mid-term review of this strategy and action plan, using monitoring data and community feedback to confirm priorities, identify gaps, and agree any necessary changes.
> - **Neighbourhood focus:** We will monitor how benefits are distributed across the city, including between wards, and will target additional support where communities currently have poorer access to nature or lower-quality greenspaces.
> - **Community voice:** Residents, community groups and partners will be invited to comment on annual progress and to propose new or improved actions, particularly where local experience suggests our approach needs to change.

Finally, add a **Glossary of Key Terms** – including **all acronyms** used throughout the Biodiversity Strategy – to enhance clarity, usability and transparency for residents, partners and Councillors.

Appendix: 'Nature in your neighbourhood'

Summary: The "Nature Recovery 'From the Ground Up'" project names four wards (Cherry Hinton, Abbey, East Chesterton, Market & Trumpington) but gives no selection criteria or scope to add others – such as Petersfield. Therefore: Petersfield is proposed here because of (a) its dense housing; (b) low POS provision, and its location near both the Cam and City Centre that supports connectivity. Please provide: (1) published selection criteria for wards; (2) flexibility to add or opt in additional wards; and (3) for Petersfield to be either an immediate fifth focus ward (if funded) or the first reserve/expansion ward when opportunities arise.

The **Nature Recovery 'From the Ground Up'** project will work in the four named wards, but there is no clarification for why those specific wards were selected or whether others (e.g., Petersfield) could also be added.

This Cambridgeshire County Council–led, four-year project targets "parish scale delivery of the LNRS", for which the city component is: Cherry Hinton, Abbey, East Chesterton, Market & Trumpington. The strategy does not state the criteria used, nor does it specify whether this list is fixed for the full 4 years.

This Appendix seeks clarification and expansion of the list – to include Petersfield. Note that Petersfield has characteristics that offer a strong case for inclusion, for example:

1. High-density housing and extremely poor availability of Public Open Space;
2. Small-scale, street, courtyard and school-based nature projects could have a significant impact on the daily environment of residents of all ages;
3. Proximity to both the Cam corridor and to the City Centre offers clear opportunities to improve ecological connectivity as well as enhanced access to Nature.

Therefore:

- The criteria used to choose the four wards initially selected should be published in the final Biodiversity Strategy (or supporting papers).
- Petersfield should be considered now as a fifth focus ward, if funding allows; or as the first reserve / expansion ward if the project is extended; or if there is underspend; or as soon as extra grant funding becomes available.
- The project design should explicitly *either* include additional pilot wards (e.g. Petersfield) from an early stage, *or* specify a mechanism for additional wards to be added to the project – especially where there is both demonstrable community capacity and need.

Cambridge City Council

November 2025

Biodiversity Duty Report (2022 – 2025) and Action Plan (2026 – 2031)

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Introduction

What is Biodiversity

Biodiversity is the variety of life on Earth, including all living organisms, the genetic differences within species, and the ecosystems they form. It covers:

Species diversity – the range of different species.

Genetic diversity – variation within species.

Ecosystem diversity – different habitats and ecological processes.

What is a Biodiversity Duty Report?

The statutory Biodiversity Duty was first introduced by Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act in 2006 which required that:

'Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, as far as is consistent with the proper exercise of these functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity'.

In 2021, the Environment Act (Section 102 and 103) strengthened this duty by amending Section 40 of the NERC Act and by requiring all public authorities in England to take steps to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England.

As a public authority and local planning authority, the government guidance requires Cambridge City Council (CCC) to:

- Consider what we can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on our consideration.
- Act to deliver our policies and achieve our objectives.

To evidence the above we are required to publish a Biodiversity Report to communicate what we are doing to improve the environment and to show the positive changes that have been made. The first reporting period must end by 1st January 2026, and the report must be published within 12 weeks (by the end of March 2026).

This report follows the government guidelines and covers actions undertaken in the period from adoption of our Biodiversity Strategy in 2022 through to November 2025.

Our role in nature recovery

Management of streets and open spaces

Cambridge City Council manages more than 80 parks and open spaces, such as play areas, allotments, community gardens and orchards, totalling over 742 hectares. Some of these sites, such as our 12 Local Nature Reserves, are designated and managed primarily for nature and form part of the core Cambridge Nature Network, whilst others provide valuable predominantly recreational open space for residents and visitors to enjoy.

Whatever the primary purpose and size of these spaces, combined they provide a huge potential for increasing the extent, quality, and connectivity of habitats within the city. Therefore, we have an obligation and opportunity to ensure that all sites maximise their potential for biodiversity, provide good examples of habitat management and creation and hopefully encourage other landowners to do the same.

We manage approximately 23 kilometres of awarded watercourses, including some of our precious chalk streams, by ensuring management is sensitive to biodiversity, whilst providing our statutory drainage functions, we can protect such iconic species as water vole, kingfishers and brown trout in the city. We are also riparian owners of a significant stretch of the main riverbank through the city.

Wherever possible we are seeking to ‘naturalise’ previously engineered banks such as at Stourbridge Common, creating new backwaters and wetland such as on Logan's Meadow Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and providing passage for fish around artificial obstructions, such as the weir at Byron’s Pool LNR and ‘The Rush’ fish pass at Sheep’s Green LNR.

We are custodians of our precious common land and oversee the historic grazing management practice that retains flood meadow landscapes and iconic cattle grazing in the heart of the city. These grasslands form a key part of the network of Cambridge spaces and offer potential for enhanced management to benefit biodiversity and capture carbon emissions.

Through implementation of our tree strategy, we manage over 30,000 trees, contributing to the urban forest that provide both wildlife and communities with a range of ecosystem services, making our neighbourhoods cooler, cleaner and more attractive places to live. Street trees provide habitat and ‘stepping stones’ for species living in or moving through the built environment.

Management of our estate

Our property estate includes rental units, iconic buildings such as the Guildhall, and council housing properties with gardens and communal open spaces. Decisions on how we manage, renovate, and invest in these assets will impact upon existing species present and provide huge opportunities for restoring nature where people live and work. Energy efficiency Investment towards net zero will contribute to reducing the impact of climate change on the natural world, whilst increased water efficiency measures and rainwater capture will reduce abstraction pressure on the chalk stream aquifer.

Community Empowerment

Through our Community Services Engagement Team, we offer support to local Friends Groups, providing opportunities for volunteering in our parks and open spaces, and work closely with local community action groups including On the Verge Cambridge, promoting new wildflower meadows and Action for Swifts, with swift box provision on our estate such as on Queen Ann Terrace car park and at Edgecombe Flats.

As a local authority we are often a key partner in many local initiatives and projects with links to community groups. By promoting biodiversity through raising awareness in communities we can ensure that opportunities for people to connect with, protect, enhance, and appreciate nature are realised.

Planning and Growth

Through our Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service we shape and implement policies that guide sustainable development seeking to protect, restore and enhance nature across administrative boundaries.

Section 1: Our policies, objectives and actions for biodiversity

In 2019 we declared a Biodiversity Emergency in recognition of the global loss of biodiversity and the local impacts this could have on the communities and business we serve.

To address this, we have recognised and incorporated the importance of conserving and enhancing local biodiversity across numerous strategies, policies, partnerships and actions.

1.1 Our corporate and partnership strategies and policies for biodiversity

Relevant strategies are summarised below, followed by further information on 4 key strategies:

Strategy or policy document	**Summary of relevance to biodiversity**
Internal strategies	
Cambridge City Corporate Plan (2022 – 2027)	Sets out our 4 key priorities including: Priority 1: Leading Cambridge's response to the climate change and biodiversity emergencies
Biodiversity Strategy (2022 – 2030)	Our key biodiversity document that includes our vision, objectives and actions to meet the biodiversity emergency declaration and Biodiversity Duty.
Tree Strategy (2016 – 2026)	Sets out policies and actions to manage the City tree stock, plus increase and diversify tree canopy for the benefit of people and nature.
Climate Change Strategy (2021 – 2026)	Includes actions to reduce and mitigate the impacts of climate change on biodiversity.

Cambridge Local Plan (2018)	Includes hierarchical policies to ensure development protects and enhances biodiversity.
Greater Cambridge Biodiversity SPD	Provides technical guidance on how to comply with Local Plan policies to protect and enhance biodiversity.
Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan (a 20 year plan for Greater Cambridge Area)	Includes a key theme of 'Biodiversity and Green Spaces' and proposes polices to protect and enhance biodiversity and improve the network of green spaces in Greater Cambridge.
External / partnership strategies	
Draft Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recover Strategy (LNRS)	A proposed regional statutory plan that identifies local biodiversity priorities and maps areas for habitat restoration.
Natural Cambridgeshire's 'Doubling Nature' Vision for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough	Our Local Nature Partnership vision for doubling the current area of wildlife rich habitats by 2050.
Cambridge Nature Network vision	Sets out a shared vision for nature recovery in and around the city for collective delivery by partners.
BIG Chalk	A shared vision for supporting nature recovery projects across the chalk and limestone landscapes of southern England.
Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) - BNG Strategy	Commits to a minimum 20% BNG across the transport programme covering on and offsite delivery.

1.2 Our visions and objectives for biodiversity

Biodiversity Strategy (2022 – 2030)

'Our vision is that over the next 9 years Cambridge will see a "measurable net gain" in biodiversity, both within the city and the surrounding countryside, including the extent and quality of priority habitats and populations of priority species. Wildlife habitats will be protected, enhanced and where possible expanded and linked. The very best wildlife habitats will form part of a much wider Cambridge Nature Network that will permeate the whole of the city and

beyond. Everyone who lives or works within Cambridge will have access to high quality natural greenspaces close to their home or place of work, and there will be a greater awareness and understanding of biodiversity with opportunities to be involved and collaborate in local wildlife enhancement projects and monitoring.'

To deliver this vision we have been delivering on 7 strategic objectives:

1. To secure a measurable net gain in biodiversity across the city by 2025 and support the Natural Cambridgeshire Doubling Nature Vision by 2050

2. To ensure designated sites and priority habitats are in good / favourable condition and connected, where possible, to increase resilience to a changing climate and contribute to the Cambridge Nature Network

3. To promote awareness of biodiversity and wellbeing, supporting coordinated action in our communities, businesses, and institutions

4. To ensure that biodiversity is considered by all council service functions and projects

5. To maximise the potential of our buildings, parks, open spaces, allotments and community gardens, watercourses and tree stock to support biodiversity, whilst balancing their multifunctional needs

6. To harness the wealth of local professional and amateur knowledge and experience in identifying and solving local issues.

7. To establish long term, species and habitat surveys and monitoring to measure the impact of activities and identify new threats and opportunities across the city

To meet the objectives, the proposed actions have been grouped within the three main themes:

1. **Biodiversity mainstreaming:** This theme is about embedding biodiversity into everything that we do, whether that is constructing new houses, buying materials, or undertaking our role as a planning authority. We will ensure that our actions minimise impacts on biodiversity as well as seek opportunities to enhance it. We will aim to develop cross-cutting strategies and solutions between all services that promote biodiversity and focus on nature-based solutions.
2. **The core:** This theme is about developing our core of biodiversity sites in the city. This includes reviewing and updating management plans for our most important nature conservation areas and working with partners to ensure a coherent and resilient nature network through Cambridge and beyond.
3. **Nature in your neighbourhood**: This theme is about encouraging nature to flourish across the city through collaboration with communities, businesses

and institutions. The aim is to ensure nature is not restricted to a few precious locations and that it can be enjoyed, understood, and experienced by all.

Natural Cambridgeshire 'Doubling Nature' Vision

'Natural Cambridgeshire' is the Local Nature Partnership for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough. A partnership of leaders from businesses, local authorities, the health sector, farming, wildlife and environmental organisations that exists to champion, influence and enable the fulfilment of the 'Doubling Nature' vision:

'Our Vision is that by doubling the area of rich wildlife habitats and natural green-space, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will become a world-class environment where nature and people thrive, and businesses prosper'

The key objective is to double the area of rich wildlife habitats and green space from 8.5% to 17% by 2050.

Cambridge Nature Network

The Cambridge Nature Network is a landscape scale biodiversity initiative led by the Bedfordshire Cambridgeshire & Northamptonshire Local Wildlife Trust (BCN WT) and Cambridge Past Present and Future with support from the City Council and other key landowning partners.

'Our vision is for Cambridge to have significant areas of downland, fens, meadows, waterways and woodlands around it, where nature can recover and thrive and where people can experience a wilder countryside and nature on their doorstep.'

The initiative is founded on an evidence based spatial plan for protecting and enhancing nature, focused on the best of the remaining habitats within 10km of the city and key opportunities and locations for creating new habitats and associated linkages.

Through collaboration with landowners and communities it represents an ambitious but achievable vision for local nature recovery. The Cambridge Nature Network has steered our actions over the past 5 years and forms a critical part of the emerging statutory LNRS.

Draft Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

The LNRS is a spatial strategy mandated by the Environment Act 2021. It identifies locations to improve nature and provide other environmental benefits including

carbon sequestration, flood risk mitigation, accessibility to green space to promote social well-being.

The LNRS covering Cambridge City is being developed by Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA), who are the government appointed 'Responsible Body' working with our Local Nature Partnership (Natural Cambridgeshire) and Cambridgeshire County Council.

As a supporting authority, we have contributed to the development of the LNRS through representation on the Steering Group and at technical workshops and approving the draft document for consultation. We have advocated for inclusion of the existing Cambridge Nature Network (CNN) vision within the LNRS to ensure existing plans and projects are recognised, celebrated and link to the wider ambitions.

Key objectives identified for Cambridge City within the draft LNRS include:

Theme	**Objective**	**Action**
Ecological Connectivity	Enhance and expand chalk downland, fens, meadows, and woodlands within the CNN	Prioritise habitat creation and enhancement across CNN corridors
Chalk Stream Restoration	Restore stream flow, water quality, and habitat	Implement restoration works on urban chalk streams
Urban Forest	Increase and diversify tree canopy building on the successful Cambridge Canopy Project	Coordinate protection and planting across public and private land

A Public consultation on the draft LNRS ran from July to September 2025 and the subsequent revised documents are awaiting final Supporting Authority approval before submission to the Secretary of State, planned for late December 2025.

1.3 Our partnerships for biodiversity

We recognise that nature recovery cannot be delivered without working in collaboration with others. The table below summarises some of our key partnerships for nature.

Key partnerships and groups	Relevance to our biodiversity work
Natural Cambridgeshire	Helping steer sustainable development, nature recovery and community engagement with nature and coordinating an annual Actions for Nature Report
Cambridge Nature Network	Through the Steering Group we help guide strategic decisions, joint funding bids and project delivery, including the annual Cambridge Nature Festival
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Environmental Records Centre (CPERC)	Through the steering group and a service level agreement we support the work of the centre to collate, validate and supply habitat and species data across the County.
Cambridge Conservation Forum	Strengthen links and developing collaborations across the diverse community of conservation practitioners and researchers based in Cambridge
Cambridge Conservation Initiative – Urban Nature	A collaborative partnership which brings together the biggest names in international biodiversity conservation with the University of Cambridge and local conservation practitioners.
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Wildlife Site Partnership	We guide selection and monitoring of public and private Local Wildlife Sites to protect and enhance these critical habitats and the species they support
BIG Chalk	Both the Cambridge Nature Network and Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Projects are recognised project partners sharing knowledge and expertise with the wider partnership
Local Friends and community groups	We consult and offer support and guidance to numerous, passionate,

	diverse groups across the city to protect, enhance and celebrate our chalk streams, commons, parks, community orchards and gardens.

1.4 Our actions for biodiversity (2022 – 2025)

Through implementation of the above strategies with our partners, we have collectively delivered many actions for nature over the reporting period. These are summarised in the table below under our 3 Biodiversity Strategy Themes.

Biodiversity Mainstreaming *'Consider and embed nature in everything we do'*

Action	Services & Partners	Outcome
Updated project 'Climate Change Rating Tool' to include a Biodiversity Assessment	All services	All corporate projects and programmes are assessed as to how they may impact or could enhance biodiversity prior to approval
Herbicide Reduction Plan for phased transition to cease herbicide use on our estate	City Service, Pesticide Free Cambridge,	Ceased use of herbicide across all council owned sites, including parks, car parks and housing areas in March 2024
Ceased the use of Peat in all landscape schemes	City Services, City Homes	Reduced demand for unsustainable harvesting of rare peat habits and associated carbon emissions.
City Services Operatives Biodiversity Training	City Services, BCN Wildlife Trust, Cambridge University / colleges	Delivered 3 bespoke training events alongside university college gardening teams to increase understanding and skills around Biodiversity, grassland and watercourse management
Great Crested Newt Pond Restoration at Bar Hill Crematorium	City Services, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Amphibian & Reptile Group	2 Great Crested Newt breeding ponds restored under Natural England license

Delivering 20% BNG on all our developments	City Investment Partnership	16 sites have delivered or secured minimum 20% BNG
Development of Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan	GCSPS	'First Conversation' consultation in 2020, 'First Proposals' consultation in 2021, January 2025 update of the Loal Plan timetable to submit Local Plan by December 2026.
Adopted Greater Cambridge Biodiversity SPD	GCSPS, SCDC, City Services	Adopted in 2022 to ensure planning applications meet best practice and comply with Local Plan policies

The Core '*working with partners to ensure a coherent resilient nature network*'

Action	**Partners**	**Outcome**
Local Nature Reserve and Commons management	City Service, Community Services, Volunteers and Corporate Groups	Completed ongoing habitat management of our 12 LNRs, including control of invasive species
Open Mosaic Habitat (Brownfield) Creation trials at Bramblefield's LNR	City Services, Cambridge University	Ongoing project continued with 3 new substrate mounds installed and studied.
Invertebrate banks and stumpery habitat trials	City Services, Anglia Ruskin University, Friend's of St. Thomas Park	Ongoing project being studied, with 8 new habitats installed.
'No Fence' Collar Trials	City Services, Licensed graziers	Positive demonstration of new technology that supports adopting conservation grazing on key sites
Logan's Meadow Wetland	City Services, CPCA, Friends of Logan's Meadow	Over 1 hectare of new urban wetland habitat created
Cambridge Nature Network - Green Recovery Fund delivery	City Services, CNN, Natural England	Over 20 partnership projects delivered. 7 City Services projects included: Sheep's Green LNR Veteran Willow Restoration and

		community engagement, Logan's Meadow LNR community tree planting, 'Artscaping' in Bramblefield's LNR, Stourbridge Common LNR habitat improvement, Commons grassland restoration trials
Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project	City Services, CPCA, City Services, Hobson's Conduit Trust, Anglia Ruskin University, Keele University, SCDC, Anglian Water, South Staffs Water, Environment Agency	Secured funding to deliver 6 evidence driven, case study restoration and demonstration sites. Engaged over 50 Citizen Scientist in baseline and ongoing monitoring
Coldham's Brook enhancements, Abbey Ward	City Services, Abbey People South Staffs Water	500m of in-channel habitat restoration with volunteers, 2 interpretation panels installed
Dog Control Orders to reduce disturbance to breeding birds	City Services	Seasonal Dogs on Lead Orders in place for 6 Local Nature Reserve (2023)
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy	CPCA, City Services, Greater Cambridge Shared Planning, Natural Cambridgeshire, Natural England, all neighbouring Local Authorities	Draft plan approved at CPCA Board, due for submission by December 2025, subject to 'Supporting Authority' Approval
Woodland Management Plans for Byron's Pool and Nine Wells LNRs	City Services, Forestry Commission (FC)	Plans consulted and approved by FC for phased delivery between 2025 and 2027
Hobson's Park County Wildlife Site designation	City Service, County Wildlife Site Panel, BCN WT	35.7 hectare of recently created grassland and wetlands designated for their value to breeding birds
Introduced conservation grazing at Netherhall School chalk slope	City Services, OTV, Netherhall School, Local grazier	1.5 hectare of chalk grassland under favourable management

Byron's Pool Fish Pass enhancement	City Services, Wild Trout Trust, Environment Agency	Fish pass redesigned to better guide fish around the weir

Nature in your neighbourhood *'ensure nature is not restricted to a few precious locations and can be enjoyed, understood and experienced by all'*

Action	Partners	Outcome
Supported the Cambridge Citizen UK Young Person's Assembly	Community Services, City Services, Kings College, Cambridge Citizens - UK, local schools	Decision makers heard from young people about their concerns for local biodiversity and pledged to act
Cambridge Canopy Project	City Services, Community Services, Nature Smart Cities	Developed a business model for the incorporation of more green infrastructure solutions in towns and cities. Launched the i-Tree Eco project and the Neighbourhood Canopy Campaign.
Happy Bee Streets	City Services, Community Services	Active groups on 14 streets across 8 wards
Declaration of Butterfly Emergency in 2024, Cambridge Butterfly Trail	City Services, Butterfly Conservation (BC)	Creation of Cambridge Butterfly Trail covering 30 green spaces across the city and surrounds.
Hedges for Kings Hedges	City Services, Community Services, Trees are Good, Tree for Cities	Volunteers planted 100 m of new mixed native hedge and fruit tree planted in the ward parks. Included a fruit tree grafting workshop.
Free Trees for babies' scheme	City Services	878 trees donated over the reporting period to increase canopy cover. This has been running for over 30 years to incentivise tree planting in the city.
Neighbourhood Canopy Campaign	City Services, Community Services	Residents claimed 309 trees and shrubs over the reporting period to reduce inequality in canopy cover across wards.

Cambridge Nature Festival	City Services, CNN	City-wide month-long festival running for 3 consecutive years. Multiple organisations delivering a month of over 100 free events for all ages. Voted as one of the best free festivals in 2023 by the i-news.
River Cam CAN, DiversiTree	City Services, Community Services, Community Fund for Lottery	23 artist-led workshops in 20 different spaces in the City. 8 public events attended by an estimated 6,000 people. x5 public walks and talks on the cultural and biodiversity significance of veteran trees in Cambridge City. x4 workshops for landowners and members of the public on how to manage veteran trees sustainably. Charter for sustainable veteran tree management being created.
Environmental Improvement Program	City Services	28 biodiversity focused projects delivered on parks and public realm across the city including new meadows, stumperies, bird and bat boxes
Parks Biodiversity Toolkit	City Services	Promotion of our toolkit inspired a local community to design, consult and deliver enhancement to St Thomas Park, Queen Edith's ward
S106 funded park enhancement schemes	City Services	Five Trees Park meadow and tree planting, Jesus Green stumpery, 700m^2 'pictorial meadow' at Parkside Pool to provide pollinator 'steeping stone' through the urban environment
Environmental Education Spaces	City Service, primary school / nursery license holders	Licenses in place for 2 City owned spaces delivering access to nature for local pupils
Community Engagement Team Biodiversity Assembly / School visits	Community Services	Approximately 35 school session held over the reporting period

Investment in new Cut and Collect machine	City Services	Enhanced management of long grass and meadow areas across our parks and road verges
Hobsons Conduit Bioblitz	City Services, Hobsons Conduit Trust	3 x Annual community event recording wildlife along the brook over 24hrs

1.5 Condition of Cambridge Local Wildlife Sites

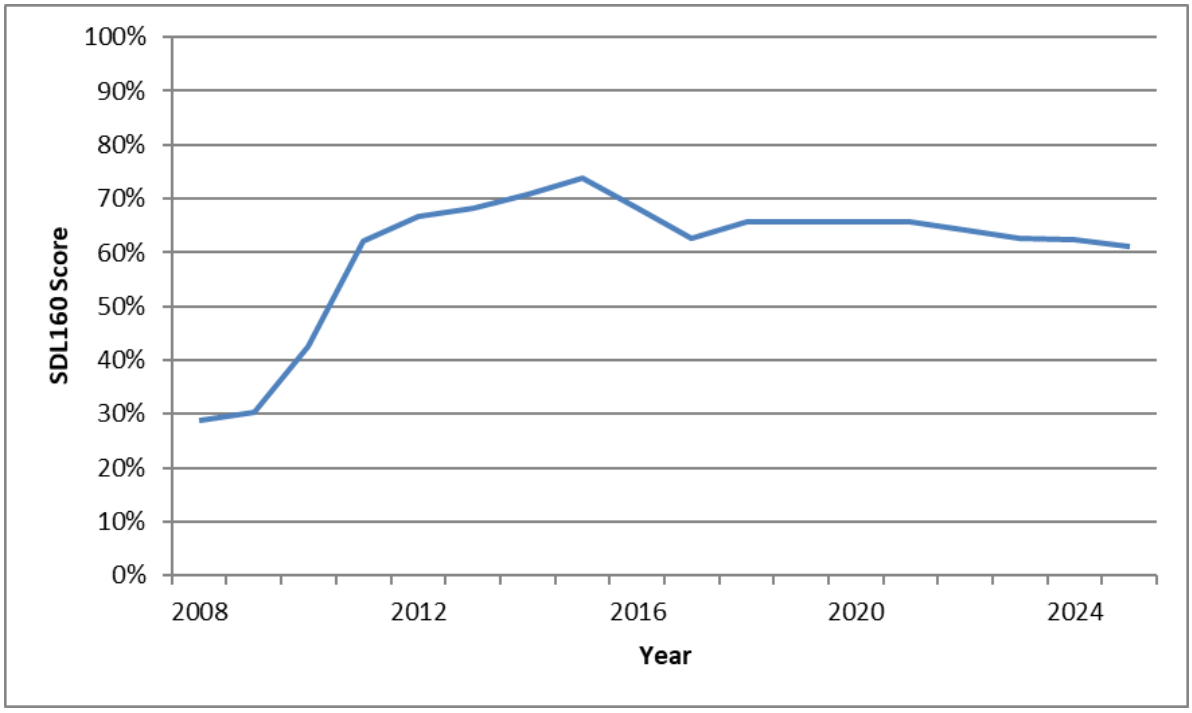
Local Wildlife Sites (including 3 designations: County Wildlife Site, City Wildlife Sites & Protected Road Verges) are non-statutory designations for areas identified locally as having high biodiversity value, supporting important species or habitats at a city or County scale.

These sites can be on both private and public land. Through our annual monitoring to central government, we report on how many are in favourable management to support the habitats and species for which they are recognised.

Cambridge City Local Wildlife Sites in positive management (public and private)

Results for the 2024/25 reporting year

Total number of Local Sites where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented within the last five years	44
Total number of Local Sites	72
% of Local Sites where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented within the last five years	**61.1%**



Results over time, SDL160 scores 2008 – 2025

Cambridge City Council (CCC) owned and/or managed sites only
Results for the 2024/25 reporting year

Total number of Local Sites (CCC owned and/or managed) where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented within the last five years	29
Total number of Local Sites (CCC owned and/or managed)	32
% of Local Sites (CCC owned and/or managed) where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented within the last five years	**90.6%**

Section 2: Our future actions for biodiversity (2026 – 2031)

In 2026 we will review and consult on our Biodiversity Strategy, Climate Change Strategy and Tree Strategy.

Proposed updated actions have been included in the table below, grouped by theme. Please note these may be subject to change following consultation, prior to formal adoption**.**

'Our vision is that over the next 5 years Cambridge will see a "measurable net gain" in biodiversity, both within the city and the surrounding countryside, including the extent and quality of priority habitats and populations of priority species. Wildlife habitats will be protected, enhanced and where possible expanded and linked. The very best wildlife habitats will form the Cambridge Nature Network that will permeate the whole of the city and link to the wider Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Everyone who lives or works within Cambridge will have access to high quality natural greenspaces within walking distance of their home or place or work, and there will be a greater awareness and understanding of biodiversity with opportunities to be involved and collaborate in local wildlife enhancement projects and monitoring'.

Biodiversity Mainstreaming *'Consider and embed nature in everything we do'*

Actions	Partners	Outcomes	Timeline
Adopt, support delivery and monitoring of the LNRS	NC, CPCA, Cambridgeshire County Council	Strategic delivery of habitat and species actions	Adoption: December 2025 – Delivery ongoing
Adoption and implementation of Shared Local Plan	GCSPS, SCDC	Robust biodiversity policies, aligned with LNRS and	Proposed adoption by December 2026

		BNG delivery to guide sustainable	
Adoption and implementation of Urban Forest Strategy (2026 - 2036)	City Services, Community Services	Management, protection, planting of and engagement with the urban forest	Adoption March 2026 – Delivery 2026 – 2036
Ensure CIP and other City development achieve a minimum 20% BNG target across all projects	CIP, GCSPS	New development secure high-quality habitats and species enhancement with long term management and monitoring in place.	Ongoing
Implement Environmental Management System to secure ISO14001 accreditation for City operation hub and activities	City Services	Improved environmental performance across City Service	March 2026 - ongoing
Explore rainwater harvesting on Council owned properties	City Service, Property Services, Water Resources East (WRE)	Reduced abstraction for aquifer for tree watering and other operation functions	Feasibility 2026, deliver 2027

The Core '*working with partners to ensure a coherent resilient nature network*'

Actions	**Partners**	**Outcomes**	**Timeline**
Continued support of CNN	City Services, CPPF, BCN WT, Cambridge Ahead, National Trust, RSPB, East Cambridge Farming Cluster, CU Botanic Garden, South Cambs DC, Magog	Collaborate on funding bids and sharing resource to create 'Bigger, better, more joined up' habitats across the CNN	Ongoing

	Down, Natural Cambs, Cambridge Sports Lake Trust		
Local Nature Reserve and Commons management	City Service, Community Services, Volunteers and Corporate Groups	Complete ongoing habitat management of our 12 LNRs, including control of invasive species	Ongoing
Continue our work with the Wildlife Trust to provide advice to private landowners and managers to bring sites into positive management	City Services, BCN WT, private landowners	Increase number of designated Local Wildlife Sites in positive management	Ongoing
Identification and designation of additional City Wildlife Sites and LNRs	City Services	Secure protection and enhanced management of qualifying sites	2026 -Cowley Road drain CiWS, Church End LNR and Fulbourn Rd LNR
Adopt and deliver new Management Plan Reviews for LNRs and Commons	City Services	New management plans embedded to ensure favourable habitat condition	13 sites reviewed in 2025 to be adopted and delivered in 2026 to 2030
Conservation Cattle Grazing Review	City Service, CNN, Licensed graziers	Review grazing timescales and number of animals to ensure we meet site management plan conditions	Review in 2025 / 2026
Trial the use of hardy sheep breeds within temporary fenced compartments on smaller sites.	City Services, CNN, East Cambridge Farmers Cluster	Enhanced management of key sites	Triall in 2026, if successful deliver from 2027 onwards
Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project (GCCSP)	City Services, South Staffs Water, Cam Catchment Partnership, Anglian Water, Environment	Deliver and monitor 6 case study sites. Work with partners to deliver WINEP and other investment in	2026 - 2028

	Agency, Hobson's Conduit Trust	Cambridge chalk streams	
Cambridge and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre (CPERC)	City Service, GCSPS, CPERC	Continue support through Service Level Agreement and representation on the Steering Group	Ongoing

Nature in your neighbourhood *'ensure nature is not restricted to a few precious locations and can be enjoyed, understood and experienced by all'*

Actions	**Partners**	**Outcomes**	**Timeline**
Seek support and agree actions to achieve Nature City Accreditation	City Services, Community Services, CNN, CCF Community Groups, Business	Strengthened partnership, shared leadership, community engagement, external recognition, increase funding opportunities	2026 Self-assessment. Build Partnership, seek Foundation Accreditation
Parks Biodiversity Toolkit (publish 2021) promotion	City Services, Community services	Inspire communities to codesign and secure funding for local park biodiversity enhancement	Ongoing
Nature Recovery 'From the Ground Up' LNRS delivery ward-based community action	City Services, Community Services, Cambridgeshire County Council, Community Groups	4-year Cambridge County Council Project targeting Parish scale delivery of the LNRS. Selected wards: Cherry Hinton, Abbey, East Chesterton, Market & Trumpington	2026 – 2030 programme to enable communities to develop and deliver LNRS actions.

Butterfly Friendly Council (BFC)	City Services, Butterfly Conservation	Meet the 5 steps to become an official BFC	2026
Cambridge Elm diversity Project – *celebrating the unique diversity of Cambridgeshire Elm*	City Services, Community Service, BCN WT	Establish a 'community nursery' of local Elm species for planting in partnership across the CNN	2026 - 2030
Native Black Poplar Project	City Services, Community Services, Forest Research, Tree Council,	Establish a 'community nursery' of cultivars of known provenance for planting in partnership across the CNN	2026 - 2030
River Cam CAN, DiversiTree legacy	City Services, Community Services	Seek further funding to secure sustainable management and replacement planting for willow pollards, continue with engagement	2026 - 2030
Cambridge Nature Festival	City Services, Community Services, CNN	Month long programme of free and low-cost events to connect people with nature	Support events and promotion in 2026, seek funding 2026 onwards
Environmental Education Spaces Continue to support existing spaces and explore additional site resource	City Service, primary school / nursery license holders	Continued use of 3 spaces, explore at least 1 additional site	2026 - 2031
Environment Improvement Programme (EIP) project selection criteria / prioritisation	City Services	Seek to allocate future budget to meet strategic biodiversity and urban forest objectives.	2026 - 2027
'Wild about Art' projects – continue to	City Services, Community	Innovative education and / or	2026 - 2030

support funding bids and provide locations for nature-based art across Cambridge	Services, artist and communities	habitat creation temporary and permanent installations exploring the wonders of nature	
Urban Nature, Conservation Evidence	City Services, Cambridge Conservation Initiative, Cambridge Conservation Forum	Facilitate research trials on our urban conservation actions to build a shared evidence base	2026 – Closed Churchyard grass cutting trials and monitoring invertebrate use of climate resilient non-native trees – Ongoing

Section 3: Biodiversity net gain information

We deliver our local planning authority function through the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service (GCSPS) in partnership with South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC).

3.1 Actions we have carried out to meet BNG obligations

From 12 February 2024, we have been applying a mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain Pre-Commencement Condition to all relevant (except exempted) planning applications coming forward. This data has been captured and entered the corporate BNG tracking software (Verna's Mycelia), as well as being tracked through the corporate planning software (Uniform).

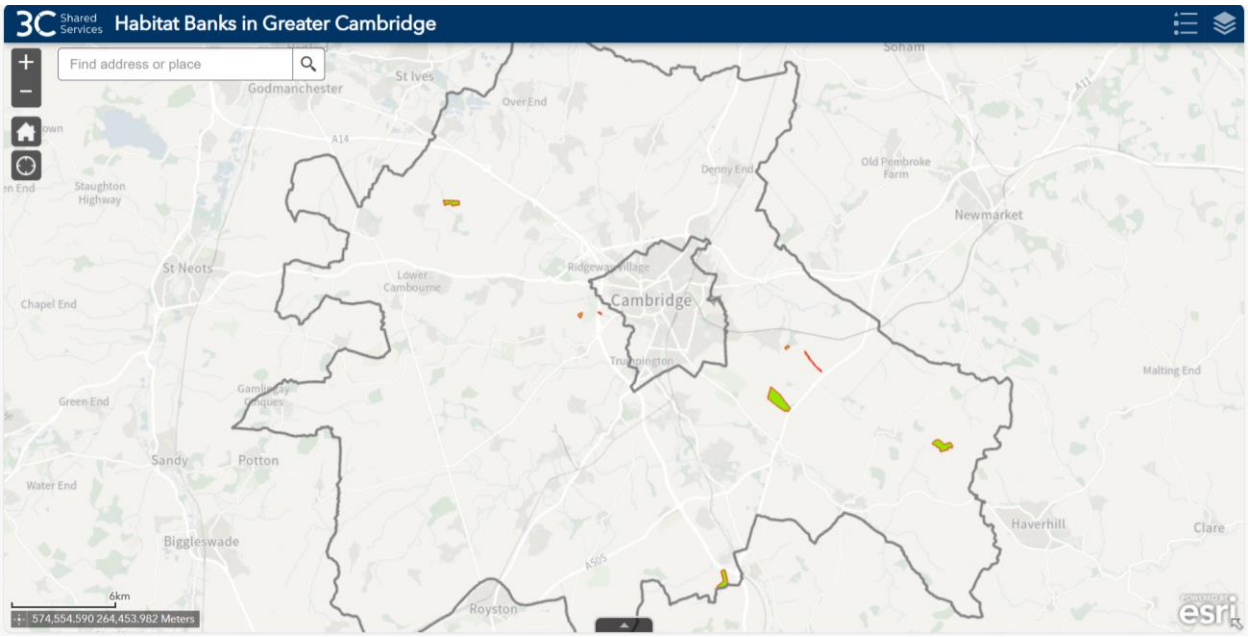
In Greater Cambridge, we have also facilitated the creation of **8** offsite advance habitat creation offset sites which cover a total land area of approximately **200** hectares. These sites are either already listed on DEFRA's Biodiversity Register, or are in the process of finalising the Section 106 Agreements and registering.

These BNG Offset sites are where developers can purchase BNG credits to mitigate habitat loss from developments taking place in Greater Cambridge. For our work facilitating the creation of these sites, we won the Planning for the Natural Environment category at the June 2025 Planning Awards.

Through the negotiation and creation of Section 106 Agreements, we have put in place a chargeable monitoring regime for the offsite BNG Providers to cover the costs of LPA monitoring of BNG on their recovery sites by our ecology team.

GCSP have also agreed **twelve** Section 106 Agreements for onsite delivery of BNG and as of October 2025 approximately **125** planning applications for which the mandatory BNG Condition has been applied for onsite BNG.

BNG offset provider sites in Greater Cambridge



3.2 BNG resulting, or expected to result, from biodiversity gain plans you've approved

The BNG resulting or expected to result from these collected activities both on and offsite is difficult to quantify at present as we have just begun to receive offsite reports and the process for collating and tracking onsite BNG is still emerging, but we can report that as of September 2025 the offset providers in Greater Cambridge have provided 177 BNG Units to developers in order to offset damage to the natural environment as a result of development.

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning has through the set-up of these offset sites enabled the creation of new habitats and thus new opportunities for biodiversity to thrive here.

BNG unit sales from offset sites created in Greater Cambridge

BNG Provider/Agent	Site	BNG unit sales as at 09/10/2025
Cambs County Council	Lower Valley Farm	64.46
Wildlife Trust BCN	Flack Field, Fulbourn	19.62
Groundworks	Devana Centre	7.4

The BNG Partnership	Boxworth	85.99
Cheffins	Coploe Hill,	0 (S106 being finalised)
Cambridge Past Present & Future	Coton Reserve	0 (S106 being finalised)
Total Units	-	**177.47**

We are in concept stage of developing a watercourse offsite BNG credit option at pour Sheep's Green Local Nature Reserve in Newnham to ensure that any offsite watercourse habitat requirements resulting from development can be delivered to the benefit of local habitats and communities.

Section 106 Agreements which include BNG Provision in Greater Cambridge

App No	Site Address	Decision	Ward	District	Type	Deed Date
21/00660/FUL	Land Adj 129 - 131 Ditton Fields Cambridge Cambridgeshire	Granted	Abbey	Cambridge City Council	BNG - Provision	05/11/2021
22/01384/FUL	Beech Farm Church Street Harston Cambridgeshire CB22 7NR	Granted	Harston & Comberton	South Cambridgeshire District Council	BNG - Provision	23/02/2023
22/02088/FUL	Bourn Golf Club, Health and Fitness Club Toft Road Bourn Cambridgeshire CB23 2TT	Granted	Caldecote	South Cambridgeshire District Council	BNG - Provision	18/11/2022
22/05549/OUT	TWI Granta Park Great Abington Cambridgeshire CB21 6AL	Granted	Linton	South Cambridgeshire District Council	BNG - Provision	18/01/2024
23/01335/OUT	Land East Of Ermine Street Caxton Cambridgeshire	Granted	Caxton & Papworth	South Cambridgeshire District Council	BNG - Provision	26/07/2024
23/04233/FUL	Fitzwilliam College Storeys Way Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB3 0DG	Granted	Castle	Cambridge City Council	BNG - Provision	09/08/2024
23/04590/OUT	Land South Of Coldhams Lane Cambridge Cambridgeshire	Granted	Cherry Hinton	Cambridge City Council	BNG - Provision	31/01/2025
23/04687/FUL	Barnwell Local Centre Barnwell Road Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB5 8RG	Granted	Abbey	Cambridge City Council	BNG - Provision	26/11/2024
23/04952/FUL	19 - 35 Regent Street Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB2 3AS	Granted	Market	Cambridge City Council	BNG - Provision	18/12/2024
24/01080/OUT	Land At Green End/Heath Road Gamlingay Sandy SG19 3JZ	Granted	Gamlingay	South Cambridgeshire District Council	BNG - Provision	10/04/2025
24/01354/FUL	137 And 143 Histon Road Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB4 3HZ	Granted	Arbury	Cambridge City Council	BNG - Provision	06/03/2025
24/03285/OUT	Land Southwest Of Lanacre 86 Chrishall Road Fowlmere Cambridgeshire SG8 7RY	Granted	Foxton	South Cambridgeshire District Council	BNG - Provision	31/07/2025

3.3 How we plan to meet BNG obligations in the next reporting period

We will continue to support applicants and habitat bank providers through the planning system with the provision of expert advice from our team of three full-time in-house ecologists and the systems and process that we have put in place to record and report on BNG.

To track, monitor and report on our BNG data, we have purchased a specialist software package (Verna's Mycelia), which will be used to collate data from other corporate systems (Uniform, Exacom) to provide greater detail of BNG delivery in future Biodiversity Duty reports.

Our draft shared Local Plan proposes that all Major development in Greater Cambridge must provide a minimum 20% biodiversity net gain (BNG), unless exempt under the Environment Act 2021, to be provided onsite where this is feasible and effective. If adopted, we will implement this policy to ensure that our large developments deliver above mandatory 10% net gain. Where this requires offsite delivery, we will ensure that sites support the emerging LNRS.

ENDS

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BIODIVERSITY DUTY REPORT

Biodiversity and Tree Projects Progress Report

2022-November 2025

Authors: Natalie Lambert – Biodiversity Projects Officer
Guy Belcher – Biodiversity Manager
Victoria Smith – Local Nature Reserve Ranger
Rober Martyr – Project Lead, Great Cambridge Chalk Steam Project

Fulbourn Road Green Space: Scrapes and Bee Bank

Location (What3Words): each.actual.remark

Project Summary

This project focuses on transforming council-owned amenity grassland into a more species-rich chalk grassland habitat. Early trial scrapes in 2021 demonstrated the potential of the underlying chalk substrate, which informed a larger-scale intervention in February 2022. Topsoil was removed to expose nutrient-poor chalk, followed by rotavation and sowing with a chalk grassland seed mix. A substantial bee bank was created in April 2022 using arisings from the scrapes, providing habitat for ground-nesting solitary bees. The site lies close to three nature reserves, including a chalk grassland SSSI, improving ecological connectivity. Ongoing monitoring and further planned scrapes indicate long-term biodiversity gains.

Quick Facts

🌿 Habitat work	c. 200 m² improved chalk grassland including bee bank
🛠️ Volunteer input	10 volunteers, 3 sessions per year, 4 hours each
🔭 Monitoring	Annual Rapid Condition grassland monitoring by ranger
🤝 Engagement / Legacy	Further scrapes planned for January 2026
🗓️ Project Dates	January 2022 – ongoing

Partners and Funders

Cambridge City Council Housing Department







Coldhams Common Pond

Location (What3Words): lobby.fumes.clear

Project Summary

A small experimental pond measuring 3m by 2m was installed by volunteers on Coldhams Common in an area that already displayed wetland potential through its vegetation. The purpose was to test whether a pond could be sustained naturally in this location. If successful, the intention is to develop a sequence of ponds across the area, each at different successional stages, to create a richer wetland system. Such a network would provide new opportunities for local residents, schools, clubs and academic groups to study freshwater ecology in an accessible setting, whilst also contributing as a stepping stone in the Cambridge Nature Network. The pilot pond also acts as a catalyst for wider habitat enhancement and community engagement with wetland biodiversity.

Quick Facts

🌿 Habitat work	6 m² experimental pond created
🛠️ Volunteer input	5 volunteers, 1 session, 4 hours
🪵 Additional features	Log pile hibernacula installed
🔭 Monitoring	Ongoing assessment of pond sustainability (experimental site)
🗓️ Project Dates	February 2025 – ongoing







Barnwell West LNR:
Ponds, Bee Bank, Wildflower Meadow and Willow Planting

Location (What3Words): verse.dream.trucks

Project Summary

To increase habitat diversity within Barnwell West Local Nature Reserve, a new glade was created through the removal of scrub and topsoil across an area of approximately 60 m². Two ponds were installed, and a substantial bee bank was constructed along the entire south-facing edge of the glade. The remaining ground was seeded with a wildflower mix suitable for the site's conditions. Four mature Osier Willow trees were planted to strengthen structural diversity and provide future habitat benefits. A log-round seating area was added to create an outdoor meeting and learning space for local schools and community groups, supporting the wider aim of encouraging educational use and community engagement.

Quick Facts

🌿 Habitat work	60 m² glade creation, wildflower seeding, 2 ponds, bee bank, 4 Osier Willows
🛠️ Volunteer input	10–15 volunteers, 4 sessions per year since 2022
🔭 Monitoring	Ongoing site condition checks (informal)
🤝 Engagement / Legacy	Dedicated outdoor learning space established
🗓️ Project Dates	March 2022





Bee Kind Log Bee Hives

Location (What3Words):
Byron's Pool LNR (front.rice.after) & Nine Wells LNR (turkey.redouble.voices)

Project Summary

This project represents the first step in introducing more veteran tree features into two council-managed woodlands. Many of the city's wooded areas suffer from a lack of staggered age structure, which limits the availability of habitat niches for invertebrates and other wildlife. To help address this gap, hollowed log 'Bee Kind' hives were installed at the woodland edges at Byron's Pool and Nine Wells Local Nature Reserves.

These natural log hives provide suitable refuge for wild honeybees, offering an alternative to conventional managed hives. By giving colonies a place to live with minimal human interference, the project aims to support more resilient wild populations. Honeybees face a range of pressures including pesticide exposure, reduced forage availability, emerging diseases and stress from intensive honey production. The log hives offer an opportunity for wild colonies to exist simply as pollinators within a more natural ecological setting, contributing to woodland biodiversity and long-term habitat health.

Quick Facts

🌿 Habitat work	Installation of hollow log bee hives to mimic veteran tree features
🛠️ Volunteer input	3 volunteers, twice
🔭 Monitoring	Volunteers monitor hive condition and bee activity throughout the year
🤝 Engagement / Legacy	Supports long-term habitat diversification in council woodlands
🗓️ Project Dates	April 2022



Coldhams Brook Enhancement Project

Location (What3Words): chemistry.limbs.paid

Project Summary

Coldhams Brook, a chalk stream on the east side of Cambridge, had been canalised in the 1950s and received little maintenance beyond an annual weed cut. As a result, the stream developed slow flow, reduced habitat diversity and significant sediment build-up. Despite this, water voles, kingfishers and little egrets continued to use the area, motivating a collaborative enhancement project between Cambridge City Council and Abbey People Community Charity. The project aims to improve a 600 m stretch of the brook through introducing flow deflectors, berm creation with planted macrophytes, secondary channels, backwaters and selective shade reduction. Most of the work has been delivered by volunteers, with occasional contractor support. This ambitious project remains ongoing with continued ecological monitoring.

Quick Facts

🌿 Habitat work	Flow deflectors, berms with marginal planting, secondary channels, backwaters, shade reduction
🛠️ Volunteer input	10–20 per session, ~10 sessions per year since 2022
🔭 Monitoring	Quarterly Riverfly monitoring
📏 Area improved	Approx. 600 m stretch
📅 Project Dates	February 2022 – ongoing

Partners

Abbey People Community Charity









Substrate Experimental Mounds and Pond at Bramblefields LNR

Location (What3Words): long.poker.manage

Project Summary

Bramblefields LNR was selected for experimental habitat creation following the loss of nearby brownfield habitat to development. Initially, a large mound surfaced with recycled ceramics was constructed in 2018. Monitored by Cambridge University Zoology students, academics and volunteers, the trial proved successful for both flora and invertebrates. Building on these results, three additional 'S'-shaped mounds were created, each using a different recycled aggregate: sand, recycled concrete and recycled brick. All were seeded with a chalk grassland mix, and a pond was also excavated, with its spoil forming part of the mound bases. The project has provided diverse learning and engagement opportunities for students, schools, nursery groups, botany groups and local residents, and has been featured in Conservation Land Management and will join the Conservation Evidence library. Annual monitoring continues as part of the second-year Zoology module.

Quick Facts

🌿 Habitat work	3 'S'-shaped mounds (sand, recycled concrete, bricks), chalk grassland seeding, pond creation
🛠️ Volunteer input	10–20 volunteers, 5 sessions per year since 2018
📏 Area improved	Approx. 108 m²
🤝 Engagement	University students, academics, local schools, public guided walks
🔭 Monitoring	Annual plant and invertebrate surveys by Zoology module
🗓️ Project Dates	February 2023











Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project (GCCSP): Evidence-Led Restoration, Monitoring and Community Engagement

Locations (What3Words): Multiple sites including spring.waters.clearly, meander.silver.riffles, brook.pathways.urban, historic.chalk.source, commons.clear.brook, industrial.runoff.channel, chalk.spring.origin, ancient.spring.head, meadow.river.habitat, farm.recharge.soils

Project Summary

The Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project is an evidence-led programme delivering ecological monitoring, restoration design and community engagement across nine chalk-stream and springhead sites in Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire. The project addresses long-standing gaps in hydrological and ecological data, building a robust scientific baseline for long-term chalk-stream recovery. Weekly water-quality monitoring, macroinvertebrate and macrophyte surveys, geomorphological assessments, sediment studies and citizen-science training have created one of the most comprehensive chalk-stream datasets in the region.

Urban streams such as Cherry Hinton Brook, Hobson's Brook and Coldham's Brook show nutrient enrichment, storm-driven pollution pulses and sedimentation, while rural reaches such as Linton, Abington and the springheads at Nine Wells and Giant's Grave demonstrate groundwater influences and seasonal dissolved-oxygen variability. Restoration plans for each site are now process-led and tailored to local hydrological and ecological conditions. Over sixty volunteers have been trained, new partnerships have been strengthened, and the programme has established a model for long-term chalk-stream recovery in Greater Cambridge.

Quick Facts

🌿 Sites involved	Nine chalk streams, springheads and a regenerative farming demonstration site
🛠 Volunteer input	60+ volunteers trained for weekly sampling, sediment monitoring and survey work
🔭 Monitoring	Weekly water-quality sampling; sediment traps; erosion pins; biological surveys; hydro-surveys
📏 Key findings	Storm driven urban nutrient pulses; seasonal dissolved oxygen variation; sediment mobility patterns; groundwater influence
📘 Evidence use	All data now underpins site-specific, process-led restoration design
🗓 Project Dates	January 2024 – November 2025

Quote

"Chalk streams cannot be restored through assumptions or wishful thinking. The Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project is the first initiative in this area to build the level of evidence we actually need... It has been refreshing to see a project led by science, not by fashion." — Dr Steve Boreham, Geologist & Ecologist, Hobson's Conduit Trust

Partners and Funders

Principal funder: Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA)
Supporting staffing, monitoring, restoration design, citizen science, regenerative farming, and technology trials across all GCCSP sites.

Major co-funders: Anglian Water (Get River Positive), Cambridge Water / South Staffordshire Water
Supporting long-term water-quality monitoring, habitat enhancement and urban pollution mitigation. Match funding for sites including Linton, Abington, Cherry Hinton Brook, Coldham's Brook and Giant's Grave, plus springhead research and WINEP support.

Local authority partners: Cambridge City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council
CCiC - Funding for Cherry Hinton Brook and Coldham's Brook, drainage improvements, sediment mitigation, and project coordination.
SC - core delivery partner for Linton, Abington and rural Granta sites.

Project-Specific Contributors:
• Hobson's Conduit Trust (HCT) – targeted contributions to Hobson's Brook, Vicar's Brook and Nine Wells; springhead protection, monitoring and research.
• Big Chalk Fund – capital funding for city habitat creation and in-channel works.
• Patchwork Education Village, Abington Woods – education, community access and habitat works.
• Private landowners at Neville & Enzo's Meadow, Giant's Grave and Nine Wells.

Delivery and Technical Partners
• Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) – water-quality programme, WHPT and MTR surveys, wellbeing surveys and citizen-science training.
• Keele University – geomorphology, sediment advice, in-channel process design.
• Aquamaintain Ltd – in-channel and bankside restoration delivery.
• Wildlife Trust BCN – riparian design and community engagement.
• Cam Valley Forum & local experts – long-term monitoring, historical context and citizen-science data.
• JRH Ltd – rainwater harvesting infrastructure and aquifer recharge engineering at New Shardelowes Farm.

Community and Volunteer Partners
• Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook
• Friends of Hobson's Brook
• Abington Naturewatch

• Linton community groups
• East Cambridgeshire Farm Cluster
• Over sixty trained citizen-science volunteers supporting weekly monitoring, sediment surveys, fixed-point photography and engagement events.





Logan's Meadow LNR Wetland Creation

Location (What3Words): hits.bolt.token

Lead organisation: Cambridge City Council, in partnership with Friends of Logan's Meadow

Project Summary

Logan's Meadow Local Nature Reserve sits on the River Cam in East Chesterton and is one of the council's core nature sites within the Cambridge Nature Network. The wetland creation project has significantly extended the reserve, transforming former rough grassland into a complex of open water, reedbed, ditches and wet woodland. The design was informed by a community-led process, including a public consultation in 2020 that showed strong support for enlarging the LNR, planting more trees and adding additional wetland features.

Cambridge City Council, river restoration specialists and Friends of Logan's Meadow worked together to create backwaters, scrapes and marginal habitats that support species such as water vole, otter, reed warbler, grass snake, dragonflies and breeding fish.

The new wetlands were officially opened in June 2025 at a community event that drew several hundred visitors for guided walks, children's activities and stalls from local groups. The extension more than doubles the wetland area on site, strengthens the ecological corridor along the Cam, and showcases how urban riverside land can be repurposed for nature recovery, climate resilience and community access to blue-green space.

Quick Facts

🌿 Habitat work	Approx. 1 ha of new wetland including open water, reedbeds, scrapes and wet woodland
🤝 Community involvement	Community-led consultation and ongoing volunteering
🛠️ Volunteer input	Around 1,000 volunteer hours across planting, management and events
🎪 Engagement	Hundreds attended the 2025 opening event, the project has been video documented and a film is planned.
🔭 Monitoring	Ongoing ecological monitoring by partners and volunteers
🗓️ Project dates	2022–2025

Partners

Cambridge City Council; Friends of Logan's Meadow; Cambridge Nature Network; Anglia Ruskin University.

Funders

Heritage Lottery, Green Recovery Fund, Natural England, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, S106 Contributions.













Herbicide Reduction Plan

Location: City-wide

Project Summary

Following a motion in July 2021, Cambridge City Council committed to a Herbicide Reduction Plan and herbicide-free trials, initially in two wards, with the aim of phasing out routine glyphosate use across the city. The plan tested non-chemical weed management methods in residential streets and public spaces, while monitoring costs, public perception and biodiversity outcomes.

By March 2024, the council had closed the original Herbicide Free Plan and trials, and approved a new city-wide weed control methodology that significantly reduces herbicide use and restricts it to exceptional circumstances where alternatives are not viable. In March 2025 a new herbicide-free weed management work programme was approved, following the decision to discontinue herbicide use (restricted to exceptional circumstances) across all council-owned sites, including parks, car parks and housing areas.

Alongside operational changes, the council has developed communication and engagement initiatives to help residents understand why verges and pavements may look less "tidy" and to promote manual and mechanical weed control. This includes the "Happy Bee and Butterfly Streets" community weeding scheme, which supports local groups to manage verges in ways that benefit pollinators and public health. The Herbicide Reduction Plan is now a cornerstone of the council's approach to reducing harm to pollinators, improving air and water quality and delivering the Biodiversity Strategy.

Quick Facts

🌿 Scope	City-wide shift away from routine herbicide use
🔄 Implementation	Trials from 2022; revised method adopted 2024; discontinuation confirmed 2025
🤝 Community engagement	Collaboration with Pesticide-Free Cambridge and volunteers
🌼 Happy Bee Streets scheme	Supports community weeding for pollinator benefit
📅 Dates	2021–2025

Partners

Cambridge City Council; Pesticide-Free Cambridge; local residents; volunteer groups.

City Services Operatives Biodiversity Training

Locations: Multiple council-managed sites

Project Summary

City Services operatives manage a large proportion of Cambridge's public realm, including parks, verges, housing land, watercourses and local nature reserves. To embed biodiversity into day-to-day operations, the council has worked with BCN Wildlife Trust and the University of Cambridge to develop bespoke biodiversity training for operational grounds and streets staff.

Three bespoke training events were delivered, alongside university college gardening teams, to increase understanding and practical skills in biodiversity, grassland and watercourse management. The University's operational grounds team joined Cambridge City Council and BCN Wildlife Trust for biodiversity training as part of a wider commitment to enhance biodiversity across the estate.

Training has covered topics such as recognising priority habitats and species on sites, tailoring mowing regimes, managing banks and ditches for wildlife, and communicating changes (for example, relaxed mowing) to residents and park users. This programme supports the council's Biodiversity Strategy actions to build staff capacity, reduce unintentional harm to habitats and ensure that operational decisions contribute positively to nature recovery.

Quick Facts

👷 Training delivered	Three bespoke biodiversity training events
🌿 Focus areas	Grassland, verge and watercourse management; habitat recognition
🤝 Collaboration	Joint delivery with BCN Wildlife Trust and University of Cambridge teams
📘 Strategic context	Supports delivery of the Biodiversity Strategy and Biodiversity Duty commitments to equip staff with the skills needed to manage LNRs, commons and green spaces for nature.
🗓️ Dates	2023–2024, further sessions proposed for 2026-2031 as part of the Biodiversity Strategy action plan.

Partners

Cambridge City Council; BCN Wildlife Trust; University of Cambridge; partner colleges.

Great Crested Newt Pond Restoration at Bar Hill Crematorium

Location: Cambridge City Crematorium near Bar Hill

Project Summary

Cambridge City Crematorium supports an important population of protected great crested newts within a network of breeding ponds. Restoration work under Natural England license has focused on desilting, re-profiling pond margins, fish removal and improving aquatic vegetation to enhance breeding habitat quality.

Quick Facts

Habitat work	Desilting, re-profiling, vegetation improvements, fish removal
Monitoring	Ongoing population monitoring by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Amphibian and Reptile Group (CPARG)
Strategic role	Part of District Level Licensing and amphibian conservation work
Dates	2013–ongoing

Partners and Funders

Cambridge City Council; CPARG; Natural England.

Greater Cambridge Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Planning area: Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire

Project Summary

The Greater Cambridge Biodiversity SPD provides detailed guidance to support the biodiversity policies of the Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Local Plans. It sets out how new development in Greater Cambridge should protect, enhance and restore biodiversity, and how planners and applicants should interpret requirements around habitat creation, ecological networks, mitigation hierarchies and biodiversity net gain. The SPD underwent public consultation in 2021 and was formally adopted by Cambridge City Council in January 2022 and South Cambridgeshire District Council in February 2022. It is now a key material consideration in planning decisions, helping to secure better designed green infrastructure, more joined-up habitats and improved access to nature within and around new developments.

Quick Facts

📅 Adoption	Adopted by Cambridge City Council (Jan 2022) and South Cambridgeshire District Council (Feb 2022)
🌿 Scope	Applies to all new development across Greater Cambridge, supporting Local Plan biodiversity policies
📘 Purpose	Provides practical guidance on delivering biodiversity net gain, habitat creation and ecological connectivity
🧩 Role in decisions	Used as a material consideration in planning decisions and to guide pre-application discussions
👥 Consultation	Subject to public consultation in 2021, with broad support for stronger biodiversity requirements

Partners

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning; Natural Cambridgeshire; biodiversity stakeholders who contributed through consultation.

Nofence Collar Trials on Cambridge Commons

Location: Coldham's Common and other grazed commons

Project Summary

Conservation grazing on Cambridge's commons is vital for maintaining species-rich grassland, but conventional fencing can fragment access and constrain where livestock can graze. The Council has therefore trialled Nofence virtual fencing technology on a section of Coldham's Common and other grazed areas. Solar-powered collars on cattle create GPS-defined grazing cells without the need for physical fencing, allowing more flexible targeting of areas with grassland and scrub encroachment while maintaining open access for people and dogs. The trials are being used to evaluate animal behaviour, public perception, grassland response and operational feasibility. Early findings suggest that Nofence collars can help improve sward condition and reduce manual cutting in difficult-to-access areas, while supporting the Council's wider climate and biodiversity goals.

Quick Facts

🌿 Habitat focus	Improving condition of grazed common grasslands such as Coldham's Common
📍 Trial area	Coldham's Common and selected compartments on city commons
🛠 Approach	Use of GPS-based Nofence collars to create virtual grazing cells without physical fencing
🎯 Aim	Target grazing where it delivers greatest biodiversity benefit while retaining public access
🗓 Timeline	From 2023 onwards

Partners

Cambridge City Council City Services; local graziers; Natural Cambridgeshire partners; technology provider Nofence.



Woodland Management Plans for Byron's Pool and Nine Wells Local Nature Reserves

Location: Byron's Pool LNR and Nine Wells LNR

Project Summary

Byron's Pool and Nine Wells Local Nature Reserves contain important riparian and spring-fed woodland habitats that have developed dense, even-aged canopies in places. To secure their long-term ecological value, the Council has prepared woodland management plans for both sites, funded in part through Section 106 ecological mitigation.

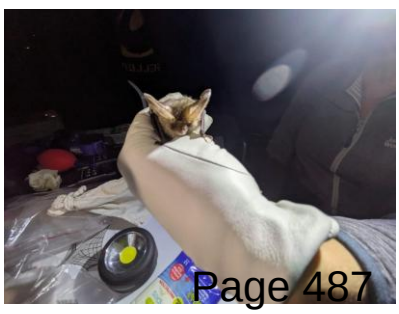
The plans set out a phased programme of selective thinning, regeneration felling and coppicing to diversify age structure, create open glades and promote natural regeneration. At Byron's Pool this includes several hectares of light thinning and small areas of coppice and regeneration felling, while at Nine Wells the focus is on heavier thinning and coppice to restore structural diversity around the rare chalk springs. Arisings are retained as habitat piles wherever practical, supporting deadwood invertebrates, fungi, bats and woodland birds, and improving resilience to climate change and recreational pressure.

Quick Facts

🌿 Habitat work	Phased thinning, regeneration felling and coppicing across woodland blocks at both LNRs
📏 Scale	Several hectares of light thinning and smaller areas of coppice and regeneration felling
🪵 Deadwood	Arisings stacked as habitat piles where possible to increase deadwood resource
🎯 Objectives	Improve structural diversity, light levels, natural regeneration and habitat quality around springs and river
🗓️ Status	Woodland management plans approved, with implementation procured and phased from 2024 onwards

Partners

Cambridge City Council; Wild Trout Trust (linked works at Byron's Pool); local volunteer groups; contractors delivering woodland works.



Hobson's Park County Wildlife Site Designation

Location: Hobson's Park, south Cambridge (near Trumpington)

Project Summary

Hobson's Park is a large, recently created greenspace in south Cambridge, designed alongside new development to provide multifunctional public open space and high-quality habitats for wildlife. The park includes extensive grassland, balancing ponds, reedbeds and ditches, and forms part of a wider green corridor linking the city to the surrounding countryside. In recognition of the site's ecological importance, particularly for breeding birds, approximately 35.7 hectares of grassland and wetlands at Hobson's Park have been designated as a County Wildlife Site, and are also recognised by the City Council as a City Wildlife Site. Management focuses on maintaining a rich mosaic of sward heights, wet features and scrub while balancing recreation. The designation secures stronger planning protection and underscores the success of biodiversity-led design in new urban extensions.

Quick Facts

📏 Area	Around 35.7 ha of grassland and wetland designated for biodiversity value
🌿 Habitats	Species-rich grassland, balancing ponds, reedbeds, ditches and scrub
🕊️ Key interest	Notable assemblage of breeding and wintering birds associated with open farmland and wetland
📘 Status	Designated as a County Wildlife Site and recognised as a City Wildlife Site within the Green Belt
🗓️ Timeline	Habitat creation delivered with new development; CWS status confirmed in early 2020s

Partners

Cambridge City Council; BCN Wildlife Trust; County Wildlife Site Panel; local bird and natural history groups.

Funders

Countryside Properties and partners involved in park creation.



Conservation Grazing at Netherhall School Chalk Slope

Location: Chalk slope adjacent to Netherhall School, south-east Cambridge

Project Summary

A steep chalk slope on land associated with Netherhall School provides one of the few remaining examples of chalk grassland in this part of Cambridge. To secure its long-term condition, the Council has worked with Netherhall School, a local grazier and partners to introduce conservation grazing as the primary management tool. The aim is to maintain a short, herb-rich sward and prevent scrub encroachment, supporting characteristic chalk grassland flora and associated invertebrates. The site also functions as an outdoor learning resource for pupils, illustrating the links between land management, biodiversity and climate resilience. Conservation grazing here complements other chalk grassland projects in the Cambridge Nature Network and demonstrates how school land can contribute to city-wide nature recovery.

Quick Facts

📏 Area	Approximately 1.5 ha of chalk grassland under favourable management
🐄 Grazing	Conservation grazing introduced with a local grazier to manage sward height and scrub
🎓 Education	Used as an outdoor classroom by Netherhall School to support curriculum and nature connection
🌿 Strategic role	Adds to the limited chalk grassland resource on the south-eastern edge of the city
🗓️ Timeline	Conservation grazing in place during the 2020s, with ongoing monitoring of grassland condition

Partners

Cambridge City Council City Services; Netherhall School; local grazier; partners in the Cambridge Nature Network.

Byron's Pool Fish Pass Enhancement

Location: Byron's Pool Local Nature Reserve, River Cam, Trumpington

Lead organisation: Cambridge City Council, working with the Wild Trout Trust and specialist contractors

Project Summary

Byron's Pool weir on the River Cam historically posed a barrier to fish migration and altered natural river processes. To address this, the Council has worked with the Wild Trout Trust and river engineering specialists to enhance the existing nature-like fish pass, which takes the form of a bypass channel around the weir. Detailed designs have improved the channel's gradient, flow patterns and in-channel features so that it functions both as an effective route for fish movement and as additional habitat for juvenile fish and other wildlife. The project has been funded through Section 106 developer contributions, with input from local volunteers and river groups. It sits within a wider programme of ecological mitigation at Byron's Pool, including amphibian pond improvements and access upgrades, and supports the health of the wider Cam catchment.

Quick Facts

Intervention	Enhancement of a nature-like bypass channel functioning as a fish pass around Byron's Pool weir
Objectives	Improve upstream and downstream fish passage and create habitat for juvenile fish
Additional works	Works linked to amphibian pond improvements and ecological mitigation on the reserve
Funding	Supported by Section 106 contributions with technical input from river specialists
Timeline	Fish pass concept developed in 2010s; enhancement works delivered in the early 2020s

Partners

Cambridge City Council; Wild Trout Trust; 5Rivers Environmental and other technical consultants; Cam Valley Forum; local volunteers.

Parks Biodiversity Toolkit: St Thomas Park Enhancement

Location: St Thomas Play Park, Queen Edith's ward, Cambridge

Project Summary

The Parks Biodiversity Toolkit was developed by Cambridge City Council to help local groups plan and deliver small-scale biodiversity interventions in parks and open spaces. St Thomas Play Park in Queen Edith's ward is a leading example of the toolkit in action. Inspired by the guidance in the Toolkit, local residents worked with the Council's Biodiversity and Tree Teams to design and consult on a set of enhancements that would improve habitat for pollinators and other wildlife while keeping the site welcoming for play. Changes have included installing bird and bat boxes, creating a bee bank and drilled logs for solitary bees and other invertebrates, reducing but not removing ivy on taller trees to stop encroachment but allowing habitat for bats, adjusting mowing regimes to allow areas of longer grass and flowers, and developing a new wildflower border. The project is now referenced in the Council's Biodiversity Duty reporting as an example of community-led park enhancement.

Quick Facts

📘 Toolkit	Local application of the city-wide Parks Biodiversity Toolkit
🌿 Habitat changes	Sand bank and bee features, selective ivy removal, relaxed mowing, new wildflower border, installation of bat and bird boxes
🤝 Community role	Design and consultation led by residents working with City Services
🗓️ Timeline	Toolkit launched in early 2020s; St Thomas Park enhancements developed and delivered 2025

Partners

Cambridge City Council City Services; Birdwood Area Residents Association; Butterfly Conservation's Wild Spaces initiative (mapping and inspiration).





Hobson's Brook and Hobson's Conduit Bioblitz

Location: Hobson's Brook, Hobson's Conduit and associated greenspaces (including Hobson's Park and Brookside)

Project Summary

The Hobson's Brook and Conduit Bioblitz is a long-running citizen science initiative designed to build a detailed record of the wildlife associated with Hobson's Brook, Hobson's Conduit and their green corridor through Cambridge. Launched in 2017 as a ten-year programme, the Bioblitz brings together local experts, community groups and families for intensive survey sessions along different sections of the watercourse, including Hobson's Park and the Brookside gardens. Events typically run over a weekend, covering birds, mammals, bats, fish, aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates, plants and fungi. The resulting species lists contribute to understanding of the ecological value of the Conduit corridor and inform management discussions between the Trust, the City Council and other partners. The Bioblitz has also become an important engagement event, and as part of the annual Cambridge Nature Festival introducing residents to the history and biodiversity of this historic water supply system.

Quick Facts

Programme	Ten-year Bioblitz programme initiated in 2017
Surveys	Multi-taxon surveys including birds, mammals, bats, fish, invertebrates, plants and fungi
Coverage	Different sections of Hobson's Brook and Conduit surveyed in successive years, including Hobson's Park and Brookside
Participation	Events open to families and local residents, supported by expert naturalists and volunteers
Use of data	Species records feed into ecological understanding and management of the Hobson's Conduit corridor

Partners

Hobson's Conduit Trust; Cambridge City Council; local natural history societies; schools and community groups; Cambridge Nature Network partners.

DiversiTree Project

Location: Cambridge (10km stretch and 100m wide of the river Cam from Baits Bites to Grantchester Meadows)

Project Summary

DiversiTree is a Cambridge City Council initiative launched in September 2023 to promote the importance of diversity within the city's urban forest. A particular focus is on identifying, understanding and improving the management of veteran trees along the River Cam by creating a Charter for veteran tree managers to sign up to. The project forms part of the River Cam Climate Action through Nature programme delivered by the Cambridge Nature Network partnership and is funded through the National Lottery's Climate Action Fund.

As well as the Charter, another core element of DiversiTree is community engagement. The project works with Cambridge Curiosity and Imagination to involve children, families and under-represented groups in creative and educational activities that connect people with veteran trees and their wildlife. Professional storyteller Studio Places has led participatory storytelling sessions, including 'Weaving Words with Willows', helping communities explore the cultural and ecological significance of veteran riverbank trees through storytelling and creative workshops.

Quick Facts

🌳 Project focus	Urban forest diversity, focusing on veteran riverbank trees (including veteran willows), community engagement
🗓️ Programme dates	September 2023 – spring 2026 (legacy actions expected to continue)
🌿 Key actions	Identifying veteran trees, improving long-term management approaches, raising awareness of veteran-tree biodiversity
🤝 Community engagement	Targeted engagement to involve under-represented local people and communities, as well as stakeholders that manage veteran willows
💷 Funding	National Lottery Community Fund – Climate Action Fund

Partners and Funders

Cambridge City Council; Cambridge Nature Network; National Lottery Community Fund; Local stakeholders involved in riverbank stewardship; Cambridge Curiosity and Imagination; Studio Places.





Cambridge Butterfly Trail

Location: Cambridge City (30 parks and open spaces across every ward)

Project Summary

The Cambridge Butterfly Trail is a self-guided nature trail launched by Cambridge City Council in August 2025. It uses eye-catching marker posts placed across 30 parks and open spaces, spanning every ward of the city, to help residents and visitors explore Cambridge's green spaces and learn about butterflies and moths found locally.

Each marker post features a species-specific plaque with a QR code linking to information about the featured butterfly or moth, alongside an outline designed for 'rubbings' using a pencil or crayon. Participants can start anywhere, use a downloadable collection sheet (also available from community centres), and submit a photo once completed. The first 20 people to complete the full set of 30 rubbings can win a pair of entry tickets to the University of Cambridge Botanic Garden.

The trail supports the council's commitment to become a more 'butterfly-friendly' city, reflecting the wider concern about declines in butterflies and moths highlighted by Butterfly Conservation's declaration of a national 'Butterfly Emergency'. It also links with actions in the council's Biodiversity Strategy, including improving habitat quality in parks and encouraging residents to create 'wild spaces' for pollinators at home.

Quick Facts

🦋 Trail scale	30 marker posts in 30 parks and open spaces, across every ward of Cambridge
🔎 Species featured	30 butterflies and moths found in Cambridge and surrounding areas
📱 Interpretation	QR codes on plaques link to species information and trail locations
🖍️ Interactive element	Rubbing plaques and a downloadable collection sheet (also available at community centres)
🎟️ Incentive	First 20 completions receive a pair of tickets to Cambridge University Botanic Garden
♿ Accessibility	Posts located on accessible paths suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs
🗓️ Launch date	August 2025

Quote

"The new Cambridge Butterfly Trail is a wonderful way for people to get out and explore some of our parks and open spaces, and to learn more about the many different species of butterfly and moth which live in and around our city." – Cllr Martin Smart (Cabinet Member for Nature, Open Space and City Services)

Partners and Funders

Cambridge City Council; Butterfly Conservation (context and 'Wild Spaces' programme); University of Cambridge Botanic Garden (trail completion prize partner); Cambridge community centres (collection sheets).







Cambridge Microwoods (Nuns Way and Five Trees)

Locations: Nuns Way Rec and Five Trees, Cambridge

Project Summary

Cambridge City Council has established a series of microwoods across the city to increase urban tree cover, improve biodiversity and strengthen climate resilience. Microwoods are small, densely planted areas of trees and shrubs designed to grow rapidly into woodland habitat, delivering ecological and environmental benefits even in constrained urban spaces.

The Nuns Way microwood was planted in 2025 by Cambridge City Council and local residents, supported by the Coronation Living Heritage Fund. It provides shelter, food and nesting opportunities for wildlife, improves air quality, absorbs rainwater and helps cool the urban environment.

The Five Trees microwood, established as part of the Tiny Forest programme on 26 March 2022, covers approximately 201 m^2 and was planted with a diverse mix of native species including oak, birch, hazel, hawthorn and guelder rose. Delivered in partnership with Earthwatch Europe and funded by the Forestry Commission's Local Authority Treescape Fund, the site was created with community volunteers and supports citizen science monitoring. Together, these microwoods form stepping-stone habitats that contribute to the Cambridge Nature Network, helping wildlife move through the city while engaging communities in nature recovery.

Quick Facts

🌳 Habitat creation	Dense planting of native trees and shrubs to create mini woodland habitat
📍 Key sites	Nuns Way microwood (planted 2025) and Five Trees Tiny Forest (planted March 2022)
🌿 Biodiversity benefits	Provides habitat, nesting sites and food for birds, insects and other wildlife
🌡️ Climate benefits	Improves air quality, stores carbon, reduces urban heat and absorbs rainwater
🤝 Community involvement	Community planting, volunteering and citizen science monitoring
🧩 Strategic role	Supports Cambridge Nature Network and city-wide urban nature recovery
💷 Funding	Coronation Living Heritage Fund and Forestry Commission Local Authority Treescape Fund

Partners and Funders

Cambridge City Council; Cambridge Nature Network; Earthwatch Europe; Forestry Commission (Local Authority Treescape Fund); Coronation Living Heritage Fund; local community volunteers.







Free Trees for Babies Scheme

Location: Cambridge (city-wide residential planting scheme)

Project Summary

The Free Trees for Babies Scheme is a long-running Cambridge City Council initiative that provides a free tree to residents to plant in their garden to celebrate the birth or adoption of a child. The scheme helps grow the city's urban forest, supports biodiversity and strengthens connections between families and nature. By encouraging tree planting on private land, the scheme contributes to wider efforts to increase tree canopy cover and climate resilience across Cambridge.

Eligible Cambridge residents with a child or grandchild aged four or younger can apply to receive a tree. Applications typically open in early November and close the following August, with trees distributed during the winter planting season. Participants are provided with guidance and materials to support successful planting and establishment. Trees may also be planted in other suitable locations within Cambridge, such as schools or community spaces, where residents do not have access to a garden.

The scheme supports the Cambridge Canopy Project and Biodiversity and Trees Strategies by increasing habitat availability, helping store carbon, improving air quality and contributing to long-term environmental resilience.

Quick Facts

🌳 Purpose	Celebrate births and grow Cambridge's urban forest
👶 Eligibility	Cambridge residents with a child or grandchild aged four or younger
🌿 Biodiversity benefit	Creates habitat and food sources for wildlife in residential areas
🗓️ Timeline	Annual scheme with applications typically open November–August
📦 Support provided	Free tree, planting guidance and establishment materials
🧩 Strategic role	Supports Cambridge Canopy Project and Biodiversity Strategy
🤝 Community impact	Encourages residents to actively participate in nature recovery

Partners and Funders

Cambridge City Council; partner tree nurseries; local residents participating in the scheme.



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Project: Biodiversity Strategy Midterm Review **Date:** 10/11/25 **Your Name: Guy Belcher**

1. IMPACT ON CARBON EMISSIONS (MITIGATION OF CLIMATE CHANGE)

	HOW WILL THIS PROJECT/PROPOSAL AFFECT THE FOLLOWING KEY AREAS:	WHAT IS THE IMPACT CONSIDERED TO BE? *See guidance in the purple box, below, to help you assess the degree of the negative and positive impacts e.g. High, Medium or Low*		CLIMATE CHANGE RATING: *Use drop down list*	WILL THE PROJECT MOVE CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL CLOSER TO THE OBJECTIVE OF BEING NET ZERO CARBON BY 2030? *Use drop down list*	WILL THE PROJECT MOVE THE CITY CLOSER TO THE OBJECTIVE OF A NET ZERO CARBON CAMBRIDGE BY 2030? *Use drop down list*	PLEASE DETAIL HERE THE ACTION THAT WILL BE TAKEN TO AVOID, MITIGATE OR COMPENSATE FOR THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS AND MAXIMISE POSITIVE IMPACTS?		HAS A NET ZERO CARBON OPTION BEEN CONSIDERED? PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS.
1	ENERGY USE	Positive Impact:	Energy use will be reduced or renewable energy will be used	Medium Positive	Yes	Yes	**Consider:** - Reducing demand for energy - Specifying energy efficiency measures (e.g. insulation, low energy lighting) - Generating renewable energy (e.g. heat pumps,	Semi natural habitats, tree canopy and water coarses cool the city and reduces energy demand in heatwaves.	No
		Nil Impact:	No extra energy use is involved						
		Negative Impact:	More energy (gas and/ or electricity) will be consumed (by CCC or others)						
2	WASTE GENERATION	Positive Impact:	Less waste will be generated OR amount of waste that is reused/ recycled will be increased	Nil	No	No	**Consider:** - Will resources be reduced or reused? - Will you use recycled goods? - Will recycling facilities be increased?	Review of park leaf clearance will reduce operational carbon use and enhance soil carbon capture. However, additional meadow creation will require cut and collect management with tranport of green waste within the City. Options for onsite composting will be explored for suitable sites.	No
		Nil Impact:	No waste will be generated						
		Negative Impact:	More waste will be generated (by CCC or others)						
3	USE OF TRANSPORT	Positive Impact:	The use of transport and/or of fossil fuel-based transport will be reduced	Nil	No	No	**Consider:** - Will you purchase an electric vehicle? - Will you specifiy the use of public transport? - How will you reduce the need to travel or transport goods?	Additonal hay cuts may require increase use of vehicle to move green waste. Options for onsite composting will be explored for suitable sites.	No
		Nil Impact:	No extra transport will be necessary						
		Negative Impact:	CCC or others will need to travel more OR transport goods more often/ further						
4	SUSTAINABLE FOOD	Positive Impact:	Food will be locally grown and/ or meat-free	Low Positive	No	No	**Consider:** - Use of locally grown/ produced food - Reducing use of imported food - Reducing use of meat	Produce available from community orchards and gardens. Foraging for blackberries, Sloes etc on Local Nature Reserves	No
		Nil Impact:	No change in supply of food						
		Negative Impact:	Food will travel long distances and include meat						

2. IMPACT ON RESILIENCE (ADAPTATION) TO THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

	HOW WILL THIS PROJECT/PROPOSAL AFFECT THE FOLLOWING KEY AREAS :	WHAT IS THE IMPACT CONSIDERED TO BE? *See guidance in the purple box, below, to help you assess the degree of the negative and positive impacts e.g. High, Medium or Low*		CLIMATE CHANGE RATING: *Use drop down list*	WILL THE PROJECT HELP CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL TO BE MORE RESILIENT TO THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE?	WILL THE PROJECT HELP CAMBRIDGE TO BE MORE RESILIENT TO THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE? *Use drop down list*	PLEASE DETAIL HERE THE ACTION THAT WILL BE TAKEN TO AVOID, MITIGATE OR COMPENSATE FOR THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS AND MAXIMISE POSITIVE IMPACTS?		HAS A NET ZERO CARBON OPTION BEEN CONSIDERED? PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS.
5	HEATWAVES	Positive Impact:	Increased/ improved shade & natural ventilation	High Positive	Yes	Yes	Consider: Building orientation and installing measures such as Brise Soleil to reduce heat gain and plant hydration methods.	Signiciant contribution to reducing urban heat island effect, through shading and cooling effect of semi natural habitats	No
		Nil Impact:	No impact on existing levels of shade & ventilation						
		Negative Impact:	Lack of or reduced shade (e.g. from trees or buildings) & natural ventilation						
6	WATER AVAILABILITY	Positive Impact:	Provision made for an enhancement of water efficiency measures to minimise the impact on water resource availability	Medium Positive	Yes	Yes	Consider: Managing water use efficiently, installing measures to use less water such as low water use taps, planting drought resistant plants and using rainwater for irrigation.	Watercourse enhancments and reconnecting sites to their floodplain. Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project focuses on water use and quality. Rainwater harvesting project will reduce our reliance on aquifer abstraction for operations such as tree watering	No
		Nil Impact:	Levels of water use will not be changed						
		Negative Impact:	Water use will increase and/or no provision made for water management = Negative Impact						
7	FLOODING	Positive Impact:	Sustainable drainage measures incorporated, positive steps to reduce & manage flood risk	Medium Positive	Yes	Yes	Consider: The installation of measures to reduce the speed and increase the absorption of rainwater e.g. green roofs, SuDS, permeable paving etc. and alternative arrangements (business continuity)	Reconnecting the river to its floodplain through habitat creation schemes, tree canopy and sustainable urban drainage schemes will help 'slow the flow'	No
		Nil Impact:	Levels of surface water run-off & flood risk are not affected						
		Negative Impact:	Levels of surface water run-off will increase, no management of flood risk						
8	HIGH WINDS / STORMS	Positive Impact:	Exposure to higher wind speeds is being actively managed & reduced	Low Positive	Yes	Yes	Consider: the need to install stabilisation measures and ensure robust structures resilient to high winds	A healthy urban forest provides shelter for streets and parks	No
		Nil Impact:	No change to existing level of exposure to higher wind speeds						
		Negative Impact:	Exposure to higher wind speeds is increased or is not managed = Negative Impact						
9	FOOD SECURITY	Positive Impact:	Opportunities & resources for local food production are increased/ enhanced	Medium Positive	Yes	Yes	Source food locally, and provide meat-free catering to reduce vulnerability to food shortages and reduce emissions from transport and farming of food	Urban Forest and LNR habitats nurture a healthy pollintor population for pollination of food crops.	No
		Nil Impact:	No change to opportunities & resources for local food production						
		Negative Impact:	Opportunities & resources for local food production are reduced						
10	BIODIVERSITY	Positive Impact:	Biodiversity will be protected/ enhanced	High Positive	Yes	Yes	Provide net gain mitigation if required and seek enhancement in projects of all types and scale	Main outcomes are to protect and enhance biodiversity at a city and landscape scale.	No
		Nil Impact:	Level of biodiversity will not change						
		Negative Impact:	Biodiversity will decrease						

Weighing up the negative and positive impacts of your project, what is the overall rating you are assigning to your project?: **Medium Positive**

This overall rating is what you need to include in your report/ budget proposal, together with your explanation to be included in the red box below

Guidance on Assessing the Degree of Negative and Positive Impacts:

Note: Not all of the considerations/ criteria listed below will necessarily be relevant to your project

Low Impact (L)	* No publicity
	* Relevant risks to the Council or community are Low or none
	* No impact on service or corporate performance
	* No capital assets; or capital assets with lifetime of less than 3 years
Medium Impact (M)	* Local publicity (good or bad)
	* Relevant risks to the Council or community are Medium
	* Affects delivery of corporate commitments
	* Affects service performance (e.g.: energy use; amount of waste; distance travelled) by more than 10%
	* Capital assets with a lifetime of more than 3 years
High Impact (H)	* National publicity (good or bad)
	* Relevant risks to the Council or community are Significant or High
	* Affects delivery of regulatory commitments
	* Affects corporate performance by more than 10%
	* Capital assets with a lifetime of more than 6 years

In the box below please summarise the projects impacts (the reasons for the ratings given in column E above) to explain how the overall rating for the project/ proposal has been derived (Cell E37). Please also highlight any negative impacts your project may have and how you plan to avoid, mitigate or compensate for these (as you will have detailed in column I above).

The overall impact of the Biodiversity Strategy mid term review is assessed as being moderately positive in terms of reducing impacts of climate change and enhancing biodiversity.

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Cambridge City Council Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

This tool helps the Council ensure that we fulfil legal obligations of the Public Sector Equality Duty to have due regard to the need to –

(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;

(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Guidance on how to complete this tool can be found on the Cambridge City Council intranet. For specific questions on the tool please contact the Community Equity Team at equalities@cambridge.gov.uk.

Also, once you have drafted the EqIA please send this to equalities@cambridge.gov.uk for checking.

1. Title of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service
Biodiversity Strategy (2022–2030), Biodiversity Duty Report (2022–2025), and Biodiversity Action Plan (2026–2031)

2. Webpage link to full details of the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service (if available)
To be updated when published Date?. Existing Strategy link: https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/11066/biodiversity-strategy.pdf

3. What is the objective or purpose of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?
The combined programme sets out how Cambridge City Council will conserve and enhance biodiversity across the city, in line with statutory requirements in the Environment Act 2021 and amended NERC Act Section 40. It embeds biodiversity into council decision making, land management, planning policy and community engagement. A mid-term review of the Biodiversity Strategy is planned to celebrate achievements and align future actions with new legislation and initiatives. The Biodiversity Duty Report documents how Cambridge City Council has taken and will continue to take steps to conserve and enhance biodiversity in exercising its functions. The accompanying Action Plan (2026–2031) sets out future commitments to embed biodiversity across council operations, estate management, planning policy, and community engagement.

4. Responsible Team and Group
City Services: Biodiversity Team

5. Who will be affected by this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service? (Please tick all that apply)	☒ Residents ☒ Visitors ☒ Staff
- Council tenants and residents across all wards - Community volunteers, Friends groups, and local schools engaged in biodiversity actions - Developers and land managers participating in biodiversity net gain initiatives - Staff across service areas involved in delivering biodiversity actions - People who work in the city but do not live here - Tourists	

6. What type of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service is this?	☒ New ☐ Major change ☐ Minor change

7. Are other departments or partners involved in delivering this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service? (Please tick)	☒ Yes ☐ No
Community Services, Cambridge Investment Partnership, Combined Authority, Natural Cambridgeshire, Cambridge Nature Network, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust, community groups and Friends groups.	

8. What research methods/ evidence have you used in order to identify equality impacts of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?
This EQIA draws on national guidance and a growing peer reviewed evidence base on the links between access to green space, biodiversity and health, with a focus on how these benefits and risks are patterned by age, disability, income, ethnicity and other characteristics. Key sources include: • **UK guidance and reviews** o Public Health England, *Improving access to greenspace: 2020 review* which summarises evidence that greener communities show lower levels of depression

and anxiety, reduced exposure to heat and flooding, and that disadvantaged groups often gain greater health benefit when green space is improved. GOV.UK

    - Public Health England and wider UK reviews summarised in *Making the most of green space for people's health* and the EKLIPSE report on types and characteristics of green space that affect mental health. Eklipse

    - Health Foundation and Friends of the Earth analyses of inequalities in access to green space and environmental hazards by deprivation and ethnicity. health.org.uk

- **Mental health and wellbeing**

    - Systematic reviews and meta-analyses showing that exposure to nature and urban green space is consistently associated with improvements in mental health outcomes across age groups, including reduced depression and anxiety and improved quality of life. Journal of Global Health

    - Evidence that urban green exercise and even short periods of nature exposure can improve mood and reduce stress, including for adults with existing mental illness. Urban Green Exercise

- **Children, young people and older adults**

    - Systematic reviews showing that access to green space supports children's mental wellbeing, behaviour and cognitive development, and that outdoor learning in green environments benefits attention and academic performance. Impact of Green Space

    - Reviews and longitudinal studies showing that green space can improve physical and mental health for middle-aged and older adults and reduce heat-related morbidity and mortality. Health impacts of urban green spaces

- **Disability and long-term conditions**

    - Meta-analyses and scoping reviews indicating that nature exposure produces short term improvements in mood, stress and quality of life for adults with mental illness, and broader mental health benefits across diagnostic groups. Nature Exposure Benefits

- **Pregnancy and maternity**

    - Systematic reviews and meta-analyses showing there is some evidence that residential greenness is associated with healthier pregnancy outcomes such as higher birthweight and lower risk of preterm birth and small for gestational age. Greenspace and birth outcomes

- **Race, income, climate vulnerability and intersectionality**

    - UK analyses showing that people in more deprived areas and many ethnic minority communities have less access to high quality green space and are more exposed to

extreme heat and environmental risks, which increases health inequalities. Inequalities in access to green space

- Evidence that neighbourhood green space can have particularly strong protective mental health effects for disadvantaged groups. Greenspace and mental health in disadvantaged groups

- **Safety, gender and quality of green space**

  - Systematic reviews and studies on green space quality, which highlight perceived safety as a key dimension of quality affecting mental health outcomes and park use. Greenspace and safety

  - Research showing that women and girls are more likely to feel unsafe in parks and other public green spaces, and that design features such as lighting, visibility and signs of disorder influence their use of these spaces. Perceptions of safety in urban parks

The evidence above has been used to identify where the combined Biodiversity Strategy, Duty Report and Action Plan can have positive impacts for different groups, where there are risks or barriers (for example linked to safety or unequal access), and where mitigation and inclusive design are needed. More detailed evidence is referenced under each protected characteristic in Section 9.

9. Potential impacts

For each category below, please explain if the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service could have a positive/ negative impact or no impact. Where an impact has been identified, please explain what it is. Consider impacts on service users, visitors and staff members separately.

(a) Age - Please also consider any safeguarding issues for children and adults at risk

Positive impacts

- Children and young people: Systematic reviews show that access to green space is associated with improved mental wellbeing, reduced stress, better behaviour and enhanced cognitive development and academic performance in children. School-based studies link greener school environments to gains in working memory and attention. Greenspace and mental well-being of children

- The Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan support outdoor learning, nature-based play and activities in parks and open spaces, including forest schools, which should therefore have positive impacts on children's learning and wellbeing.

- Older adults: Reviews and longitudinal studies indicate that green space and street trees can promote physical activity, social contact and better self-rated health for middle-aged and older adults, and can reduce heat-related morbidity and mortality in hotter periods. Health impacts of urban greenspaces

- Increasing canopy cover and nature-based cooling in neighbourhoods where older people live responds to evidence that they are particularly vulnerable to climate-related risks such as heatwaves. Heat related morbidity and mortality

Safeguarding

- No specific safeguarding risks have been identified at strategy level, but individual projects should follow safeguarding procedures for activities involving children, young people and adults at risk.

(b) Disability

Positive impacts

- High quality green space, especially where it is accessible and well maintained, is consistently associated with improved mental health outcomes. Scoping reviews of nature-based interventions report improvements in mood, stress, anxiety and depression across diagnostic groups, including people with existing mental illness. Impacts of nature on health

- A recent meta-analysis focusing on adults with mental illness found that even brief (around 10 minutes) exposure to nature can yield short term improvements in depressive symptoms, stress and quality of life. Nature exposure and the benefits for adults with mental illness

- By increasing the quantity and quality of green space in the city, the programme has the potential to support mental health for disabled residents, including those with long term mental health conditions.

Mitigation and design

- Accessibility audits and engagement with disabled residents and representative groups are needed to ensure that paths, entrances, seating, signage and facilities are inclusive, and that sensory planting and quiet areas are designed with neurodivergent users in mind. For example, the city's new Butterfly Trail ensures the height of the trail signage is in line with recommendations from the government's inclusive mobility.

- This is consistent with evidence that green space quality, including safety, accessibility and amenities, is crucial in determining who actually experiences health benefits. Greenspace quality and health

(c) Gender reassignment

There is very limited peer reviewed evidence specifically on trans and non-binary people's use of green space. Existing research on public space suggests that trans and non-binary people may face harassment or exclusion in public settings, but this is not yet well studied for parks and nature spaces.

(d) Marriage and civil partnership

No impacts have been identified specific to this equality group.

(e) Pregnancy and maternity

Positive impacts

- Multiple systematic reviews and meta-analyses show that there is some evidence that residential greenness is associated with healthier pregnancy outcomes, including higher average birthweight and lower risk of preterm birth and small for gestational age births. Greenspace and birth outcomes
- The programme's focus on local, walkable green spaces, shade, benches and traffic-free routes is therefore likely to benefit pregnant women and new parents by supporting safe physical activity, stress reduction and social contact.

Risks

- A small number of recent studies highlight possible associations between certain types of greenness and childhood asthma, which may be related to specific pollen or air quality profiles, so this evidence remains mixed and developing. Residential Greenspace and Asthma
- These uncertainties underline the importance of integrating biodiversity, air quality and species selection considerations into planting schemes, rather than simply maximising greenness.

(f) Race – Note that the protected characteristic 'race' refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

Local context

- Cambridge is relatively diverse compared with England and Wales overall. Census 2021 data for Cambridge City show:
    - Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: 14.8% of residents
    - Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: 2.4%
    - Mixed or multiple ethnic groups: 5.1%
    - White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British: 53.0%
    - White: Other ethnic group: 21.5%
    - Other ethnic group: 3.1% Cambridge City Council

- This means that only just over half of residents identify as White British, compared with 74.4% for England and Wales overall, so Cambridge's population is substantially more diverse than the national picture. Office for National Statistics

National evidence on race, deprivation and green space

- England wide analyses by Friends of the Earth show a strong correlation between green space deprivation, ethnicity and income. Their "England's green space gap" report finds that Black, Asian and minority ethnic people are around 2.7 times as likely as White people to live in areas with the least green space, and that these neighbourhoods also tend to be more deprived. Friends of the Earth

- The Health Foundation's evidence hub on green space similarly reports that people in more deprived areas, and those from minority ethnic groups, are more likely to live in neighbourhoods with limited access to green space, even though they may gain greater health benefits when high quality green space is available locally. health.org.uk

- Public Health England's review of access to greenspace concludes that improving green spaces in disadvantaged areas can reduce health inequalities and provide the largest marginal benefits for groups who currently have least access. GOV.UK

Positive impacts

- Given Cambridge's relatively high ethnic diversity, and the presence of pockets of deprivation in urban neighbourhoods, actions that increase the quantity, quality and accessibility of local green space have strong potential to reduce environmental and health inequalities for residents from minority ethnic backgrounds.

- UK analyses show that people from ethnic minority communities are more likely to live in neighbourhoods with lower access to high quality green space and are more exposed to environmental hazards such as extreme heat. Ethnic minorities and access to greenspace

- There is emerging evidence that improvements in residential greenness may contribute to better perinatal outcomes in under-resourced neighbourhoods, including for Black mothers. Residential greenspace and maternal race

- By targeting improvements to neighbourhood green space and canopy in areas of greatest need, the Strategy and Action Plan have potential to reduce environmental and health inequalities that currently fall disproportionately on some ethnic minority residents.

Risks and mitigation

- National research highlights that ethnic minority communities can be less likely to use existing green space where it feels unsafe, poorly maintained or not designed with their needs in mind. Urban greenspace use among ethnic communities

- **To avoid reinforcing inequalities, individual projects should:**

    - use Cambridge's IMD and Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) mapping to identify and prioritise improvements in neighbourhoods with both higher deprivation and lower access to quality green space

    - involve ethnically diverse communities and organisations in co-design and stewardship of local green spaces

    - consider cultural preferences, language, and perceptions of safety in engagement and design

- No direct negative impacts on any ethnic group are anticipated if this targeting and engagement approach is followed. There is an opportunity to narrow existing environmental and health inequalities that currently fall disproportionately on some minority ethnic communities.

Mitigation and engagement

- Research on "green space gaps" highlights that provision, quality and cultural relevance of green space can all be barriers. Greenspace gaps

- Engagement work with community groups should therefore include ethnically diverse communities, co-design of spaces, and attention to cultural and language barriers.

(g) Religion or belief

No negative impacts for this protected characteristic have been identified at strategy level.

(h) Sex

Positive impacts

- Women and men can both benefit from the physical and mental health advantages associated with access to good quality green space described above. Systematic reviews suggest that green space is associated with better mental health, lower mortality and increased physical activity in adults of all genders. Health impacts of urban green space

Safety and barriers

- A consistent finding in the literature is that women are more likely than men to feel unsafe in parks and other public spaces, especially after dark, and that these perceptions reduce their use of green space. Perceptions of safety in urban parks
- UK and international studies highlight that women and girls cite poor lighting, low visibility, presence of groups of men, and signs of neglect or disorder as key reasons for feeling unsafe in parks. Women and girl's safety in parks

Mitigation

- In response, individual projects under the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan should:
    - incorporate women's and girls' views in design and management of sites
    - review lighting, sightlines, vegetation management and routes with a gender-sensitive lens
    - work with community safety colleagues to ensure design and management reflects best practice.

(i) Sexual orientation

There is limited direct research on how access to green space varies by sexual orientation. Some broader studies on public space and harassment indicate that LGBTQ+ people can experience discrimination or abuse in public settings, which may also apply in parks, but empirical evidence is sparse.

The Strategy and Action Plan are inclusive in intent and do not treat people differently by sexual orientation. Activities and volunteering are open to all and must comply with Council equalities and anti-harassment policies.

Engagement and consultation activity should ensure LGBTQ+ organisations are included so that any specific safety or inclusion concerns about particular sites can be identified and mitigated.

(j) Other factors that may lead to inequality – in particular, please consider the impact of any changes on:

- **Low-income groups or those experiencing the impacts of poverty.**
- **People of any age with care experience – this refers to individuals who spent part of their childhood in the care system due to situations beyond their control, primarily arising from abuse and neglect within their families. The term "Care experience" is a description of a definition in law, it includes anyone that had the state as its corporate parent by virtue of a care order in accordance with the Children Act 1989 and amendments.**
- **Groups who have more than one protected characteristic that taken together create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. (Here you are being asked to consider intersectionality, and for more information see: https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/1_l59kt25q).**

Deprivation patterns and potential inequalities – Local context

- Cambridge City as a whole is relatively less deprived than the national average, with average IMD domain scores around decile 7. However, there are clear pockets of deprivation:
    - Nine Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are in the three most deprived deciles nationally on the Index of Multiple Deprivation.
    - Deprivation is concentrated in the northeast of the city, particularly parts of Abbey and King's Hedges. Cambridgeshire Insight
    - On the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI), 20 out of 68 LSOAs are in the three most deprived deciles nationally. Cambridgeshire Insight
- The Council's own "Mapping poverty" and IMD analysis highlight that these more deprived areas are also among the most built up and therefore more at risk of environmental inequalities such as poorer housing conditions, air quality and limited access to high quality green space. Cambridge City Council

Low-income groups and deprived areas

- National and local analyses show that people living in more deprived neighbourhoods are more likely to lack access to high quality green space and are disproportionately exposed to environmental risks such as air pollution and extreme heat. Inequalities in access to green space
- Reviews by Public Health England conclude that disadvantaged groups often gain greater health benefit when green space is improved, and that greener areas can reduce socio-economic inequalities in health. Improving access to green space

- The Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan therefore prioritise improvements that increase equitable access to nearby, good quality green space and canopy cover in areas of greatest need, which is likely to be particularly beneficial for low-income households.

Intersectionality

- Studies of environmental and health inequalities show that disadvantage often overlaps, for example where low income, ethnic minority status, gender and disability coincide, and that these groups can experience the highest exposure to environmental risks and the lowest access to green space. Climate and nature impact on ethnic minorities
- Evidence also shows that neighbourhood green space can provide strong protective mental health effects for disadvantaged groups when it is safe, high quality and culturally relevant. The effects of neighbourhood green spaces on mental health of disadvantaged groups
- By embedding equity into site prioritisation, design and engagement, the programme aims to ensure that those facing multiple disadvantages are not further excluded and can share in the benefits.

10. Action plan – New equality impacts will be identified in different stages throughout the planning and implementation stages of changes to your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service. How will you monitor these going forward? Also, how will you ensure that any potential negative impacts of the changes will be mitigated? (Please include dates where possible for when you will update this EqIA accordingly.)

- Monitoring: Equality impacts will be undertaken for specific projects within the action plan
- Engagement: Strengthen partnerships with schools, community groups, and accessibility networks
- Mitigation: Embed accessibility and inclusion in project design
- Next EqIA review: December 2026

11. Do you have any additional comments?

12. Sign off

Lead officer: Natalie Lambert, Biodiversity Projects Officer. Others consulted: Guy Belcher, Biodiversity Manager; Lily Simmonite, Community Equity Officer.

All EqIAs need to be sent to the Community Equity Team at equalities@cambridge.gov.uk

REPORT TITLE: Urban Forest Strategy 2026-2036: Cabinet Decision Report

To: Cabinet Member for Nature, Open Spaces and City Services, Martin Smart.

Cabinet 24 March

Report by: Matthew Magrath, Urban Forest Manager

Tel: 01223458526. Email:matthew.magrath@cambridge.gov.uk

Wards affected: All

Director Approval: Director James Elms confirms that the report author has sought the advice of all appropriate colleagues and given due regard to that advice; that the equalities impacts and other implications of the recommended decisions have been assessed and accurately presented in the report; and that they are content for the report to be put to the Cabinet/Cabinet Member for decision.

1. Recommendations

1.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

a) Approve the Urban Forest Strategy 2026-2036 (v5) and the supporting Topic Papers.

b) Note Scrutiny Committee's consideration of the Strategy's development history and consultation process (**see section 6.4**).

c) Endorse the proposed Delivery Framework (**see Appendix 6**), Policies, Actions and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) as the basis for delivery and monitoring of the Strategy.

2. Purpose and reason for the report

2.1 This report seeks Cabinet approval of the Urban Strategy 2026-2036 (UFS) as the Council's strategic framework for protecting, managing and growing Cambridge's urban forest over the next decade.

2.2 The report is decision-focused and does not repeat the detailed development history or consultation narrative, which has been considered by Scrutiny Committee[1] (see section 6.4). Cabinet is asked to note this context and focus on the final Strategy.

2.3 This report therefore focuses on:

- the case for adoption;
- any changes arising from Scrutiny; and
- the implications of approving or not approving the Strategy.

3. Alternative options considered

3.1 Option 1: Retain the Citywide Tree Strategy 2016-2026 (Not recommended)
The 2016 Tree Strategy is time-expired and does not reflect current climate, biodiversity, planning or evidence contexts.

Option 2: Adopt the Urban Forest Strategy 2026-2036 (Preferred option)
Provides an up-to-date, evidence-led framework for protecting, managing and growing Cambridge's urban forest over the next decade.

Option 3: Delay adoption (Not recommended)
Would create a policy gap and weaken strategic coordination, delivery and defensibility of tree-related decisions.

[1] A Agenda for Services, Climate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday, 11th March, 2026, 5.30 pm - Cambridge Council

4. Background and key issues

4.1 The UFS represents an evolution from the 2016 Tree Strategy[2], moving from a primarily asset-based approach focused on Council-managed trees to a whole-city urban forest approach that recognises the role of partners, private land and communities in delivering canopy outcomes.

4.2 The evidence base and strategic rationale for the UFS, including the long-term ambition of at least 20% canopy cover by 2050, has been reviewed by Scrutiny Committee and is not repeated in detail here.

4.3 Cabinet is asked to consider whether the final Strategy provides a sufficiently clear, proportionate and deliverable framework to guide policy, investment and operational decision-making over the next decade.

5. Corporate plan

5.1 The UFS supports delivery of all Corporate Plan priorities, including responding to the climate and biodiversity emergencies, tackling inequality and improving health and wellbeing, supporting sustainable neighbourhoods, and modernising council services through evidence-led, cross-service working.

5.2 The Strategy aligns with and complements the Climate Change Strategy and Biodiversity Strategy, providing a coherent framework for nature-based solutions and climate adaptation across the city.

6. Consultation, engagement and communication

6.1 The development history of the Strategy and the consultation process have been considered in detail by Scrutiny Committee and are not repeated in full in the Cabinet appendices.

6.2 Cabinet is asked to note that consultation across Officers, Leadership Team, independent technical and legal review (Subsidence Topic Paper), and the public demonstrated strong overall support for the direction of the Strategy, with feedback used

[2] Tree strategy - Cambridge City Council

to improve clarity, alignment with corporate strategies and legal robustness.

6.3 Any material issues raised through consultation that affect the final Strategy have been addressed prior to this Cabinet report.

6.4 Along with the Biodiversity mid-review, the Urban Forest Strategy was taken before Scrutiny Committee 11 March 2026[3].

Following a question-and-answer session, the Committee noted the progress made in developing the Urban Forest Strategy 2026-2036, including consultation responses, and approved the Strategy for recommendation to Cabinet for adoption without amendment. Minor editorial corrections (e.g. spelling and formatting) have been made since the meeting.

7. Anticipated outcomes, benefits or impact

7.1 Approval of the UFS will provide a clear, evidence-led framework for protecting, managing and expanding Cambridge's urban forest, strengthening cross-Council coordination and providing transparency through monitoring and KPIs.

7.2 The Strategy is expected to improve canopy equity, embed trees as core urban infrastructure, and strengthen community participation and shared stewardship.

8. Implications

8.1 Relevant risks

Approving the Strategy carries low strategic risk, primarily relating to delivery capacity over time and managing public expectations. Not approving the Strategy carries higher strategic, environmental and reputational risk through loss of policy direction and weakened defensibility of decisions.

[3] Agenda for Services, Climate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday, 11th March, 2026, 5.30 pm - Cambridge Council

Financial Implications

8.2 There are no direct financial implications arising from adoption of the Strategy. Adoption does not commit the Council to additional expenditure. Delivery will be prioritised within existing approved budgets, with any future initiatives or aspirational elements subject to separate business case development and approval through the Council's normal budget-setting and governance processes.

Legal Implications

8.3 No new legal duties arise. The Strategy provides a clearer framework to support lawful and defensible decision-making.

Equalities and socio-economic Implications

8.4 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been prepared for v2 of the UFS and attached as an appendix to this report (**Appendix 1**).

The EqIA prepared for v2 has been reviewed for ongoing relevance and remains applicable to v5, as the strategic aims and equity principles have not changed.

The UFS explicitly addresses issues of equitable access to tree canopy cover across the city. Analysis has highlighted inequalities in canopy distribution that correlate with social and economic deprivation. The UFS responds to this evidence by embedding equity considerations into future planting and management priorities.

Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental implications

8.5 Trees and woodlands are a vital part of climate mitigation and adaptation. The UFS sets out a proactive approach to maintaining and expanding canopy cover, contributing to:

- Carbon storage and sequestration, supporting the Council's net zero targets.
- Urban cooling and shade, reducing the impacts of extreme heat.
- Stormwater management, helping reduce local flood risk.

- Biodiversity enhancement and habitat connectivity.

The UFS complements and aligns with the Council's Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategies.

A climate change rating has been completed for v2 of the UFS and it attached at **Appendix 5.** The Climate Change Rating completed for v2 remains applicable to v5, as the Strategy's direction and climate outcomes are unchanged**.**

Procurement Implications

8.6 There are no direct procurement implications arising from this decision. Any future procurement for planting, maintenance or surveys arising from delivery of the UFS will follow existing Council frameworks and procurement processes.

Community Safety Implications

8.7 There are no direct community safety implications arising from this decision. The UFS supports public safety in relation to the Council's tree asset through continued proactive inspection, risk-based management and maintenance, and provides a consistent framework to guide tree-related decision-making across multiple Council services.

8.8 **Checklist - Impact of the decision:**

Financial: Adoption of the UFS does not commit the Council to additional expenditure. Delivery will be prioritised within existing approved budgets. Future elements may be accelerated through collaboration and external funding opportunities, building on the Council's track record of securing over £1 million since 2019. Actions without identified funding are included as aspirational and will only be progressed where resources become available and subject to the Council's normal budget approval processes.

Legal: No new legal duties are created. The UFS supports compliance with existing duties such as tree preservation and planning requirements.

Corporate Priorities: The UFS contributes to all four Corporate Plan priorities: responding to the climate and biodiversity emergencies, tackling poverty and inequality, supporting sustainable housing and neighbourhoods, and modernising council services.

Climate Change, Biodiversity & Sustainability: The UFS has a positive impact. It will help increase canopy cover, capture carbon, provide shade and cooling, deliver biodiversity net gain, and reduce stormwater flooding.

Crime and Disorder / Community Safety: The UFS indirectly supports safety through proactive tree inspection and maintenance.

Discrimination and Equality: The UFS explicitly addresses equity and will identify areas with low canopy cover and higher social need, ensuring fairer distribution of the benefits of trees.

Human Resources: The UFS does not create new posts, though it reinforces the Urban Forest Manager role and may guide future staff and team development.

ICT: Existing systems such as GIS and online mapping will support delivery and monitoring.

Property: Trees on council land are an asset class but there are no new property implications.

Procurement: Future procurement for services, planting or maintenance will follow standard council processes or our Framework Agreement[4].

Customer Services: The UFS will provide a clearer framework for responding to public enquiries, complaints and FOIs.

Communications, Consultation & Engagement: A two-stage consultation process has been undertaken, comprising internal consultation followed by public consultation

[4] Our tree-work partners - Cambridge City Council (last accessed 26/08/25)

alongside the Biodiversity Strategy review. Both stages indicated overall support for the direction and aims of the UFS, with feedback used to refine clarity and presentation.

Council's values and Target Operating Model: The UFS supports cross-service working, measurable performance through KPIs, fairness through tree equity, sustainability through canopy expansion, protection and resilience, and improved customer focus.

9. Background documents

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

N/A

10. Appendices

Appendix 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for Urban Forest Strategy (v2)
Appendix 2 UFS Version control details
Appendix 3 UFS v5
Appendix 4 Topic Papers 1-12 v5
Appendix 5 Climate Change Rating Tool for UFS (v2)
Appendix 6 Summary of UFS Delivery Framework

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Matthew Magrath, Urban Forest Manager, 01223458526, matthew.magrath@cambridge.gov.uk

Cambridge City Council Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

This tool helps the Council ensure that we fulfil legal obligations of the Public Sector Equality Duty to have due regard to the need to –

(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;

(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Guidance on how to complete this tool can be found on the Cambridge City Council intranet. For specific questions on the tool please contact the Community Equity Team at equalities@cambridge.gov.uk.

Also, once you have drafted the EqIA please send this to equalities@cambridge.gov.uk for checking.

1. Title of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service
Urban Forest Strategy 2026–2036 v1 - draft

2. Webpage link to full details of the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service (if available)
To be added to the Council's website once final approval has been given March 2026

3. What is the objective or purpose of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?
The Strategy sets out Cambridge City Council's long-term approach to protecting, expanding and managing the City's tree canopy. Its aim is to secure the health, resilience and equitable distribution of the urban forest so that all communities benefit from cleaner air, reduced heat stress, enhanced biodiversity, climate resilience and improved wellbeing. It provides a clear framework of principles, aims, policies and actions, ensuring that trees are embedded in planning, infrastructure, climate and health decision-making. It is an extension, revision and continuation of the Citywide Tree Strategy that expires in 2026 **UFS vision** To protect, expand and manage Cambridge's tree canopy, guided by principles of equity, need and environmental value, ensuring that the benefits of urban trees are accessible

across all communities and that the canopy we leave for future generations is healthier and more resilient than what we have inherited.

UFS principles

Five principles serve as the foundation of the Strategy, guiding the approaches taken to a deliver healthier, fairer and more resilient urban forest.

1. Awareness and Action:

A clear-eyed recognition of the challenges we face and a bold plan to address them. Understanding the problems of the past and those we still face, the resulting impact on ecosystem services and taking clear, innovative steps to redress the balance between the built and natural environments.

2. Climate Resilience:

Leveraging urban trees to cool neighbourhoods, capture carbon and reduce flood risk. Protecting and enhancing canopy cover to minimise the occurrence and impact of extreme weather events to minimise damage to the environment, well-being and the economy.

3. Intergenerational Equity:

Protecting and planting today with tomorrow in mind, building a green legacy for the future. Recognising the importance of trees, the time it takes for them to grow and the need for us to act now to benefits our future generations.

4. Public Engagement:

Encouraging community participation, education and shared stewardship of our urban forest. Educating the wider community on the benefits of trees but also how and where they could make their own contribution so taking responsibility in self-protecting the urban forest at a neighbourhood level.

5. Environmental Justice:

Ensuring that every resident, especially those in the most heat vulnerable areas, has access to shade, clean air and nature. With an uneven distribution of trees throughout Cambridge the proactive preservation of existing trees and new planting needs to be prioritised in areas with lower canopy cover.

UFS Aims

1. Increase canopy cover

To protect where appropriate and expand tree canopy across Cambridge, particularly in areas of low provision, enhancing climate resilience, reducing urban heat and contributing to long-term environmental improvement.

In line with the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan, the Strategy sets an aspirational target of achieving at least 20% by 2050 canopy cover across Cambridge, to be pursued through protection, public planting, private engagement and integrated policy.

Supporting Climate Resilience, Intergenerational Equity and Environmental Justice principles.

2. Improve the condition and longevity of existing trees

To proactively protect, manage and care for trees throughout their lives, recognising the long-term benefits of a healthy, mature tree population.

Supporting Awareness and Action, Intergenerational Equity principles.

3. Ensure equitable access to the benefits of the urban forest

To address disparities in canopy cover and environmental conditions by focusing efforts on communities that are underserved or most vulnerable to climate-related impacts.

Supporting Environmental Justice, Public Engagement principles.

4. Embed trees and canopy into policy and decision-making

To ensure trees are considered at all levels of planning and design, from infrastructure and development to climate and public health policy.

Supporting Awareness and Action, Climate Resilience principles

5. Support biodiversity and habitat connectivity

To increase species diversity and strengthen ecological networks, recognising trees' roles in supporting wider urban biodiversity.

Supporting Climate Resilience, Intergenerational Equity principles.

6. Promote shared stewardship and community participation

To empower individuals, organisation sand communities to take an active role in the care and expansion of the urban forest.

Supporting Public Engagement, Intergenerational Equity principles

7. Build and maintain a strong evidence base

To use high-quality data and research to inform decisions, track progress and respond to emerging threats such as climate change and tree disease.

Supporting Awareness and Action principle

Strengthen the capacity and resourcing needed to deliver the Strategy

8. Build internal capacity, develop strategic partnerships and secure funding to deliver the Strategy

Build internal capacity, develop strategic partnerships and secure funding to ensure the urban forest Strategy can be effectively implemented over the long term.

Supporting Awareness and Action, Intergenerational Equity, Public Engagement principles

4. Responsible Team and Group
Tree Team (City Services, Public Realm).

5. Who will be affected by this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service? **(Please tick all that apply)**	☒ Residents ☒ Visitors ☒ Staff
Please state any specific client group or groups (e.g. City Council tenants, tourists, people who work in the city but do not live here): All people who live in, work in and visit the city, including: City Council tenants (housing estates and communal areas) Community groups involved in planting/ urban forestry projects Developers and landowners affected by new policy guidance Vulnerable residents in areas of low canopy cover and high climate risk (heat, air quality, flooding).	

6. What type of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service is this?	☒ New ☐ Major change ☐ Minor change

7. Are other departments or partners involved in delivering this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service? (Please tick)	☒ Yes ☐ No
If 'Yes' please provide details below: Subject to approval to go to consultation at Cabinet in September the strategy will proceed to internal consultation to ensure feasibility. Consultees will include: Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service Cambridgeshire County Council (Highways) Greater Cambridge Partnership	

It will then proceed to public consultation in December/January.

8. What research methods/ evidence have you used in order to identify equality impacts of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?

- Canopy cover datasets (2008 & 2018) and ward-level analysis
- i-Tree Eco survey (2020–21) of ecosystem services
- Tree Equity mapping
- Tree audit data from Ezytreev (Council-managed trees)
- DiversiTree veteran willow survey (2025)
- Shadeways analysis (2023)
- Free Trees for Babies participation data
- National and local demographic data identifying vulnerable groups most at risk from climate impacts.
    - Tree Equity Score UK Tree Equity Score UK
    - Local studies analysing tree canopy with IMD
        - tree-canopy-cover-in-cambridge-between-2008-and-2018.pdf
    - Govt IMD English indices of deprivation 2019 - GOV.UK

9. Potential impacts

For each category below, please explain if the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service could have a positive/ negative impact or no impact. Where an impact has been identified, please explain what it is. Consider impacts on service users, visitors and staff members separately.

(a) Age - Please also consider any safeguarding issues for children and adults at risk

Positive: Engagement activities are citywide and inclusive and do not discriminate

Children benefit from improved air quality, shaded walking routes to schools, and opportunities to engage in planting/education. Older residents gain health and wellbeing

benefits from access to shaded spaces, reduced heat stress, and opportunities for social connection.

Health matters: air pollution - GOV.UK - children and older people are especially likely to be impacted by poor air quality so improvements are especially beneficial to them

Safeguarding: Planting projects involving schools/community groups will include safeguarding measures in accordance with Council policy.

Negative impacts: We do not advise seating directly beneath trees. While trees provide important general cooling benefits and shade, seating can create maintenance issues such as clearing honeydew, bird droppings, and fruit fall, as well as potential safety risks. For this reason, we recommend that cooling and shading benefits are enjoyed more generally within treed spaces rather than focused on seating provision beneath individual trees

(b) Disability

Positive: Engagement activities are citywide and inclusive and do not discriminate

Accessible green spaces with shade and improved air quality benefit people with physical and mental health conditions. Increasing urban tree canopy helps prevent heat-related illnesses, respiratory and heart diseases, obesity, and mental health disorders by cooling cities, cleaning air, and reducing stress. Planting programmes consider accessible design (e.g. avoiding obstructions to pavements/paths).

Creating shaded places help foster inclusive, age-friendly spaces where people can pause and recover. Shade not only protects humans from heat it also keeps pavement cooler for assistance dogs, making urban areas more accessible and comfortable for everyone.

Air quality and physical health

Trees and vegetation help capture and hold onto airborne particles, which improves local air quality and delivers measurable health benefits for nearby communities.
Forest Research – Improving Physical Health

Mental wellbeing and stress reduction

Access to woods and trees supports health and wellbeing by reducing stress, lifting mood, and strengthening the immune system.
Woodland Trust – Health and Wellbeing

Cooling, air quality, and overall wellbeing

Urban trees provide wide-ranging health benefits: they clean the air, lower asthma levels, reduce stress, and offer shade that helps protect people from heat and sun exposure.
GOV.UK – The Case for Trees

Potential barriers: None identified.

(c) Gender reassignment

Positive: Engagement activities are citywide and inclusive and do not discriminate

(d) Marriage and civil partnership

Positive: Engagement activities are citywide and inclusive and do not discriminate

No negative impacts identified specific to this group.

(e) Pregnancy and maternity

Positive: Engagement activities are citywide and inclusive and do not discriminate

Improved air quality, shade and reduced heat stress benefit pregnant people and those with infants. The “Free Trees for Babies” scheme provides positive symbolic and environmental benefits for new families.

No negative impacts identified.

(f) Race – Note that the protected characteristic ‘race’ refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

Positive: Engagement activities are citywide and inclusive and do not discriminate

No negative impacts identified.

(g) Religion or belief
Positive: Engagement activities are citywide and inclusive and do not discriminate Many faith groups and beliefs value nature for spiritual reasons. No negative impacts identified.

(h) Sex
Positive: Engagement activities are citywide and inclusive and do not discriminate Urban forest benefits are universal. Women are more likely to experience caring responsibilities and can benefit from safer, shaded routes for walking with children. '*In 2022, females on average made 18% more walking trips than males'* Walking and cycling statistics, England: Demographic differences in walking and cycling - GOV.UK No negative impacts identified.

(i) Sexual orientation
Positive: Engagement activities are citywide and inclusive and do not discriminate Community planting and stewardship events provide inclusive opportunities, fostering social cohesion across diverse groups. No negative impacts identified.

(j) Other factors that may lead to inequality – in particular, please consider the impact of any changes on:

- **Low-income groups or those experiencing the impacts of poverty.**
- **People of any age with care experience – this refers to individuals who spent part of their childhood in the care system due to situations beyond their control, primarily arising from abuse and neglect within their families. The term "Care experience" is a description of a definition in law, it includes anyone that had the state as its corporate parent by virtue of a care order in accordance with the Children Act 1989 and amendments.**
- **Groups who have more than one protected characteristic that taken together create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. (Here you are being asked to consider intersectionality, and for more information see: https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/1_l59kt25q).**

Low-income groups: Targeting of planting and protection in deprived wards improves environmental quality, access to green space, and resilience to heat and flood risks. Free schemes (e.g. Free Trees for Babies) ensure benefits are not income dependent.

Care-experienced individuals: The Strategy does not directly disadvantage this group. Community engagement programmes will be inclusive, offering opportunities for involvement regardless of background.

Intersectionality: Strategy recognises that residents in lower-income, ethnically diverse communities may face compounded disadvantages; canopy prioritisation explicitly addresses this. The Strategy targets canopy cover interventions toward areas where multiple disadvantages overlap (low income, ethnically diverse, health vulnerabilities), and by embedding inclusivity into planting, engagement, and policy frameworks.

10. Action plan – New equality impacts will be identified in different stages throughout the planning and implementation stages of changes to your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service. How will you monitor these going forward? Also, how will you ensure that any potential negative impacts of the changes will be mitigated? (Please include dates where possible for when you will update this EqIA accordingly.)

1. Equality impacts will be monitored through delivery of actions and KPI reporting (tree planting by ward, canopy change, engagement participation). We will specifically report on Free Tree for Babies given away and canopy cover correlations with the Index of Multiple Deprivation every 10 years.
2. Consultation feedback will be analysed for equality impacts, with adjustments made where barriers are identified.
3. Engagement materials will be reviewed for accessibility (plain English, translations where needed, digital and non-digital formats).

4. Draft strategy to Sept Cabinet for approval to go to consultation
5. Internal consultation October to December 2025
6. Public consultation (with the Biodiversity mid-period review) December to January 2026
7. March 2026 Cabinet for final approval
8. EqIA will be reviewed post public consultation (2026) and before final approval in March 2026.

11. Do you have any additional comments?

The Strategy actively supports environmental justice, ensuring equitable access to shade, clean air and green infrastructure across Cambridge. It seeks to reduce health inequalities linked to climate impacts and promote inclusive participation in stewardship of the City's trees.

12. Sign off

Name and job title of lead officer for this equality impact assessment: Matthew Magrath, Urban Forest Manager

Names and job titles of other assessment team members and people consulted: Cllr Smart – Executive Councillor; James Elms – Director; Alistair Wilson – Project sponsor; Kenny McGregor, Jake Camilleri, Natalie Lambert - delivery; Helen Crowther – Equity & Community Power Manager & Graham Lewis Community Equity Officer

Date of EqIA sign off: 10/09/25

Date of next review of the equalities impact assessment: March 2026

Date to be published on Cambridge City Council website: Click here to enter text.

All EqIAs need to be sent to the Community Equity Team at equalities@cambridge.gov.uk

Drafted by Matthew Magrath 04/09/25 v1

Modified following Equalities review and feedback 09/09/25 v1.1

Equalities review 09/09/25 v1.2; Equalities final review 09/09/25 v1.3

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Appendix 2 UFS Version control details

UFS version control details

v2 (September 2025)

Cabinet draft approved to proceed to consultation, including approval of the consultation plan and selected Topic Papers.

v3 (November-December 2025)

Internal consultation draft, issued with the full suite of Topic Papers, and used to test deliverability and cross-service alignment.

v4 (January -February 2026)

Public consultation draft, issued as the full suite including all Topic Papers.

v4.1 (January 2026)

Revised and shortened main Strategy following Leadership Team feedback, with Topic Paper 4 (Subsidence) revised following independent legal guidance and retained as operational guidance.

v4.2 (March 2026)

Public consultation feedback informed minor clarifications and signposting changes,

with no material change to policy direction**.**

v5 (March 2026)

Made minor revisions to UFS & Topic Paper wording, structure, spelling, and grammar post Scrutiny Committee

v6 (March 2026)

Post Cabinet - final designed version

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DRAFT CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL'S URBAN FOREST STRATEGY 2026 - 2036

Version 5



Figure 1

This is a draft document issued for Cabinet. Document design will change prior to final publication. Images are indicative only and will be appropriately credited or replaced in the final version.

'The tree in the front garden of my home is a word
The trees on my street are a sentence
The trees in my neighbourhood are a paragraph
And all the trees in the community are a story.
That story tells us about our relationship to nature, past and present.
The future of this story lies in the hands of all residents…..'

Greg McPherson, USDA Forest Service[i]

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nature is of paramount importance to all of us. We need it for our very existence, and we coexist with it and within it as a constituent part. Our physical and mental well-being, our economic stability and climate regulation rely upon it. In supporting nature, the Urban Forest Strategy, Biodiversity Strategy, and Climate Change Strategy all share common evidence bases and goals, and they have been developed in parallel to create a coherent policy framework.

This strategy affirms Cambridge City Council's (The Council's) promise to restore, protect and grow its urban forest in line with principles of equity, need and environmental value. Ensuring that the trees we plant and protect create a future urban forest that is healthier, more resilient and evidence of what we can achieve together. As the Urban Forest Strategy, Biodiversity Strategy, and Climate Change Strategy share common evidence bases and goals, they have been developed in parallel to create a coherent policy framework.[1]

Innovation and economic advances come with the desire for urban expansion. With an increase in the concentration of people, buildings and activity comes an increased pressure on the natural environment and our cultural heritage. A changing climate and the rising threat of pests and diseases also present significant challenges to the health, resilience and biodiversity of Cambridge's natural resources. This strategy aims to face up to those challenges head on and provide workable solutions.

Protecting, enhancing and expanding natural areas and habitat for flora and fauna in cities is essential for strengthening our resilience to acute events and persistent stresses, many of which will be exacerbated by climate change and urbanisation. The Urban Forest Strategy is required to enable the protection and enhancement of Cambridge's urban forest to the benefit of its residents and visitors through approved, strategic, policy-based management.

Management also has its challenges and limitations. Understanding and accepting these challenges and limitations reinforces the need for a coordinated and proactive approach to management and the need for continued investment. The strategy sets out The Council's vision and establishes the principles, aims, policies and actions necessary, across services, to deliver successful outcomes.

[1] The evidence base for the canopy cover metric and the 20% by 2050 ambition is set out in **Topic Paper 12 - Growing Cambridge's Tree Canopy**.

VERSION CONTROL

Table 1 Version details

Version	Date	Purpose	Authorised by	Changes/ notes	Authorisation
1.1	Sept 25	Draft for informal Cabinet	Alistair Wilson, Assistant Director, City Services (on behalf of James Elms, Director of City Services)	Not fully WCAG compliant All pictures are indicative at this stage	8/9/25
2	Sept 25	Cabinet final draft for consultation approval	Cabinet	Added version control table. Included status of the strategy section. Introduced new policy **M5** Updated glossary. Renamed Topic Paper 2 Corrected minor spelling and grammar issues. Added policy alignment references in the Principles section. Added Topic Paper 12. Included history of the urban forestry. Population figure updates. Made minor revisions to aims. Reformatted document	25/9/25
3	Oct 25	Internal consultation draft	James Elms, Director of City Services	Made minor revisions to Topic Paper descriptions, spelling, and grammar. Reformatted document	December 2025
4	Dec 25	Public consultation draft			
4.1	Feb 26	Following Corporate comments		LT feedback logged: shorten UFS; align structure with CCS/BS; strengthen visuals; clarify canopy target/timescales; reinforce One Council framing; reduce jargon. Topic paper 4 reviewed and revised by external barrister	
4.2	Feb 26	Scrutiny Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Public consultation feedback informed minor clarifications and signposting changes, with no material change to policy direction.	11 March 2026
5	Feb 25	Cabinet final draft for approval		Made minor revisions to UFS & Topic Paper wording, structure, spelling, and grammar.	
6	Mar 25	Final approved draft			

Document preparation

This Urban Forest Strategy has been prepared by The Council, led by the Urban Forest Manager, with specialist technical input and support from Urban Forest Consultancy[ii].

Responsibility for the content, policy direction and final decisions rests with The Council.

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FOREWORD

In 2019, a plaque[iii] was placed on a barren mountainside in Iceland to mark the first glacier lost to climate change. It read: '*We know what is happening and what needs to be done. Only you know if we did it.*' This statement resonates deeply in cities across the world as we confront our own environmental tipping points, not on remote icecaps, but on our doorsteps: in rising temperatures, degraded air quality and increasingly unequal access to green space.

This Urban Forest Strategy is The Council's acknowledgement: we understand what is happening. And we are acting.

Trees in urban environments are not just landscape features. They are critical infrastructure. They help regulate our climate, support biodiversity and improve public health. They also provide a sense of place and belonging. In a warming, densifying world, they offer hope and resilience. But they must be nurtured, expanded and protected with the same urgency that the climate crisis demands.

This strategy sets out our commitment to grow and care for a resilient, diverse and equitable urban forest over the next decade. It recognises that trees are long-term investments, planted today for the benefit of future generations. They are living testaments to our intent: to mitigate climate impacts, adapt to new challenges and create a more just, liveable City.

Our approach is guided by five principles:

1. **Awareness and Action**
2. **Climate Resilience**
3. **Intergenerational Equity**
4. **Public Engagement**
5. **Environmental Justice**



Figure 2

Just as the Okjökull plaque mourned a loss and challenged the future, this strategy is a living promise: to restore, to protect and to grow. Let the trees we plant today stand as future witnesses, not to what we failed to do, but to what we achieved together.

VISION

To protect, expand and manage Cambridge's tree canopy, guided by principles of equity, need and environmental value, ensuring that the benefits of urban trees are accessible across all communities and that the canopy we leave for future generations is healthier and more resilient than what we have inherited.



Figure 3 – picture source?

INTRODUCTION

Occupying cultural significance throughout history and one of longest living organisms on Earth, trees are central to mythology, folklore and religion. Symbolising life, growth and continuity they have served societies in many ways from the practical to the more profound. The significance of trees in the history and survival of humanity is represented in art, literature and spiritual practices, often reflecting deep philosophical concepts.



Figure 4 – picture source?

While our relationship with trees has many dimensions and has altered through history, they also deliver well-evidenced environmental, health and social benefits. They remain vital to the health, character and liveability of Cambridge and its communities.

The necessary seizing of opportunities for innovation and economic advances comes with the need for urban expansion. With a population estimated to rise to approximately 154, 500 in 2026, 161,000 in 2031, 165,500 in 2035, and 171,500 in 2041comes an increased threat to the natural environment and our cultural heritage.

Alongside population growth and urban development, a changing climate and the rising threat of pests and diseases present significant challenges to the health, resilience and biodiversity of Cambridge's natural environment.

Building on past achievements[2], this Urban Forest Strategy has been developed to set out the long-term direction for the management of Cambridge's green infrastructure to the benefit of our existing and future environment and communities and for the protection of our arboricultural heritage to 2036.

WHY DO WE NEED A STRATEGY

What is the urban forest?

The urban forest is comprised of all the trees, woody shrubs, hedges, herbaceous plants, waterways, wildlife, grasses and other green infrastructure within the built environment.

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[2] Recent achievements and learning from the 2016–2026 Tree Strategy are summarised in **Topic Paper 8 - Achievements**.

Urban forestry differs from arboriculture. Arboriculture focuses on the management of individual trees, whereas urban forestry considers the cumulative benefits, risks and resilience of the entire tree and green infrastructure system across a town or city, regardless of ownership.

A short history of urban forestry

The idea of managing the whole urban forest (not just publicly owned trees) emerged in North America in the 1960s, grew through the 1990s-2000s with better inventories and research, and now focuses on canopy cover as a metric for climate, health and fairness.

Cambridge began using canopy mapping in 2013, using 2008 data as the baseline. The city set a canopy target in 2016 and expanded community programmes through the Cambridge Canopy Project.

Cities putting urban forestry into practice:

- Melbourne - Urban Forest Strategy
- Toronto - Strategic Forest Management Plan
- London - London Urban Forest Partnership
- Sydney - Greening Sydney Strategy
- Barcelona - Master Plan For Barcelona's Trees

Protecting and enhancing natural areas and habitat for flora and fauna in cities is essential for strengthening our resilience to acute events and persistent stresses, many of which will be exacerbated by climate change and urbanisation.

The urban forest plays a significant role in making Cambridge a place where we can all thrive. However, as with many cities, Cambridge's urban forest is under pressure. The projected denser urban form is increasingly crowding out opportunities for sustainable canopy cover, while a changing climate and higher urban temperatures put physical stress on the forest. Urban expansion beyond its current footprint threatens existing vegetation and natural values that will need protection and replacing.

Acute events like floods, heatwaves, droughts and extreme weather occurrences can all be mitigated by a resilient urban forest, along with the stresses associated with climate change, vulnerable communities, high rates of chronic illness, low rates of community interaction, increased pressure on healthcare, social inequality and pressure from development on ecosystem services.

The Urban Forest Strategy replaces the 2016 - 2026 Tree Strategy and provides a policy framework for the protection and enhancement of Cambridge's urban forest to the benefit of its residents and visitors through strategic, evidence-led and policy-based management.

How to use the Strategy

The Urban Forest Strategy (UFS) sets out a programme of interrelated principles, aims and actions, supported by topic papers, that will work together to bring Cambridge closer to its Vision. The vison is supported by a clear framework of Principles, Aims, Policies and Actions that guide how The Council and its partners can protect, enhance and engage with the urban forest.

These are delivered through a series of thematic approaches and practical actions each supported by robust evidence and detailed topic papers. Together, they provide a clear framework for delivering a healthier, fairer and more resilient urban forest.

The core elements of the Strategy and their relationship to one another are illustrated in Figure 5.

Using Topic Papers in practice

Topic Papers should be used as the primary source of operational detail and technical guidance for implementing the Strategy's Policies and Actions. They support consistent, evidence-led decision-making across The Council's services and with partners. Topic Papers do not create additional statutory or planning policy requirements and should be applied in a way that is consistent with the adopted Vision, Principles, Aims, Policies and Actions.

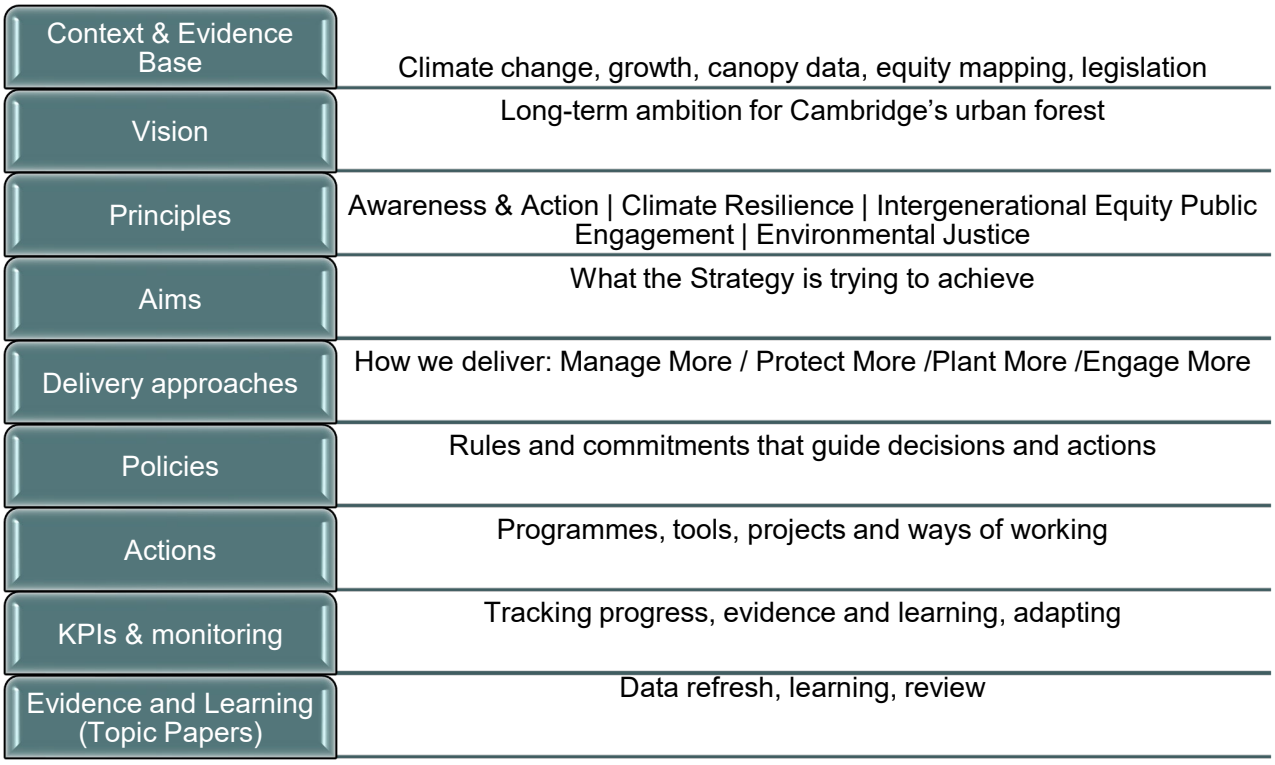


Figure 5 Relationship between the key components of the Urban Forest Strategy

Policy and legal context[3]

The strategy has been developed alongside and with consideration of local ambition, national and local planning policies, best practice and other key environmental strategies including:

- National Planning Policy Framework[iv]
- Planning Practice Guidance[v]
- Cambridge Local Plan[vi] and the Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan[vii]
- Biodiversity[viii], Climate Change[ix], Open Spaces[x], Community Wealth Building[xi], County Trees and Woodland Strategies[xii], Air Quality Action Plan[xiii] and The Council's Environment Statement[xiv].
- *'Baseline UTCC[xv] data enables monitoring of changes over time.'* TDAG, First Steps in Urban Tree Canopy Cover[xvi]

The Strategy also reflects statutory duties introduced by the **Environment Act 2021**[xvii], including the requirement to have regard to Environmental Improvement Plans and Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

Who Should Use This Strategy

The UFS is designed to guide everyone with a role or interest in the care, protection and expansion of Cambridge's trees. It is intended for:

The Council's services including Operations, Housing, Property Services, Biodiversity and Climate teams, to ensure consistent and coordinated delivery.
Key land managers including statutory agencies, developers, utility companies and the University of Cambridge and its Colleges, who hold significant areas of land and therefore play a major role in shaping the city's treescape.
Partner organisations and services such as the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service, Cambridgeshire County Council and the Greater Cambridge Partnership, where joint working is essential to align planning, transport, green, blue and grey infrastructure delivery.
Community groups and residents including schools, voluntary organisations and individuals, to help shape local projects and support shared stewardship of the urban forest.
Contractors and professionals including arboricultural consultants, landscape architects, planners, property developers and contractors, to align operational practice with The Council's standards and priorities.
Councillors and decision-makers to provide a clear framework for policy, resourcing and governance decisions.

[3] The statutory framework for tree protection, planning control and enforcement is set out in **Topic Paper 9 - Statutory Responsibilities and Planning Control**.

Delivery of the Urban Forest Strategy is led by The Council through coordinated action across services, with specialist arboricultural input provided by the Tree Team within City Services.

Status of the Strategy[4]

This Urban Forest Strategy forms The Council's adopted policy framework for the protection, management and expansion of Cambridge's trees. The Vision, Principles, Aims, Policies and Actions set out in this Strategy together form The Council's adopted policy position on the urban forest.

Together, these elements form a single, coherent policy statement. Where an aim or action does not yet have a corresponding detailed policy, it should still be understood as part of the adopted position, to be interpreted in line with the overarching vision and principles of the strategy.

Status of Topic Papers

Topic Papers provide supporting evidence and technical guidance and set out The Council's operational approach to delivery. They do not introduce new statutory or planning policy requirements and may be updated over time, provided they remain consistent with the adopted Vision, Principles, Aims and Policies.

The core strategy concisely sets out the vision and overarching principles, provides an overview of key issues, challenges and objectives and establishes the, aims, policies and actions necessary to deliver success. Throughout the document links are provided to maps, research papers, data sets and topic papers that provide supporting evidence and allow the reader to delve deeper into areas of particular relevance or interest. It ensures that the value of Cambridge's urban forest is recognised, protected and enhanced through the decisions and actions of all who influence it. While designed to be read electronically, a downloadable version is available with many linked documents appended.

[4] The statutory framework for tree protection, planning control and enforcement is set out in **Topic Paper 9 - Statutory Responsibilities and Planning Control**.

PRINCIPLES

Five principles serve as the foundation of the Urban Forest Strategy (UFS), guiding the approaches taken to a deliver healthier, fairer and more resilient urban forest.

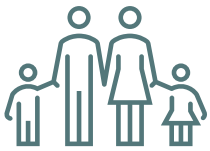
Each principle is driven by local ambition, national policy and best practice guidance, cited in the previous section, demonstrating how Cambridge's local approach to managing and expanding its urban forest both fulfils legal and policy obligations and aligns with national and international good practice.



Awareness and Action: A clear-eyed recognition of the challenges we face and a bold plan to address them. Understanding the problems of the past and those we still face, the resulting impact on ecosystem services and taking clear, innovative steps to redress the balance between the built and natural environments.

Climate Resilience: Leveraging urban trees to cool neighbourhoods, capture carbon and reduce flood risk. Protecting and enhancing canopy cover to minimise the occurrence and impact of extreme weather events to minimise damage to the environment, well-being and the economy.





***Intergenerational Equity*:** Protecting and planting today with tomorrow in mind, building a green legacy for the future. Recognising the importance of trees, the time it takes for them to grow and the need for us to act now to benefits our future generations

Public Engagement Encouraging community participation, education and shared stewardship of our urban forest. Educating the wider community on the benefits of trees but also how and where they could make their own contribution so taking responsibility in self-protecting the urban forest at a neighbourhood level.





***Environmental Justice*:** Ensuring that every resident, especially those in the most heat vulnerable areas, has access to shade, clean air and nature. With an uneven distribution of trees throughout Cambridge the proactive preservation of existing trees and new planting needs to be prioritised in areas with lower canopy cover.

Figure 6 Urban Forest Strategy's 5 Principles

BENEFITS, CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

The urban forest is amongst the most valuable components of Cambridge's green infrastructure and delivers a range of ecosystem services that contribute to the health, mental well-being, social and economic vitality of the city and its communities. But management to maximise these benefits has its challenges and limitations.

Benefits

Climate Regulation[5]

Trees can contribute to climate change mitigation by storing carbon and reducing the urban heat island effect. Shade from tree canopies can cool buildings and pavements, which may reduce energy demand in hot weather. In Cambridge, shading from large trees in streets and parks can lower surface temperatures, easing heat stress in the city and mitigating the Urban Heat Island Effect.

Air Quality and Pollution Mitigation

Trees can help improve air quality by filtering airborne pollutants including nitrogen dioxide, ozone and fine particulate matter (PM2.5). These benefits are particularly important near busy roads, schools and hospitals.

Stormwater Attenuation

Trees can play an important role in reducing surface water runoff and contribute to flood risk mitigation. Their canopies intercept rainfall, slowing the rate at which it reaches the ground. Tree roots improve soil infiltration, reducing the volume and speed of water entering drainage systems. In doing so, urban trees help to reduce the likelihood and severity of localised flooding, improve water quality and reduce pressure on Cambridge's surface water infrastructure. As the city adapts to more intense rainfall due to climate change, trees are expected to become an increasingly valuable part of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).

Biodiversity and Habitat[6]

The urban forest is a vital component of the city's ecological network. Trees support a wide range of wildlife by providing essential habitats for birds, bats, invertebrates, lichens and fungi. They offer opportunities for nesting, roosting, feeding and shelter across different stages of growth.

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[5]The role of the urban forest in climate mitigation and adaptation is explored in **Topic Paper 7 - Climate Change and Resilience**.

[6] The role of trees in supporting biodiversity and habitat connectivity is explored in **Topic Paper 3 - Biodiversity and Habitat Connectivity**.

Veteran trees and urban woodlands are especially valuable, acting as long-established reservoirs of biodiversity and supporting species that depend on older or decaying wood. Even individual street trees contribute by linking fragmented habitats and creating stepping stones for wildlife across the urban landscape, contributing to the wider Cambridge Nature Network.
Beyond direct habitat provision, trees support broader ecosystem health by helping to regulate temperature, improve air and water quality and buffer sensitive habitats from pollution and disturbance.

Health and Wellbeing

Access to trees and green space is associated with benefits to mental and physical health. Numerous studies link [xviii]higher levels of tree canopy with reduced stress, lower blood pressure, increased physical activity and improved recovery times. The presence of trees is also associated with reduced urban noise and greater perceptions of safety.

These benefits arise through a combination of mechanisms, including microclimate regulation (shade and cooling), stress reduction linked to exposure to natural environments, and the way greener streets and parks encourage walking, social interaction and use of outdoor space.

Placemaking and Community Identity

Trees enhance the visual character of streets and open spaces and provide a pleasant place to stop. They play a key role in shaping neighbourhood identity, supporting cultural heritage and fostering pride in place.

Economic Vitality

Healthy urban trees can boost retail and property values, reduce energy costs and support tourism and local businesses by improving the overall experience of place.

Equity and Inclusion

Urban canopy is not distributed equally. The UFS seeks to ensure that the benefits of trees are accessible to all communities, particularly those most vulnerable to climate impacts, through a more targeted and equitable approach to tree planting and protection.

Challenges

Like many other cities Cambridge is facing some key challenges including, growth and densification, climate change, increased pest and disease, fragmented governance and constrained public finances.

Environmental Challenges[7]

Climate Change

As trees remove climate-warming carbon dioxide from the atmosphere they help us mitigate the effects of climate change, but climate change itself creates challenges to effective tree management. Increased periods of drought and/or waterlogging results in increased difficulty to establish trees along with premature decline. Changes in climate also create opportunities for tree pests and diseases to thrive and for new pests and diseases to colonise. Prolonged periods of drought increase the instances of subsidence[8].

Pest and Disease

Pests and diseases can cause significant damage to the urban forest, leading to damaged and failed stock and economic losses. Understanding the types of pests and diseases, their impact on trees, people, pets and ecosystems and how to manage them is crucial for successful urban forestry.

Loss of Suitable Growing Space

Compacted soils, impermeable surfaces and below-ground constraints affect the viability of new planting.

Governance and Resource Constraints[9] [10]

Governance

The system by which any organisation is controlled and operates can impact on the way projects are communicated and managed. The UFS is intended to provide cohesion and strengthen the holistic, urban forest approach to mitigate potential risks of isolated, fragmented management.

Public finances

The difficult economic conditions local governments are experiencing and the necessary reductions in public spending also influence the way our arboricultural projects are funded and

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[7] The role of the urban forest in climate mitigation and adaptation is explored in **Topic Paper 7 - Climate Change and Resilience**.
[8] The Council's evidential standards and mitigation hierarchy for tree-related subsidence and structural damage are set out in **Topic Paper 4 - Subsidence and Structural Damage**.

[9] For detail on tree asset management, inspection regimes and risk-based decision-making, see **Topic Paper 1 - Tree Asset Management and Risk**.
[10] Governance arrangements and resourcing models for delivering the Urban Forest Strategy are detailed in **Topic Paper 6 - Governance and Resourcing**.

managed. With reduced financial and human resources, external funding and project management is essential to successful project delivery.

Planning and development pressures

Densification

The increase in the concentration of people, buildings, or activities within the city can impact on a resilient and geographically balanced urban canopy.

Conflicts with Utilities and Infrastructure

For example, dropped kerbs, cables, CCTV, services and lighting can limit planting opportunities or damage existing trees.

Transport Infrastructure and Road Redesign

Efforts to improve transport infrastructure including road widening, junction redesign and the delivery of cycle and bus priority schemes can place significant pressure on existing trees. In some cases mature street trees are lost to accommodate new layouts, visibility splays, or underground utilities. While these schemes support important goals such as active travel and air quality, they can conflict with urban forest objectives if tree retention and canopy value are not fully integrated into design and decision-making.

Social and cultural barriers

Unequal canopy cover persists across Cambridge, leaving some communities more exposed to heat and pollution. Public perceptions and resistance to trees may limit support for necessary changes, such as tree planting in new locations or the introduction of less traditional species. Poor tree work at the private or neighbourhood scale can undermine overall canopy health and consistency.

These challenges are not reasons to delay action. Rather, they highlight the importance of a coordinated, well-evidenced and adaptive approach to urban forest management, one that is resilient, inclusive and responsive to Cambridge's changing social, political and environmental context.

Limitations[11]

While the UFS is rooted in the best available evidence and developed through extensive consultation, it is important to recognise its limitations. Some datasets are incomplete, certain ecosystem services remain difficult to quantify and external factors such as funding, legislation and climate change may alter how or when actions can be delivered.

[11] The Council's approach to tree damage, enforcement and compensation is set out in **Topic Paper 11 - Tree Damage and Compensation**.

The strategy therefore represents a framework for adaptive decision-making, one that will evolve as new knowledge, tools and opportunities emerge. The following limitations highlight the areas where caution, flexibility, or further development may be needed.

Legal

The legal responsibilities to maintain and replace trees imposed on private landowners by law or statute are necessarily limited. While they provide essential tools to aid preservation, in order to ensure maximum public benefits derived from private tree stocks, it is necessary to also engage with the public, raise awareness, educate and incentivise proactive management.

Conflicting priorities

Use of land in Cambridge for housing, business and employment, leisure and recreation purpose can constrain the space available for a resilient urban forest. In addition to protecting space for trees, other blue-green infrastructure must also be accommodated as part of new developments, putting additional pressure on land use. It is essential, therefore, to ensure necessary urban expansion provides for the protection and enhancement of the urban forest and other ecosystem services.

Resources

With reducing local government funding and increasing demand for other services, The Council's capacity to manage the existing tree stock, deliver replacement tree planting and new planting projects is being stretched. It is essential therefore to streamline activities, make use of effective technology and take advantage of external opportunities.

Fragmented responsibilities

With less than 25% of land in Cambridge under the ownership and/or management of The Council, we have limited space on which to directly influence canopy cover. This means that partner organisations and private landowners also need to commit to managing and increasing Cambridge's urban forest. In these contexts, the Council's role is primarily to influence through example, statutory regulation, guidance and partnership. In addition to directly maximising the benefits of our trees and those we manage by agreement, committing to an urban forest approach allows us to achieve our canopy cover goals in collaboration with all those who will benefit, equipping the community to self-protect the urban forest from a corporate to neighbourhood level.

Evidence and Data

While the strategy is underpinned by datasets including canopy cover mapping, tree audits and asset valuations, some areas lack consistent or comprehensive data. Not all environmental and social benefits of trees can be fully or locally quantified. Estimates from tree mapping and asset

valuation tools such as i-Tree or CAVAT may not capture all site specific or community values. This evidence draws on snapshots in time (for example canopy cover in 2008 and 2018), but the urban environment is constantly changing. These changes can affect the relevance or accuracy of some baseline data.

Policy support

Not all tree related decisions are currently governed by clear policies. For example, the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service is proposing to introduce a citywide canopy cover target in local planning policy as part of the draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

While the benefits of trees are well evidenced, their effects vary by species, scale, location and wider environmental conditions. Trees should therefore be understood as contributing to wider outcomes, rather than being the sole cause of them. Recognising the limitations is essential for transparent decision-making. Rather than diminishing the value of the strategy, this awareness reinforces the need for continued investment in data, monitoring and adaptive management

CANOPY MAPS[12] [13]

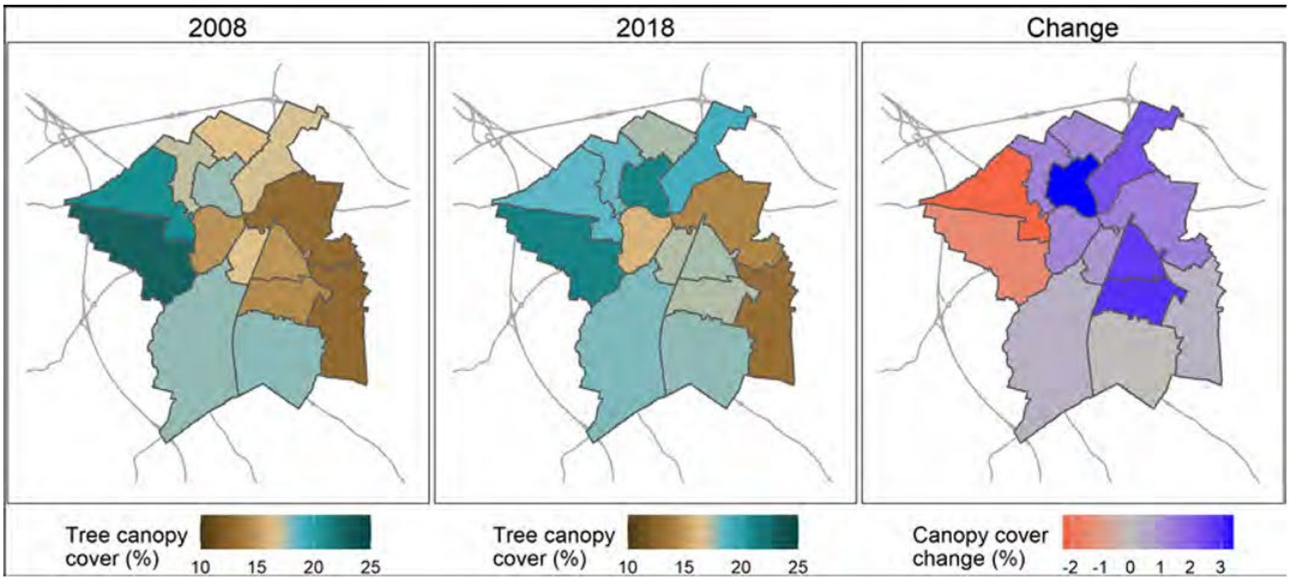


Figure 6 Maps of tree canopy cover (%) at ward level

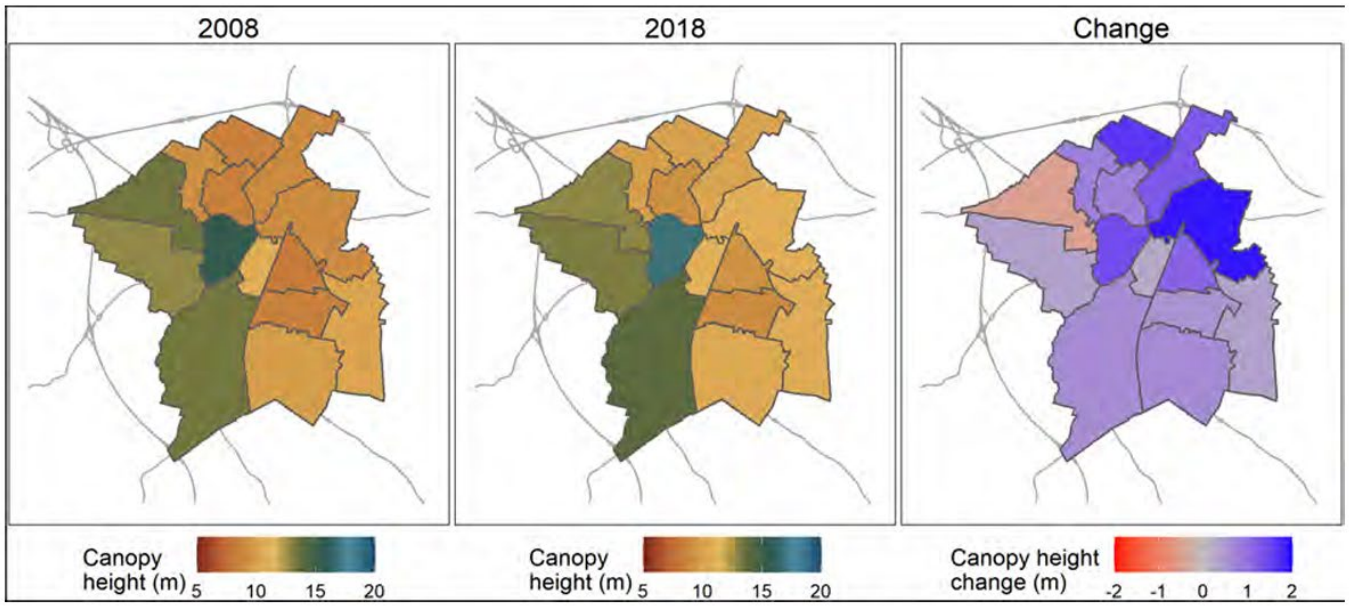


Figure 8 Maps of mean canopy height (m) at ward level

[12] Baseline canopy data and recent trends in canopy change across Cambridge are set out in **Topic Paper 10 - Cambridge's Urban Forest: Baseline and Change**.

[13] The evidence base for the canopy cover metric and the 20% by 2050 ambition is set out in **Topic Paper 12 - Growing Cambridge's Tree Canopy**.

AIMS

To achieve the strategy's vision of a healthy, resilient and inclusive urban forest, we have identified a set of overarching aims. These aims are grounded in the five core principles that guide our approach; *Awareness and Action; Climate Resilience; Intergenerational Equity; Public Engagement; Environmental Justice*

Each aim reflects one or more of these principles and provides a foundation for the delivery approaches and actions that follow:

Aim 1: Increase canopy cover[14]

To protect where appropriate and expand tree canopy across Cambridge, particularly in areas of low provision, enhancing climate resilience, reducing urban heat and contributing to long-term environmental improvement[15].

The strategy sets an aspirational target of achieving at least 20% by 2050 canopy cover across Cambridge, to be pursued through protection, public planting, private engagement and integrated policy. This target is in line with best practice[xix]. Cambridge tree canopy increased by 0.5% (20 hectares in total, 2 hectares per year) in the ten years from 2008-2018. We are setting a realistic but stretching aspirational target of increasing the canopy cover by 2.4% by 2050 (98 hectares in total, 4 hectares per year).[16]

Supporting principles



Aim 2: Improve the condition and longevity of existing trees

To proactively protect, manage and care for trees throughout their lives, recognising the long-term benefits of a healthy, mature tree population.

Supporting principles



[14] Baseline canopy data and recent trends in canopy change across Cambridge are set out in **Topic Paper 10 - Cambridge's Urban Forest: Baseline and Change**.

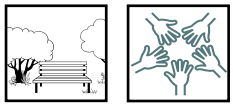
[15] The role of the urban forest in climate mitigation and adaptation is explored in **Topic Paper 7 - Climate Change and Resilience**.

[16] The evidence base for the canopy cover metric and the 20% by 2050 ambition is set out in **Topic Paper 12 - Growing Cambridge's Tree Canopy**.

Aim 3: Ensure equitable access to the benefits of the urban forest

To address disparities in canopy cover and environmental conditions by focusing efforts on communities that are underserved or most vulnerable to climate-related impacts.

Supporting principles



Aim 4: Embed trees and canopy into policy and decision-making

To ensure trees are considered at all levels of planning and design, from infrastructure and development to climate and public health policy.

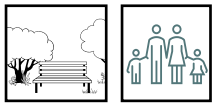
Supporting principles



Aim 5: Support biodiversity and habitat connectivity[17]

To increase species diversity and strengthen ecological networks, recognising trees' roles in supporting wider urban biodiversity.

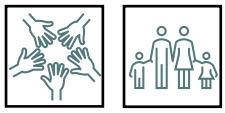
Supporting principles



Aim 6: Promote shared stewardship and community participation[18]

To empower individuals, organisations and communities to take an active role in the care and expansion of the urban forest.

Supporting principles



Aim 7: Build and maintain a strong evidence base

To use high-quality data and research to inform decisions, track progress and respond to emerging threats such as climate change and tree disease.

Supporting principle



[17] The role of trees in supporting biodiversity and habitat connectivity is explored in **Topic Paper 3 - Biodiversity and Habitat Connectivity**.

[18] The Council's approach to public engagement and partnership working is set out in **Topic Paper 5 - Public Engagement and Partnerships**.

Aim 8: Strengthen the capacity and resourcing needed to deliver the strategy[19]

Build internal capacity through improved efficiency, skills development, ways of working alongside the development of strategic partnerships and securing funding to ensure the urban forest strategy can be effectively implemented over the long term. This approach does not assume additional core staffing but focuses on maximising the impact of existing resources and levering in partner and grant-funded capacity where possible.

Supporting principles



These aims shape the strategy's delivery framework and will be implemented through four interlinked delivery approaches: Manage More, Protect More, Plant More and Engage More.

[19] Governance arrangements and resourcing models for delivering the Urban Forest Strategy are detailed in **Topic Paper 6 - Governance and Resourcing**.

DELIVERY

Delivery Approaches

To achieve the aims set out in this strategy, The Council and its partner services will apply four interconnected delivery approaches, set out below. These approaches guide how we prioritise work, allocate resources and partner with others. They provide a flexible but structured framework for delivering a healthy, inclusive and resilient urban forest.

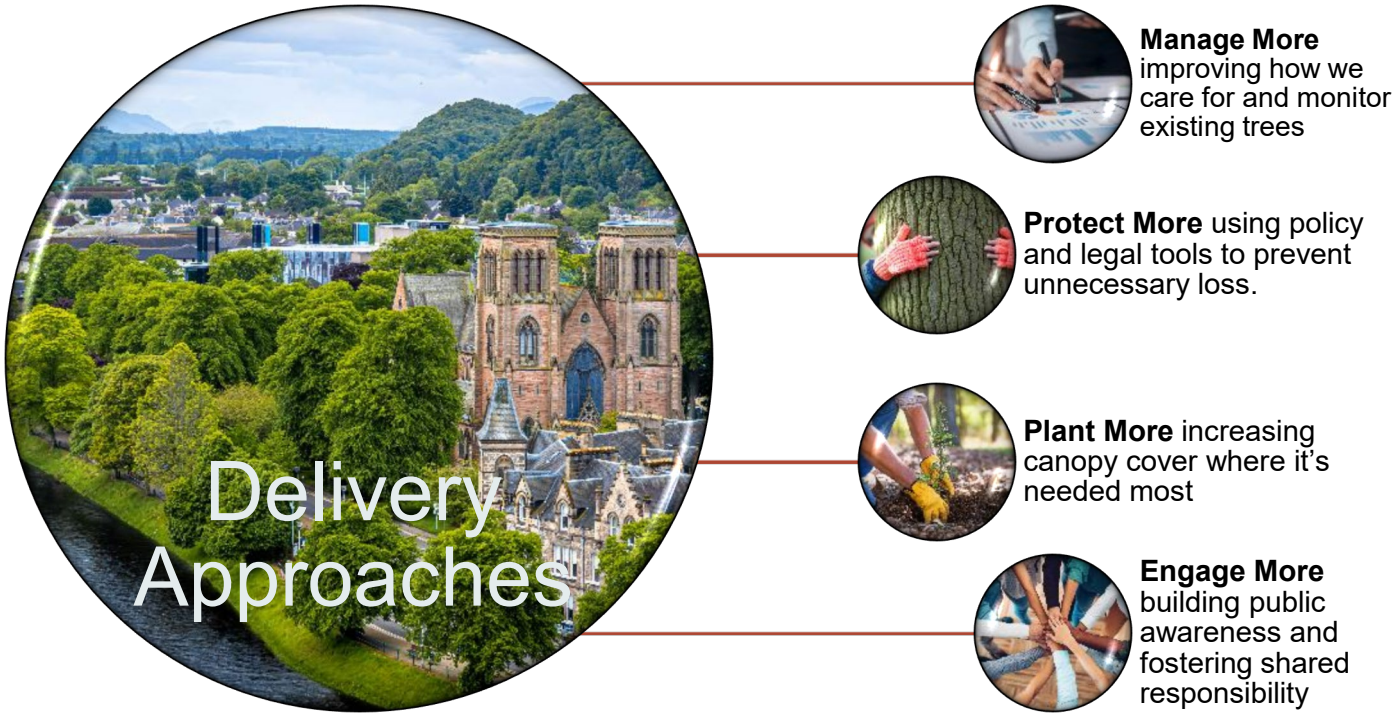


Figure 7 Our delivery approaches

Delivery Opportunities

The above approaches support the practical opportunities available to help deliver the aims of the Urban Forest Strategy. These are structured around the below four themes.

1.Targeting and Prioritising Canopy Change. By understanding where canopy is declining or gaining and the equity of its distribution, we can direct planting, protection and maintenance where they are most needed.[2021]

Supporting principles



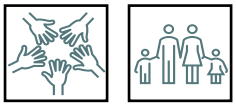
2.Tools and Data for Decision Making[22]. We rely on robust datasets to plan, prioritise and track our work. These tools, including the inventory and management system, canopy cover datasets, the i-Tree Eco® project, Proximitree™ analysis, veteran tree inventories, spatial information on land use, statutory provisions, ownership and ecosystem service and asset valuation, allow us to understand the urban forest's current condition and its capacity to deliver the required benefits.

Supporting principle



3.Delivering in Partnership[23]. Successful delivery depends on strong partnerships across the city, cross-sectoral effort, public engagement and the capacity to embed urban forest goals across multiple programmes and organisations. While CCC leads on public tree management, external funding and resources aid delivery and many opportunities also lie on land we do not directly control. Collaboration is key.

Supporting principles



4.Monitoring and Adaptation. The urban forest and the resources to manage it are dynamic. Delivery must be transparent, evidence-led and responsive to long-term trends and emerging challenges. It is therefore essential to

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[20] Baseline canopy data and recent trends in canopy change across Cambridge are set out in **Topic Paper 10 - Cambridge's Urban Forest: Baseline and Change**.

[21] Baseline canopy data and recent trends in canopy change across Cambridge are set out in **Topic Paper 10 - Cambridge's Urban Forest: Baseline and Change**.

[22] Detailed guidance on tree planting, tree works and third-party interactions is set out in **Topic Paper 2 - Tree Planting, Work and Third-Party Guidance**.

[23] The Council's approach to public engagement and partnership working is set out in **Topic Paper 5 - Public Engagement and Partnerships**.

track progress, evaluate effectiveness and adjust delivery methods in response to new challenges, including climate change, pest and disease pressures and community needs.

Supporting principles



These four themes are grounded in the strategic principles of this strategy. They reflect our commitment to evidence-led action, shared responsibility, whole-place thinking and equitable outcomes, ensuring that delivery is consistent with the values that underpin the Urban Forest Strategy.

POLICIES

The following policies set out how the aims of the Urban Forest Strategy should be delivered in line with its four approaches. They provide a framework for decision-making, guiding day-to-day operations as well as longer-term planning.

Each policy states either:

- **A current commitment -** where The Council and its partner services already have the capacity, systems and resources to deliver; or
- **An aspirational goal -** where The Council aims to develop the necessary capacity and partnerships over the lifetime of the strategy. Aspirational policies are worded as "*will work towards…*", "*will seek to…*", or *"aims to…".*

This distinction allows the strategy to be both realistic and ambitious, recognising what is deliverable now, while signalling the direction of travel and the areas where future investment, innovation, or partnership will be required.

In line with the strategy's structure, policies are organised under the four delivery approaches, however, a number of policies support more than one approach in practice.

Nothing in this strategy introduces new statutory duties, changes planning validation requirements, or creates new enforceable thresholds. Where policies are described as 'aspirational', delivery will be subject to available funding, land availability, partnership working and wider policy frameworks.

Policies are intended to guide decision-making and prioritisation and should be read alongside the supporting Topic Papers, which provide the primary source of operational detail and technical guidance for implementing the Strategy's policies and actions, but do not create additional statutory or policy requirements.



Manage More

The Council will continue to manage its tree assets sustainably and in accordance with best practice. It is recognised that, in some situations, trees can cause residents significant problems and that the wrong type of tree may be growing in the wrong place. In these situations, The Council will act reasonably and responsibly and work to seek an appropriate balance between the interests of the individual, the interests of the community and legal obligations.

POLICY M1: The Council will prioritise its legal and health and safety obligations over all other aspects of the service.[24]

To do this, The Council will:

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[24] For detail on tree asset management, inspection regimes and risk-based decision-making, see **Topic Paper 1 - Tree Asset Management and Risk**.

- Manage its tree stock through a structured, risk-based inspection and maintenance framework, consistent with nationally recognised best practice.
- Undertake cyclical inspections and programmed maintenance using its tree maintenance database as the live asset inventory.
- Respond to emergencies promptly where a tree poses an immediate high risk to people or property.
- Respond to reactive maintenance needs in a timely and proportionate way, balancing risk management with tree retention wherever possible. Records of reactive works will be kept.
- Balance the duty of care with the long-term benefits of retaining healthy trees, ensuring that risk is managed proportionately and reasonably.

POLICY M2: Government and best practice advice regarding the control of pests and diseases will be followed.

This includes compliance with national biosecurity requirements and guidance issued by government bodies, regulators and professional organisations. Management responses will be proportionate, evidence-led and informed by risk to public safety, tree health, biodiversity and long-term resilience. Where appropriate, species diversification and adaptive management will be used to reduce future vulnerability to pests and diseases.

POLICY M3 Trees, Damage and Subsidence: Tree-related damage mitigation requests and claims will be managed in line with nationally recognised guidance, ensuring decisions are based on robust evidence and a hierarchy of mitigation. [25]

Priority will be given to retaining trees wherever possible, with alternatives such as pruning, root barriers, or engineering solutions considered before removal. The Council will work with insurers, their engineers, arborists and residents to ensure fair outcomes that balance property, environmental, reputational and financial risks.

POLICY M4: Capacity and Resourcing of The Council's Tree Asset[26]

The capacity, skills and resources necessary to manage its tree stock as a long-term public asset will be maintained.

To achieve this, The Council will:

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[25] The Council's evidential standards and mitigation hierarchy for tree-related subsidence and structural damage are set out in **Topic Paper 4 - Subsidence and Structural Damage**.

[26] Governance arrangements and resourcing models for delivering the Urban Forest Strategy are detailed in **Topic Paper 6 - Governance and Resourcing**.

- Ensure adequate arboricultural staffing and training to meet statutory duties and deliver the Urban Forest Strategy.
- Sustain investment in digital systems such as EzyTreev® to support inspections, risk management and evidence-based decision-making.
- Allocate funding for cyclical maintenance, proactive inspections and replacement planting of trees under its management.
- Seek and secure external grants, partnerships and innovative delivery models to supplement core budgets.
- Review staffing levels, budgets and asset management systems regularly to ensure they remain proportionate to the scale and value of the tree stock.

POLICY M5: Trees on Housing, Tenanted, Leased Land and other council owned land not directly managed by the Tree Team

The Council will manage trees on housing estates, communal land and tenanted or leased properties in a consistent and transparent way, ensuring safety, clarity of responsibility and long-term value.

- Communal Housing Land: Trees in shared estate spaces are part of the corporate tree asset and will be inspected and maintained on a regular cycle by the Tree Team.
- Individual Tenanted Gardens: Responsibility for trees in private gardens held under tenancy rests primarily with the tenant, unless otherwise specified in tenancy agreements. The Council will provide guidance and may intervene where statutory protections or significant safety concerns apply.
- Commercial Leases and Other Tenancies: For leased land or properties, tree management responsibilities will be set out in lease agreements. In most cases, the tenant or leaseholder is responsible for tree maintenance. The Council expects leaseholders to comply with legal obligations, including tree protection law and to seek consent for works where required.
- Council Oversight: The Council retains an interest in ensuring that trees across its housing land, leased land and estate are managed to appropriate standards, reflecting their role as community assets. All land managing services (for example Property Services, City Homes, Car Parking, Bereavement and Drainage) will liaise with the Tree Team where arboricultural expertise is required.

Protect More [27]



The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and The Town and Country Planning (Trees Preservation)(England) Regulations 2012 make provision for the protection of trees with sufficient amenity value through the serving of Tree Preservation Orders, making local planning

[27] The statutory framework for tree protection, planning control and enforcement is set out in **Topic Paper 9 - Statutory Responsibilities and Planning Control**.

authority approval a prerequisite of any tree works. With the use of these regulatory powers GCSP will seek to protect and enhance trees of sufficient amenity value and preserve canopy cover, where expedient.

With consideration of National Planning Policy Framework, Planning Practice Guidance, The Cambridge Local Plan and the Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan, through the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (GCSP) service, The Council will seek to ensure new development protects and enhances the urban forest.

POLICY P1: GCSP will make efficient use of regulatory powers to protect trees of sufficient amenity value and secure replacement planting where appropriate.
If council owned/managed trees are at risk from development, The Council's Tree Team will be consulted at the earliest opportunity.

GCSP will consider visual amenity and impact, atmospheric benefits, historical, cultural or botanical value and its response to climate change and biodiversity crises as contributing factors when assessing amenity and the expedience of serving TPOs.

New structural tree planting forming part of landscape schemes implemented with development proposals will be made the subject of Tree Preservation Orders.

POLICY P2: The Council will resist the removal of or excessive works to trees, including those in Council ownership or management without robust and evidenced justification.

TPO applications submitted without sufficient evidence to justify work specified will not be validated.

The removal of or significant works to healthy trees in conservation areas will be resisted without the submission of justification for work proposed.

POLICY P3: The Council will pursue enforcement action/prosecution where protected trees are damaged or destroyed without consent.

Where private trees are removed without consent, penalties will be sought in accordance with current legislation and GCSP compliance policy.

POLICY P4: In accordance with section 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act , NPPF and Local Plan, planning permission will include appropriate provision for tree preservation and planting.

This includes the use of planning conditions and Tree Preservation Orders, where appropriate, to secure tree protection during construction and the successful establishment of new planting.

Requirements will be proportionate to the scale and nature of development and consistent with adopted planning policy and guidance. This policy does not introduce new validation requirements or thresholds**.**

POLICY P5 (Aspirational): The Council and GCSP will seek to review existing TPOs and how TPOs are used.

Older and larger orders will be prioritised
Area orders will be utilised to protect larger tree collections, and The Council will seek to update every 15 years. Any review of existing TPOs will be undertaken within existing legal powers and resource constraints

POLICY P6. Protecting Public Tree Assets: Enforcement action and appropriate compensation will be sought and pursued where trees in its care are damaged or destroyed without consent. [28]

Compensation will normally be based on nationally recognised valuation methods, such as CAVAT, to reflect both amenity and asset value. The Council will work with legal services and partner agencies to ensure deterrence and recovery of costs, reinforcing the principle that public trees are community assets.

Plant More [29]



POLICY PL1 The Council and GCSP will encourage and continue to seek new opportunities for tree planting in appropriate locations.

Funding will continue to be achieved internally and through external grants and partnerships.
The partner services will continue to seek opportunity for and encourage the planting of large canopy and long-lived trees species in sustainable locations throughout the city on public and private land.

The partner services will continue to ensure and encourage a diversity of tree species throughout the city on private and public land.

The Council will continue to target areas that currently lack tree cover to create equitable access to green infrastructure.

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[28] The Council's approach to tree damage, enforcement and compensation is set out in **Topic Paper 11 - Tree Damage and Compensation**.
[29] Detailed guidance on tree planting, tree works and third-party interactions is set out in **Topic Paper 2 - Tree Planting, Work and Third-Party Guidance**.

POLICY PL2 (Aspirational): The Council will aim to ensure every new planting site is supported by a funded establishment period covering at least the first three years after planting. This will include watering, mulching and early formative pruning.

Establishment support will be sought where practicable and proportionate, recognising that long-term success depends on early care. Delivery will be subject to funding availability, land ownership and partnership arrangements. This approach is intended to improve survival rates and long-term canopy outcomes rather than to impose fixed requirements on all planting schemes.

POLICY PL3: Replacement planting will be undertaken wherever a council-owned tree is lost, unless there is a clear justification not to replant in that location.

Replacement planting will normally seek to maintain or enhance canopy value, taking account of site constraints, species suitability and future resilience. Where replanting is not feasible at the original location, alternative sites may be identified to achieve an overall net benefit. Decisions will be recorded transparently.

POLICY PL4 (Aspirational): Services will explore opportunities to incorporate innovative planting techniques such as engineered tree pits, rain gardens and structural soils in new developments and highway schemes to support the establishment of trees in urban conditions.

These techniques will be explored where they offer clear benefits for tree establishment and long-term performance in constrained urban environments. Their use will be opportunity-led and dependent on scheme design, feasibility, funding and maintenance responsibilities. This policy is intended to encourage innovation rather than mandate specific solutions.

Engage More[30]



POLICY E1: Sustainable and proactive management of trees will be facilitated through public and partnership engagement.

Engagement will support better understanding of the benefits and limitations of urban trees and encourage shared stewardship. This includes consultation on significant works, support for community planting and clear communication about management decisions. Engagement activity will be proportionate and targeted.

[30] The Council's approach to public engagement and partnership working is set out in **Topic Paper 5 - Public Engagement and Partnerships**.

POLICY E2 (Aspirational): The Council will seek to encourage joined up approaches to tree management through partnerships with other services, managers of private trees and by working with local communities and businesses to provide opportunities for donations and sponsorship.

Partnership working will be used to extend capacity, share expertise and unlock additional resources where appropriate. This may include collaboration with other Council services, landowners, businesses and community groups. Participation will be voluntary and subject to appropriate governance and safeguards, including alignment with the Council's technical guidance where planting or works affect the Council's tree asset

POLICY E3 (Aspirational): The Council will seek to quantify the benefits of Cambridge's urban forest, whilst creating real opportunities for community participation in the process of valuation.

The Council will educate and encourage the community to participate in promoting and maintaining Cambridge's urban forest.

POLICY E4: The Council will provide clear, accessible information about its tree management and planting through its website, public notices and consultation processes

Information will be provided in a clear and accessible way, proportionate to the nature of the activity and audience. This includes publishing guidance, consultation information and data where appropriate to support transparency and informed engagement.

DELIVERY, ACTIONS & MONITORING SUMMARY

To deliver the UFS's vision and achieve its aims, a programme of interrelated actions will be undertaken. These actions also reflect the four core delivery approaches and policies and are designed to be flexible, evidence-led and scalable across the city.

The actions provide a practical delivery framework, translating the Strategy's aims and policies into operational activity across Council services and in partnership with landowners, communities and other stakeholders.

To keep the core Strategy concise and accessible, the detailed action plan (including indicative actions, supporting delivery approaches, and links to Topic Papers) is set out in **Appendix 2 - Actions.**

Delivery will be monitored through a suite of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) aligned to the Strategy's aims and delivery approaches. The detailed monitoring and evaluation framework is set out in **Appendix 3 - Monitoring, Evaluation and Key Performance Indicators**.

This approach ensures transparency and accountability while allowing the Strategy to remain focused on its strategic direction and policy framework.

AFTERWORD

Cambridge’s living treescape - a story of growth, loss and renewal

Walk through Cambridge today and you’ll see a city shaped by trees: riverside willows leaning over the Cam, plane lined streets in Petersfield and Newnham and towering college trees casting long shadows over centuries of learning. But this treescape wasn’t inevitable, it is the result of generations of choices, accidents and acts of care. Cambridge’s urban forest has grown from a patchwork of planning and chance. Some trees were planted to mark boundaries, adorn streets, or commemorate a special event. Others seeded themselves in untended spaces and simply endured. This layered evolution gives Cambridge’s treescape its richness and diversity, a mix of heritage, utility and wildness. From the medieval landscapes of Sheep’s Green with their veteran willows and the Victorian parks of Parker’s and Christ’s Pieces, to the carefully managed arboreta of the colleges and the Botanic Garden, trees have long played a role in shaping the city’s identity. The 20th century has major pressures: increased development, the introduction of new diseases and changing trends in urban design. Yet it also saw the persistence of municipal and suburban planting, and the beginnings of community led greening.

Over the past decade, new data has deepened our understanding of Cambridge’s urban forest. Between 2008 and 2018, canopy cover increased modestly, from 17.1% to 17.6% largely due to the continued growth of existing trees and new planting. Encouragingly, some of the most significant gains were in parts of the city with greater deprivation, such as East Chesterton and Abbey. The city now supports over 300,000 trees, offering more than £1 billion in amenity value.

But this growth is uneven. Canopy losses have occurred in wards like Newnham and Castle, where the older Victorian and Edwardian plantings are reaching the end of their safe useful lives. Gardens, though shrinking, still contribute disproportionately to canopy cover. Protected open spaces, veteran trees and pockets of wildness support biodiversity and trees play an important role in supporting climate resilience and create better places to live and work in, but only if they are recognised, protected and maintained.

We now stand at a point of transition. For the first time, we have access to high-resolution data, long-term canopy mapping and tools like i-Tree® and GIS analysis that can guide more equitable and strategic decisions. But understanding is not enough, the future of Cambridge’s urban forest depends on coordinated action. What we choose to plant, retain, protect and invest in today will shape the City for decades to come. This strategy builds on this story and aims to change its trajectory. In the strategy, we have set out our long-term vision, the principles that guide us and the actions we will take to protect, expand and steward the urban forest for current and future generations.

The urban forest is not static. It is living, growing, vulnerable and essential.

APPENDIX 1 - TOPIC PAPERS

1. Tree Asset Management and Risk
This paper explains how Cambridge City Council manages its tree stock as living assets while meeting its duty of care. It covers inspection regimes, risk-benefit assessment processes, cyclical maintenance, consultation and the challenges of managing trees across different landholdings, including housing and its commercial estate land.

2. Tree Planting, Work and Third-Party Guidance
This paper sets out Cambridge City Council's approach to tree planting and tree work, and also provides wider guidance applicable to private landowners, developers, utilities and other third parties. It covers species selection, structural planting, and engineered tree pits, together with considerations for non-native and climate-adapted species. The paper also explains good practice in tree work, including pruning and removals, and sets out the processes for third-party interactions such as dropped kerb applications, pruning requests, and utility works

3. Biodiversity and Habitat Connectivity
Urban trees form vital habitats and ecological corridors. This paper describes how The Council manages trees to enhance biodiversity, including veteran tree care, species diversity, and contributions to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Biodiversity Net Gain. The Council will seek to maintain high standards of biosecurity to reduce the introduction and spread of pests and diseases, ensuring a resilient treescape for the future

4. Trees, Subsidence and Structural Damage
Subsidence and other structural damage caused by trees can be complex and contentious. This paper sets out the evidential standards required, The Council's mitigation hierarchy and the legal and policy context guiding decisions. It explains how The Council works with insurers, engineers, and residents to resolve cases fairly.

5. Public Engagement and Partnerships
The urban forest belongs to everyone, and its future depends on shared stewardship. Less than 25% of land in Cambridge is directly owned or managed by The Council, making collaboration with residents, businesses, schools, and partner organisations essential. Engagement is therefore not an optional extra but a core delivery mechanism of the Urban Forest Strategy.

6. Governance and Resourcing
Topic Paper 6 explains how Cambridge's urban forest is governed and resourced. It sets out the roles of different Council services in relation to trees, how resources are allocated, and how governance arrangements ensure transparent, coordinated delivery. It applies to both The Council's directly managed tree asset and the wider urban forest across Cambridge.

7. Climate Change and Resilience

Trees are essential to Cambridge's response to climate change. This paper explores their role in cooling and shading, flood mitigation, and soil resilience, referencing strategies for diversifying species to withstand future climate and pest pressures. It links the urban forest directly to The Council's wider climate goals and provides the evidence base for the policies listed above.

8. Achievements

Cambridge has a strong record of urban forest management and innovation. Over the past decade under the Citywide Tree Strategy 2016-2026, The Council has delivered major planting programmes, pioneered new approaches to tree asset management, and embedded trees within its climate and biodiversity strategies. The achievements, set out below, justify the need for an holistic approach to the management of green infrastructure and provide a solid foundation from which the Urban Forest Strategy 2026-2036 has been developed.

9. Statutory Responsibilities and Planning Control

Trees in Cambridge benefit from a robust framework of legal protections administered by Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (GCSP). This paper explains statutory responsibilities in relation to Tree Preservation Orders, Conservation Areas, and Tree Work Applications. It also sets out how GCSP responds to planning applications, tree work applications and enforces compliance to safeguard Cambridge's urban forest and its most valuable trees.

10. Cambridge's Urban Forest - Baseline and Change

Understanding today's urban forest is essential to planning for its future. This paper presents the current evidence on canopy cover, species composition, age structure and spatial distribution across the city. It also reviews recent trends and changes, providing the baseline against which future progress will be measured.

11. Tree Protection, Damage and Compensation

The urban forest is a public asset and protecting it from harm is a core responsibility of the Council and its partner services. This paper sets out how damage to trees is addressed, including unauthorised works, vandalism, and harm caused by third parties. It explains the legal framework for enforcement and prosecution, the use of valuation tools such as CAVAT to establish compensation, and how Cambridge City Council and partner services seek to deter damage while recovering costs where appropriate.

12. Growing Cambridge's Tree Canopy

An explanatory paper that sets out why canopy cover is the right metric for Cambridge, justifies the 20% by 2050 aim against alternatives tracked via 10-year mapping cycles.

APPENDIX 2 - ACTIONS

To deliver the UFS's vision and achieve its aims, a programme of interrelated actions will be undertaken. These actions also reflect the four core delivery approaches and policies and are designed to be flexible, evidence-led and scalable across the city.

Each action supports one or more of the strategy's aims and is grounded in the 5 principles of: Awareness and Action; Climate Resilience; Intergenerational Equity; Public Engagement; Environmental Justice.

Action 1: Increase canopy cover
Supporting Plant more, Protect more approaches

1. Use updated canopy mapping to identify priority planting areas, focusing on locations with low or declining tree cover.
2. Deliver annual planting programmes across streets, parks, housing estates and open spaces.
3. Integrate canopy objectives into infrastructure, highways and urban development projects.
4. Support private landowners to plant and care for trees through guidance and incentives.
1. Protect existing trees of present and future value

This is an aspirational, citywide outcome and does not create site-specific requirements, alter planning validation criteria, or override existing planning policy

Action 2: Improve the condition and longevity of existing trees
Supporting Manage more, Protect more approaches

1. Maintain proactive inspection and maintenance regimes of tree assets.
2. Prioritise the management of mature and veteran trees to maximise longevity and ecological value.
3. Implement robust watering strategies, especially for young and recently planted trees.
4. Improve design and planting practices to support healthy root systems and future growth.
5. Encourage species diversity including climate mitigating and climate-resilient tree selection.

Action 3: Ensure equitable access to the benefits of the urban forest
Supporting Plant more, Engage more approaches

1. Use Tree Equity and Council tree canopy datasets to prioritise planting in underserved and vulnerable communities.
2. Target planting and engagement projects in areas of high need.
3. Align urban forest delivery with objectives for public health.
4. Support community planting and tree sponsorship in priority areas.

Action 4: Embed trees and canopy into policy and decision-making
Supporting Manage more, Protect more approaches

1. Inclusion of urban tree standards and canopy targets in local planning policy.
2. Integrate urban forest considerations into climate, biodiversity and other strategies.
3. Monitor the implementation of tree-related planning conditions and enforce where necessary and make effective use of regulatory powers.
4. Promote sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and green infrastructure that incorporate trees

This strategy does not introduce new validation requirements or thresholds unless formally adopted through planning policy.

Action 5: Support biodiversity and habitat connectivity
Supporting Plant more, Manage more approaches

1. Prioritise tree planting that supports habitat creation and ecological connectivity.
2. Manage river-edge willows, woodlands and veteran trees to preserve and enhance biodiversity.
3. Coordinate with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and other landscape-scale initiatives.
4. Use species-rich and locally appropriate planting to support ecological resilience.

Action 6: Promote shared stewardship and community participation
Supporting Engage more, Manage more approaches

1. Facilitate community-led planting, maintenance and aftercare schemes.
2. Deliver public engagement activities including guided walks, talks and education programmes.
3. Develop long-term partnerships with residents, businesses, landowners and third-sector organisations.
4. Promote the Veteran Willow Tree Charter[xx] and encourage community to care for the urban forest.

Action 7: Build and maintain a strong evidence base
Supporting Manage more, Protect more approaches

1. Regularly update and analyse canopy cover, i-Tree Eco and tree audit datasets.
2. Monitor changes in canopy, tree numbers and condition to inform adaptive management.
3. Use GIS mapping to increase accessibility to Council tree canopy datasets.
4. Track threats from pests, disease and climate-related stress and update risk assessments.

5. Ensure data transparency by publishing relevant datasets and maps publicly where possible.

Action 8: Strengthen the capacity and resourcing needed to deliver the Strategy
Supporting All approaches

6. Secure long-term funding for planting, maintenance and monitoring.
7. Invest in arboricultural staff capacity, training and digital infrastructure.
8. Pursue grants and external funding to support community and strategic delivery.
9. Explore co-production, partnerships and innovative delivery models with public, private and voluntary sectors.

APPENDIX 3 - MONITORING, EVALUATION AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

To assess the success of the Urban Forest Strategy and support transparent, adaptive delivery, we will track progress using a suite of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). These indicators are directly aligned with the strategy's aims and delivery approaches.
KPIs fall into two categories:

- Target based KPIs are linked to measurable, time-bound outcomes that the Council aims to achieve (e.g. a 20% canopy cover target).
- Trend based KPIs are used to monitor change over time, where year on year variation is expected due to external factors such as funding, or climate impacts. These KPIs help track the direction of travel and support adaptive management.

Together, these KPIs provide a robust performance framework for monitoring delivery, identifying risks, and informing future investment and policy.

Increase Overall Canopy Cover

(Target based and trend based)

- Measure the percentage of canopy cover citywide, using repeat mapping every 10 years – next due 2028
- Increase tree canopy cover to at least 20% by 2050s

Improve the Condition and Longevity of Existing Trees

(Trend based)

- Report on the number of council-managed trees inspected annually
- Record the number of trees removed by the Council each year
- Record the number of trees planted by the Council each year

Ensure Equitable Access to Urban Forest Benefits

(Trend based

- Track the number of new tree projects delivered in priority communities each year

Embed Trees and Canopy into Policy and Decision-Making

(Trend based)

- Track the number of TPOs served each year
- Track the number of TWAs processed each year

Support Biodiversity and Habitat Connectivity

(Trend based)

- Measure the percentage of new plantings made up of high biodiversity-value species
- Monitor the number of veteran trees under positive long-term management

Promote Shared Stewardship and Community Participation

(Trend based)

- Track the number of tree planting or other tree related events supported by the Council each year
- Record the number of trees planted by community groups and volunteers
- Measure participation in Free Trees for Babies scheme

Build and Maintain a Strong Evidence Base

(Target based and trend based)

- Update major datasets regularly (e.g. canopy mapping, ecosystem service valuation, asset valuation, every 10 years; Council managed tree audits ongoing)
- Monitor the number of datasets made publicly available to support transparency

Strengthen Capacity and Resources

(Trend based)

- Track the annual budget allocated to urban forest strategy delivery
- Monitor arboricultural staffing levels - FTEs per 10,000 trees managed
- Record the total amount of external funding secured or leveraged each year

Review and Reporting

Progress against KPIs will be reviewed annually, with key updates published for internal stakeholders and the public. This approach ensures the strategy remains evidence led, responsive to change, and accountable to the people of Cambridge.

KPIs will be reviewed periodically to ensure they remain proportionate, measurable and aligned with available data, with any proposed changes reported transparently to Members.

DRAFT

APPENDIX 4 - GLOSSARY

Amenity value - The value of trees in terms of their contribution to public enjoyment, visual character, cultural significance and overall quality of life. Amenity value is often used in planning and legal contexts, including the assessment of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs).
Arboriculture - The selection, production, planting, maintenance and removal of all woody plants for amenity purposes.
Asset valuation - The process of assigning a financial value to trees as public assets, using recognised tools such as CAVAT (Capital Asset Valuation for Amenity Trees) or i-Tree Eco®.
Biodiversity- A measure of biological variation, whether represented by gene, species, habitats or ecosystems.
Biosecurity - A set of precautions to reduce the risk of accidentally introducing or spreading alien invasive species, including potential pests and pathogens.
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) - An approach to development that ensures habitats for wildlife are left in a measurably better state than they were before development.
Blue infrastructure - Natural or artificial water-related features such as rivers, streams, canals, ponds and wetlands that form part of the wider green infrastructure network.
Blue-green infrastructure - An interconnected network of waterways, wetlands, woodlands, greenways, parks, forests and other open spaces that support native species, maintain natural ecological processes, sustain air and water resources and contribute to health and quality of life. Includes parks, parkways, riparian buffers, residential landscaping, street trees, rain gardens, green roofs and window boxes.
Cambridge - The area of land represented by the District of Cambridge City
Cambridge City Council (The Council) - The local planning authority
Cambridgeshire County Council - The county council for non-metropolitan county of Cambridgeshire and the local highway authority
Canopy Cover- A 2-dimensional metric quantifying the area of ground covered by tree canopy when viewed from above, where tree canopy is the collective branches and foliage of the tree.
Carbon sequestration - Processes that remove carbon from the atmosphere.
Capital Asset Valuation for Amenity Trees (CAVAT) - A method used to manage trees as public assets rather than liabilities
Climate resilience - The capacity of trees and the wider urban forest to withstand and adapt to the impacts of climate change, including extreme weather, drought, flooding and pests and diseases.
Community stewardship - Shared responsibility for the care and management of trees by local communities, residents and partner organisations.
Council of Tree and Landscape Appraisers (CTLA) - A professional body that publishes guidance and methods for appraising the monetary value of trees, often used internationally alongside or as a complement to CAVAT.
DiversiTree project - A spatial dataset and report documenting veteran willow trees along a 10 km stretch of the River Cam, highlighting opportunities for succession planting, biodiversity conservation and long-term heritage management.

Ecosystem Services - The ways in which humanity relies on ecosystems for the continued provision of clean air, drinking water, an equitable climate, the productivity of agriculture, forestry and oceans, control of flooding, soil erosion, coastal erosion, carbon sequestration etc.
Ecosystem - A unit of ecology consisting of a discrete community of species, interacting with each other and their physical environment.
Environment - The prevailing conditions which reflect the combined influence of climate, soil, topography and biology (other plants and animals) present in an area.
EzyTreev® - Cambridge City Council's live inventory and management system for trees on public land, used to record inspections, manage risk and plan maintenance.
Fine Particulate Matter (PM2.5) - Airborne particles 2.5 micrometres or smaller in diameter that can be inhaled deep into the lungs. PM2.5 is produced by sources such as traffic, fuel burning, and industry and is used as a key indicator of air pollution and health risk.
Free Trees for Babies - A Council-led community scheme providing free trees to celebrate the birth or adoption of children, supporting family involvement in the urban forest.
GIS (Geographic information system) - A collection of computer hardware, software and geographic data for capturing, storing, updating, manipulating, analysing and displaying all forms of geographically referenced information.
Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (GCSP) - Service responsible for delivering local planning functions across Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire
Green infrastructure - A strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural features such as parks, woodlands, hedgerows, street trees, private gardens and green roofs. Green infrastructure delivers multiple environmental, social and economic benefits, supporting biodiversity, health, climate resilience and quality of life.
Green space - Any vegetated land or water within an urban area that serves as recreation or open space. This includes neighbourhood and regional parks, gardens, cemeteries, playing fields, bike and walking paths and urban landscaping.
Grey infrastructure - The built environment's hard, engineered features such as roads, pavements, drainage network sand utilities. Grey infrastructure often competes with space for trees and green space, making integration with green and blue infrastructure critical to sustainable city planning.
Habitat - Food, water, shelter and space that supports plant or animal life.
High biodiversity-value species - Defined in the Council's Topic Paper 2 Tree Planting Work & Guidance as species selected for strong biodiversity benefits and suitability to site conditions and future climate.
Local Planning Authority (LPA) - The local government body that is empowered by law to exercise urban planning functions for a particular area.
i-Tree Eco® - A sample-based survey tool that quantifies urban forest structure, condition and ecosystem services such as carbon storage, pollution removal and amenity value.
Intergenerational equity - The principle of ensuring that decisions made today protect and enhance environmental resources so that future generations inherit equal or greater benefits.
Neighbourhood Canopy Campaign - A Cambridge initiative encouraging residents and community groups to increase canopy cover at neighbourhood scale.
Partner organisations and services - For the purposes of this Strategy, "partner organisations and services" refers to Cambridge City Council services and teams, and to external organisations,

that have related roles, interests or objectives in relation to trees, green infrastructure and place-making. Cambridge City Council services will have regard to the Urban Forest Strategy where relevant to their functions. References to partner services reflect alignment of aims and collaborative working, rather than the creation of any new legal, governance or delivery responsibilities beyond existing remits.

ProximiTree™ - High-resolution aerial data licensed from Bluesky International, used to analyse and monitor tree canopy cover over time.

Section 211 Notice - Notification to the LPA of proposed works to trees in a conservation area.

Shadeways - A Cambridge-specific mapping project identifying walking and cycling routes where tree planting could provide shade, cooling and environmental equity benefits.

Subsidence - In relation to soil or structures resting in or on soil, a sinking due to shrinkage when certain clay soils dry out, sometimes due to the extraction of moisture by tree roots.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) - An approach to managing rainfall that mimics natural processes, including tree pits, rain gardens and permeable surfaces, reducing flood risk and improving water quality.

Tree inventory (or tree audit dataset) - Gathering of accurate information on the urban forest, including tree species, location and health (see Ezytreev®).

Tree Equity - A framework for identifying and addressing unequal distribution of tree canopy in relation to social and environmental vulnerability.

Tree Team - Cambridge City Council's in-house arboricultural service, based in City Services. The Tree Team manages the Council's tree stock across streets, parks, housing estates and open space sand provides professional arboricultural advice to other Council services, including Housing and Property. It maintains the Council's tree inventory, delivers inspections and maintenance and supports statutory tree protection and strategic planning.

Tree Work Application (TWA) - A planning application relating specifically to works on protected trees, including those covered by TPOs or in Conservation Areas.

Tree Preservation Order (TPO) - A legally enforceable document served by the local planning authority to protect trees and woodland in the interests of public amenity. While trees in conservation areas are automatically protected, individual trees outside these areas may be protected with a Tree Preservation Order.

Tree Work Application - Planning application relating specifically to trees

Urban Cooling - The role of trees in lowering local temperatures, reducing the urban heat island effect and improving thermal comfort.

Urban Forest - Trees, woody shrubs, hedges, herbaceous plants, waterways, wildlife, grasses and other green infrastructure within the built environment, considered collectively over a defined area.

Urban Forestry - The holistic care and management of single trees and tree populations in urban settings for the purpose of improving the urban environment, irrespective of ownership.

Urban heat island effect - A phenomenon where air temperatures in urban areas are significantly hotter than those in surrounding rural areas due to the high concentrations of buildings and pavement in urban areas.

Veteran tree - A tree that has developed notable habitat, cultural, or heritage features due to its age, size, or condition, providing exceptional biodiversity value.

APPENDIX 5 – END NOTES

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[xx] DiversiTree project - Cambridge City Council last accessed 10/2/26

Project: Urban Forest Strategy Draft **Date:** 04-Sep-25 **Your Name: Matthew Magrath**

1. IMPACT ON CARBON EMISSIONS (MITIGATION OF CLIMATE CHANGE)

	HOW WILL THIS PROJECT/PROPOSAL AFFECT THE FOLLOWING KEY AREAS:	WHAT IS THE IMPACT CONSIDERED TO BE? *See guidance in the purple box, below, to help you assess the degree of the negative and positive impacts e.g. High, Medium or Low*		CLIMATE CHANGE RATING: *Use drop down list*	WILL THE PROJECT MOVE CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL CLOSER TO THE OBJECTIVE OF BEING NET ZERO CARBON BY 2030? *Use drop down list*	WILL THE PROJECT MOVE THE CITY CLOSER TO THE OBJECTIVE OF A NET ZERO CARBON CAMBRIDGE BY 2030? *Use drop down list*	PLEASE DETAIL HERE THE ACTION THAT WILL BE TAKEN TO AVOID, MITIGATE OR COMPENSATE FOR THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS AND MAXIMISE POSITIVE IMPACTS?		HAS A NET ZERO CARBON OPTION BEEN CONSIDERED? PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS.
1	ENERGY USE	Positive Impact:	Energy use will be reduced or renewable energy will be used	Medium Positive	Yes	Yes	**Consider:** - Reducing demand for energy - Specifying energy efficiency measures (e.g. insulation, low energy lighting) - Generating renewable energy (e.g. heat pumps,	Trees provide shading, reduce energy demand, and sequester and store carbon.	no
		Nil Impact:	No extra energy use is involved						
		Negative Impact:	More energy (gas and/ or electricity) will be consumed (by CCC or others)						
2	WASTE GENERATION	Positive Impact:	Less waste will be generated OR amount of waste that is reused/ recycled will be increased	Nil	No	No	**Consider:** - Will resources be reduced or reused? - Will you use recycled goods? - Will recycling facilities be increased?	There is no direct other than wood waste which is recycled by our contractors. Indirectly, pollution will be ameliorated through improved air quality, as trees intercept particulates and absorb pollutants. Non-potable stormwater will be captured and stored by trees and their root systems, reducing the volume entering the drainage network for treatment and lowering associated carbon	no
		Nil Impact:	No waste will be generated						
		Negative Impact:	More waste will be generated (by CCC or others)						
3	USE OF TRANSPORT	Positive Impact:	The use of transport and/or of fossil fuel-based transport will be reduced	Medium Positive	Yes	Yes	**Consider:** - Will you purchase an electric vehicle? - Will you specifiy the use of public transport? - How will you reduce the need to travel or transport goods?	Reduced reliance on vehicles through shading and increased active travel	no
		Nil Impact:	No extra transport will be necessary						
		Negative Impact:	CCC or others will need to travel more OR transport goods more often/ further						
4	SUSTAINABLE FOOD	Positive Impact:	Food will be locally grown and/ or meat-free	Nil	No	No	**Consider:** - Use of locally grown/ produced food - Reducing use of imported food - Reducing use of meat	Not directly relevant to food, but indirect benefit through community orchards.	no
		Nil Impact:	No change in supply of food						
		Negative Impact:	Food will travel long distances and include meat						

2. IMPACT ON RESILIENCE (ADAPTATION) TO THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

	HOW WILL THIS PROJECT/PROPOSAL AFFECT THE FOLLOWING KEY AREAS :	WHAT IS THE IMPACT CONSIDERED TO BE? *See guidance in the purple box, below, to help you assess the degree of the negative and positive impacts e.g. High, Medium or Low*		CLIMATE CHANGE RATING: *Use drop down list*	WILL THE PROJECT HELP CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL TO BE MORE RESILIENT TO THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE?	WILL THE PROJECT HELP CAMBRIDGE TO BE MORE RESILIENT TO THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE? *Use drop down list*	PLEASE DETAIL HERE THE ACTION THAT WILL BE TAKEN TO AVOID, MITIGATE OR COMPENSATE FOR THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS AND MAXIMISE POSITIVE IMPACTS?		HAS A NET ZERO CARBON OPTION BEEN CONSIDERED? PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS.
5	HEATWAVES	Positive Impact:	Increased/ improved shade & natural ventilation	High Positive	Yes	Yes	Consider: Building orientation and installing measures such as Brise Soleil to reduce heat gain and plant hydration methods.	Significant contribution to shading, reducing overheating impacts.	no
		Nil Impact:	No impact on existing levels of shade & ventilation						
		Negative Impact:	Lack of or reduced shade (e.g. from trees or buildings) & natural ventilation						
6	WATER AVAILABILITY	Positive Impact:	Provision made for an enhancement of water efficiency measures to minimise the impact on water resource availability	Nil	No	No	Consider: Managing water use efficiently, installing measures to use less water such as low water use taps, planting drought resistant plants and using rainwater for irrigation.	No direct benefits. Indorectly, urban cooling from trees reduces local heat stress and evaporation, helping conserve water resources while providing shade and comfort.	no
		Nil Impact:	Levels of water use will not be changed						
		Negative Impact:	Water use will increase and/or no provision made for water management = Negative Impact						
7	FLOODING	Positive Impact:	Sustainable drainage measures incorporated, positive steps to reduce & manage flood risk	Low Positive	Yes	Yes	Consider: The installation of measures to reduce the speed and increase the absorption of rainwater e.g. green roofs, SuDS, permeable paving etc. and alternative arrangements (business continuity)	Trees reduce runoff, improve infiltration, and contribute to SuDS.	no
		Nil Impact:	Levels of surface water run-off & flood risk are not affected						
		Negative Impact:	Levels of surface water run-off will increase, no management of flood risk						
8	HIGH WINDS / STORMS	Positive Impact:	Exposure to higher wind speeds is being actively managed & reduced	Low Positive	Yes	Yes	Consider: the need to install stabilisation measures and ensure robust structures resilient to high winds	Urban trees reduce wind tunnelling and exposure, but minor overall effect.	no
		Nil Impact:	No change to existing level of exposure to higher wind speeds						
		Negative Impact:	Exposure to higher wind speeds is increased or is not managed = Negative Impact						
9	FOOD SECURITY	Positive Impact:	Opportunities & resources for local food production are increased/ enhanced	Nil	No	No	Source food locally, and provide meat-free catering to reduce vulnerability to food shortages and reduce emissions from transport and farming of food	Not directly relevant to food, but indirect benefit through community orchards.	no
		Nil Impact:	No change to opportunities & resources for local food production						
		Negative Impact:	Opportunities & resources for local food production are reduced						
10	BIODIVERSITY	Positive Impact:	Biodiversity will be protected/ enhanced	High Positive	Yes	Yes	Provide net gain mitigation if required and seek enhancement in projects of all types and scale	Trees enhance habitat connectivity and biodiversity, strengthening the city's resilience to climate change.	no
		Nil Impact:	Level of biodiversity will not change						
		Negative Impact:	Biodiversity will decrease						

Weighing up the negative and positive impacts of your project, what is the overall rating you are assigning to your project?: **Medium Positive**

This overall rating is what you need to include in your report/ budget proposal, together with your explanation to be included in the red box below

Guidance on Assessing the Degree of Negative and Positive Impacts:	
Note: Not all of the considerations/ criteria listed below will necessarily be relevant to your project	
Low Impact (L)	* No publicity
	* Relevant risks to the Council or community are Low or none
	* No impact on service or corporate performance
	* No capital assets; or capital assets with lifetime of less than 3 years
Medium Impact (M)	* Local publicity (good or bad)
	* Relevant risks to the Council or community are Medium
	* Affects delivery of corporate commitments
	* Affects service performance (e.g.: energy use; amount of waste; distance travelled) by more than 10%
	* Capital assets with a lifetime of more than 3 years
High Impact (H)	* National publicity (good or bad)
	* Relevant risks to the Council or community are Significant or High
	* Affects delivery of regulatory commitments
	* Affects corporate performance by more than 10%
	* Capital assets with a lifetime of more than 6 years

In the box below please summarise the projects impacts (the reasons for the ratings given in column E above) to explain how the overall rating for the project/ proposal has been derived (Cell E37). Please also highlight any negative impacts your project may have and how you plan to avoid, mitigate or compensate for these (as you will have detailed in column I above).

The overall impact of the Urban Forest Strategy is assessed as moderately positive, with benefits across rating areas of energy use and heatwaves, transport, and biodiversity. In terms of mitigation, the Strategy supports carbon sequestration through the protection and planting of long-lived, large-canopy species, reduces energy demand from buildings by providing shade that lowers summer cooling requirements, flooding, storms and biodiversity.In terms of mitigation, the Strategy supports carbon sequestration through the protection and planting of long-lived, large-canopy species, reduces energy demand from buildings by providing shade that lowers summer cooling requirements, and improves local air quality by intercepting pollutants and particulates For adaptation, the Strategy delivers urban cooling to reduce heat stress, reduces surface water runoff, and promotes species diversification and drought-tolerant planting to increase resilience under changing climate conditions. In relation to biodiversity and the wider environment, the Strategy enhances habitat connectivity, secures biodiversity sustainability and enhancement through new planting and sensitive management of veteran and high-value trees, and improves stormwater quality by capturing and filtering non potable water before it enters the treatment system. While the overall benefits are medium rather than high because the Strategy's indirect contributions to carbon reduction are less significant than direct emissions savings, no significant negative impacts have been identified.

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Appendix 6 Summary of UFS Delivery Framework

Summary of UFS Delivery Framework

Strategic Aims (what the Strategy seeks to achieve):

1. Increase canopy cover
2. Improve the condition and longevity of existing trees
3. Ensure equitable access to the benefits of the urban forest
4. Embed trees and canopy into policy and decision-making
5. Support biodiversity and habitat connectivity
6. Promote shared stewardship and community participation
7. Build and maintain a strong evidence base

Delivery Approaches (how the Strategy will be delivered):

1. Manage More
2. Protect More
3. Plant More
4. Engage More

Delivery opportunities (how activity will be prioritised and shaped)

1. Targeting areas of high need and prioritising canopy change.
2. Utilise and enhance tools and data for decision making
3. Deliver in partnership
4. Monitoring, adapt and respond

Policies (what will guide decisions):

Manage More

M1 - Health, safety and legal duties prioritised

M2 - Pest and disease management

M3 - Trees, damage and subsidence

M4 - Capacity and resourcing

M5 - Trees on housing and other Council land

Protect More

P1 - Regulatory protection (TPOs and planning)

P2 - Resisting unjustified tree loss

P3 - Enforcement for unauthorised works

P4 - Planning conditions and development management

P5 - Review and modernisation of TPO coverage (aspirational)

P6 - Protection of public tree assets and compensation

Plant More

PL1 - Targeted new planting

PL2 - Funded establishment period (aspirational)

PL3 - Replacement planting

PL4 - Innovative planting in constrained locations (aspirational)

Engage More

E1 - Public and partnership engagement

E2 - Joined-up management of the urban forest (aspirational)

E3 - Community participation and valuation (aspirational)

E4 - Clear information and guidance

Actions (what will be delivered)

1. Increase canopy cover
2. Improve the condition and longevity of existing trees
3. Ensure equitable access to the benefits of the urban forest
4. Embed trees and canopy into policy and decision-making
5. Support biodiversity and habitat connectivity
6. Promote shared stewardship and community participation
7. Build and maintain a strong evidence base
8. Strengthen the capacity and resourcing needed to deliver the Strategy

Key Performance Indicators (how progress will be monitored):

1. Citywide canopy cover change
2. Condition and management of Council trees
3. Planting and removal trends
4. Equity of canopy distribution
5. TPO and planning outcomes
6. Veteran trees and biodiversity indicators
7. Community engagement metrics
8. External funding secured

9. Delivery capacity and budget

REPORT TITLE: CITY CENTRE HEAT NETWORK PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

To: Cabinet 24 March 2026

Lead Member: Rosy Moore, Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Environment

Report by:

Jaques van der Vyver, Senior Development Manager, Development
Tel: 01223 450000 Email: jaques.vandervyver@cambridge.gov.uk

Wards affected:
All

Director Approval: Director Lynne Miles confirms that the report author has sought the advice of all appropriate colleagues and given due regard to that advice; that the equalities impacts and other implications of the recommended decisions have been assessed and accurately presented in the report; and that they are content for the report to be put to the Executive Councillor for decision.

1 Recommendations

That Cabinet Agrees

1.1 To support the next steps in this transformative project to decarbonise a significant portfolio of Council and Academic estates in the city centre of Cambridge.

1.2 to support the Draw down of £0.6m from the Council's Climate Change Fund to fund pre-commercialisation activities

1.3 To delegated authority to the Assistant Director, Development in consultation with the Director of Economy & Place and the Chief Finance Officer to submit a bid to the Green Heat Network Fund (GHNF) in 2026 to bring forward a City Centre Heat Network. This will require the council to:

I. enter into an updated Memorandum of Agreement with Academic Partners and County Council,

II. Appoint a Specialist delivery Contractor to undertake design and commercialisation plans

1.4 That Cabinet Notes:

1.4.1 subject to the additional project development a final decision on whether to proceed would be brought to Cabinet and then to Full Council no later than March 2028

1.4.2 Connecting a heat network to Council assets would enable budgetary savings and carbon benefits for the Civic Quarter project compared to the business case estimates presented to Cabinet in September 2025.

1.4.3 At this outline stage the estimated project cost could be up to £121m, with the council share of £4m equity, £4.2m connection fees and a £18.4m loan at a rate compliant with Subsidy control.

1.4.4 With planned Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), and conditions arising from a Structural Changes Order (SCO), it is recognised that this final decision to proceed or not will need scrutiny and agreement from the Shadow Authority.

1.4.5 Feedback to Cabinet from the Performance, Assets and Strategy Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting of 3rd March 2026 will be issued separately.

2 Executive Summary

2.1 Since June 2023 officers have been working with experts and academic partners to develop an Outline Business Case for a Cambridge City Centre Heat Network.

2.2 The Detailed Project Development (DPD) has now proposed a network using air source and river source heat pumps supported by a transition to electric boilers from gas boilers to generate energy.

2.3 As part of this work, a Memorandum of Agreement was jointly signed with the County, and 19 Academic institutions with significant heating demand in the city centre. Connections to many of these partner heat loads forms the basis of a Minimum Viable Product identified for delivery at a cost of c. £121m.

2.4 Compared to business as usual using gas boilers, the proposed district heating network could produce a **93% carbon emissions reduction** over a 40-year project lifetime. A heat network would play a significant role in reducing the Council's emissions as well as key anchor institutions in the centre of Cambridge.

2.5 Current modelling suggests that this communal approach to decarbonisation is more cost effective than individual institutional approaches by c.15-20% over 40 years. From the council perspective, it has been calculated that there is a saving of c £1m capital cost if DH is used rather than trying to decarbonise four strategic assets individually.

2.6 The estimated cost of the £121m is made up of: connection costs of £70.5m (£75m as inflated in the Financial Model). This is split £4.1m to Council and £66.4m other customers); grant of £19.7m; on-lending by the council of £18.4m; and equity funding of £7.9m (£4m council and £3.9 from other investors).

2.7 To date, 19 of the projects 20 Partners have expressed an in-principal support as customers, subject to continued review and viability. Seven Academic Partners have expressed interest in potential joint investment with the Council.

2.8 The DPD confirms that a council led Joint Venture (51% council ownership) offers the best outcomes for all parties. Alternatives considered and rejected are summarised in section 3.4.

2.9 A council led Joint Venture will mean the council shares construction, delivery and reputational risk with established academic partners; ensures a small return on investment; and ensures targeting a low enough connection charge to incentivise all partners to fast-track decarbonisation.

2.10 Current modelling for a Council led JV shows a respectable post-tax nominal equity IRR of 12% assuming c. £20m of grant is received from the Green Heat network Fund.

2.11 This report outlines the next steps, which would be to develop the strategic objectives for a council led joint (51% ownership) venture to a market led scheme, applying for grant funding and progress procurement to identify and appoint a specialist delivery and management contractor.

2.12 Officers would then produce a further report for Cabinet and Full Council no later than March 2028 outlining, if officers are minded to recommend, the final proposals and development costs, and to seek approval to appoint a long-term contractor and operator for a City Centre District Heating Network which can be expanded over time. This will be subject to scrutiny from a Shadow Authority if LGR proceeds.

2.13 The draft report was scrutinised by the Performance, Assets and Strategy Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 3 March 2026.

2.14 In response to comments raised at the meeting, comments on risk mitigation relating to grid capacity and River Source Heating offtake have been added to this report, together with a clearer note on mitigation activities covering design integration within heritage context of the city and further minor amendments. The Chair of the Committee will provide comments to Cabinet at its meeting on 24 March 2026. We note that a number of points raised in Scrutiny relate to later detailed stages of work, and as such these will be incorporated and answered as appropriate should the project be approved to continue.

3 Background

3.1 In June 2023, the Environment Scrutiny Committee approved funding of £180,000 to match grant funding, to develop the Outline Business Case for a renewable heat network in the city centre.

3.2 The DPD study was facilitated by the council working with 17 colleges, Cambridge University, ARU and the County Council. Sustainability Co (Project Management), Buro Happold (Technical), Amberside Advisors(Commercial and financial advice) and Sharpe Pritchard (Legal) were appointed to undertake specialist works packages. A service agreement was signed with the National Wealth Fund (NWF) to provide further commercial advice, and the project has additionally benefited from review input from the Greater South-East Net Zero Hub, the Danish Board of District Heating, and an Expert Advisory Panel consisting of academic specialists.

3.3 Current working proposals - Minimum Viable Product (MVP)

3.3.1 The map below highlights a network using air source and river source heat pumps supported by electric boilers and transitional gas boilers in the interim of up to 15 years, to supply peak demand (10-15% of overall generation). Two phases (2030-2032 and 2032-2035) are proposed with three energy centres at a cost of c. £121m (including design build and contingency)

3.3.2 The proposed scheme will deliver heat to a significant portion of academic and Council properties within the city centre. This is forecast to produce a 93% carbon reduction over a 40-year project lifetime compared to Business As Usual (BAU) gas heating systems.

3.3.3 Ground source heat capture has been confirmed as not viable at city-scale without future linked cooling demand to replenish geological heat reserves.

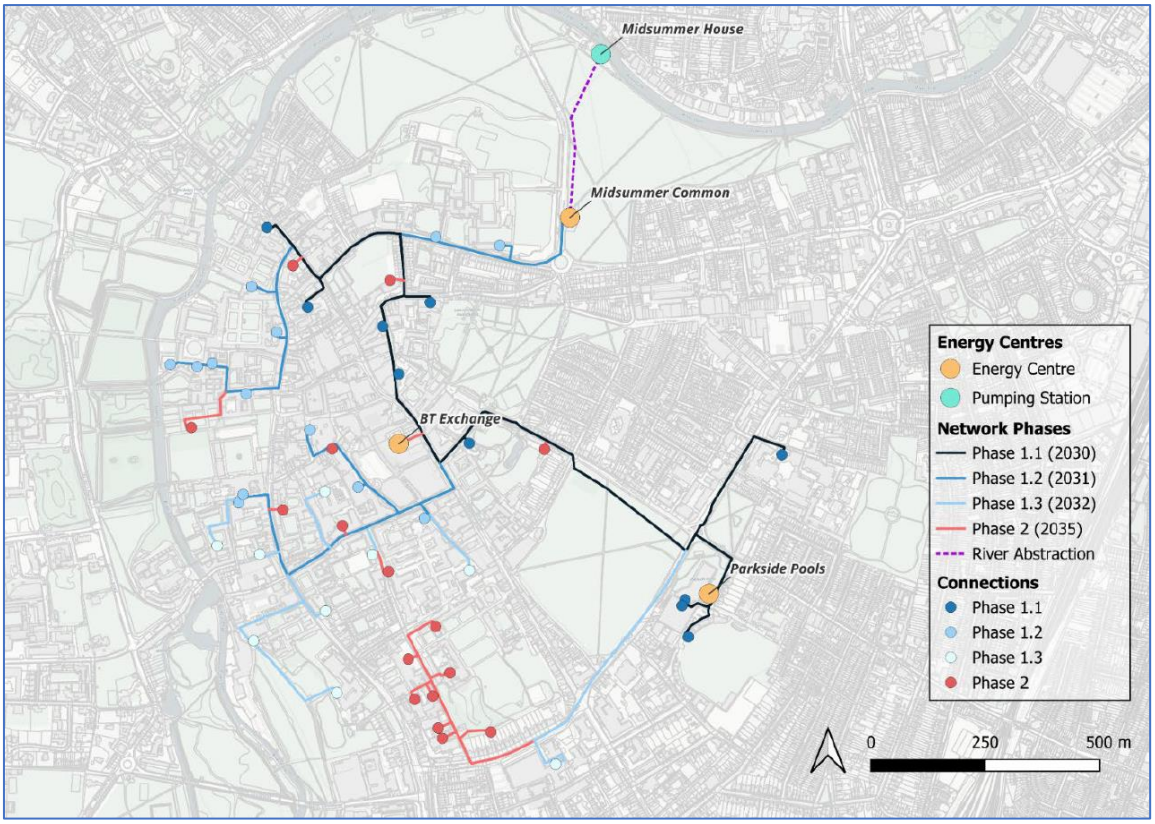


Figure 1: Proposed Heat network and Connection Phasing

3.3.4 From the Council perspective, it has been calculated that there is a saving of c £1m capital cost if the heat network is used, rather than trying to individually decarbonise four strategic assets – the Guildhall, Corn Exchange, Parkside Swimming Pool and Kelsey Kerridge. Similar blended efficiency figures have been calculated for academic partners.

3.3.5 This also allows full decarbonisation of listed assets such as the Corn Exchange, which due to structural constraints cannot be fully decarbonised on site. A heat network is the only viable decarbonisation option for such buildings.

3.3.6 A high Temperature (85-80Deg) network is currently proposed – this allows maximal connection of both historic and new buildings. Subject to fabric improvements, there is flexibility to reduce operating temperatures in future, which would improve efficiency over time.

3.3.7 Thermal storage is anticipated to form part of the heat network proposals and will be maximally incorporated to best balance performance efficiency and cost

3.4 Proposed Delivery Model

3.4.1 Different delivery models have been reviewed from Concession (private sector delivery) through to a 100% council owned Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)

3.4.2 A private sector led scheme - a Concession model - is expected to increase tariff costs over time, disincentivising the council and other parties from connecting. However, it does mean minimal construction, operational and reputational risk, with less management costs.

3.4.3 A Concession model will be considered as a viable alternative delivery option during Commercialisation Stage. Whilst it reduces overall level of control, it could be facilitated by council and Partner involvement, which facilitation would be subject to agreement on Key Performance metrics and requirements.

3.4.4 It would however require a balance to be struck between additional requirements vs Concession’s freedom to practice within their business model.

3.4.5 Whilst a 100% council led SPV is attractive, all the construction, operational and reputational risks would sit with the Council. This delivery option is not recommended for further consideration during Commercialisation Stage.

3.4.6 Officers recommend that Commercialisation Stage focuses on the preferred delivery option of a council led (51% ownership) Joint Venture, together with Academic Partners. This would mean the council can obtain lower cost financing (and lend to onward for a margin in line with subsidy control regulations). The Council also shares construction, delivery and reputational risk with Partners who hold a long-term vested interest in the City; ensures a return on investment; and ability to implement Connection Charges at levels which can incentivise all partners to fast-track decarbonisation.

3.4.7 Modelling for a Council led JV shows a respectable post-tax nominal equity IRR of 12% compared to a funding eligibility target of at least 10%.

3.4.8 The council led JV balances the competing needs of:

i. reduced connection charges (to incentivise the switch to the heat network);

ii. a return on investment (to justify financing the scheme);

iii. lower borrowing costs being facilitated (to enable connection and expansion);

iv. direct control of delivery for all interested parties (rather than being passive customers),

v. ability to target long term expansion, social value opportunities and reinvestment in the city

3.4.9 to date, nineteen of twenty Partners have expressed in-principal support as customers, subject to continued review and viability.

3.4.10 Additionally, seven Academic Partners have expressed interest in potential joint investment with the Council.

3.4.11 Formal legal agreements will only be confirmed at point of Final Investment Decision.

3.5 Potential for growth due to Heat Zoning Regulations

3.5.1 The Government's Heat Zoning Guidance consultation response has now been published and has confirmed that Regulations are to be put in place which would require heat loads (currently noted as above c100MWh/yr) to connect to a heat network, where it is shown to be the most economically viable route to decarbonisation.

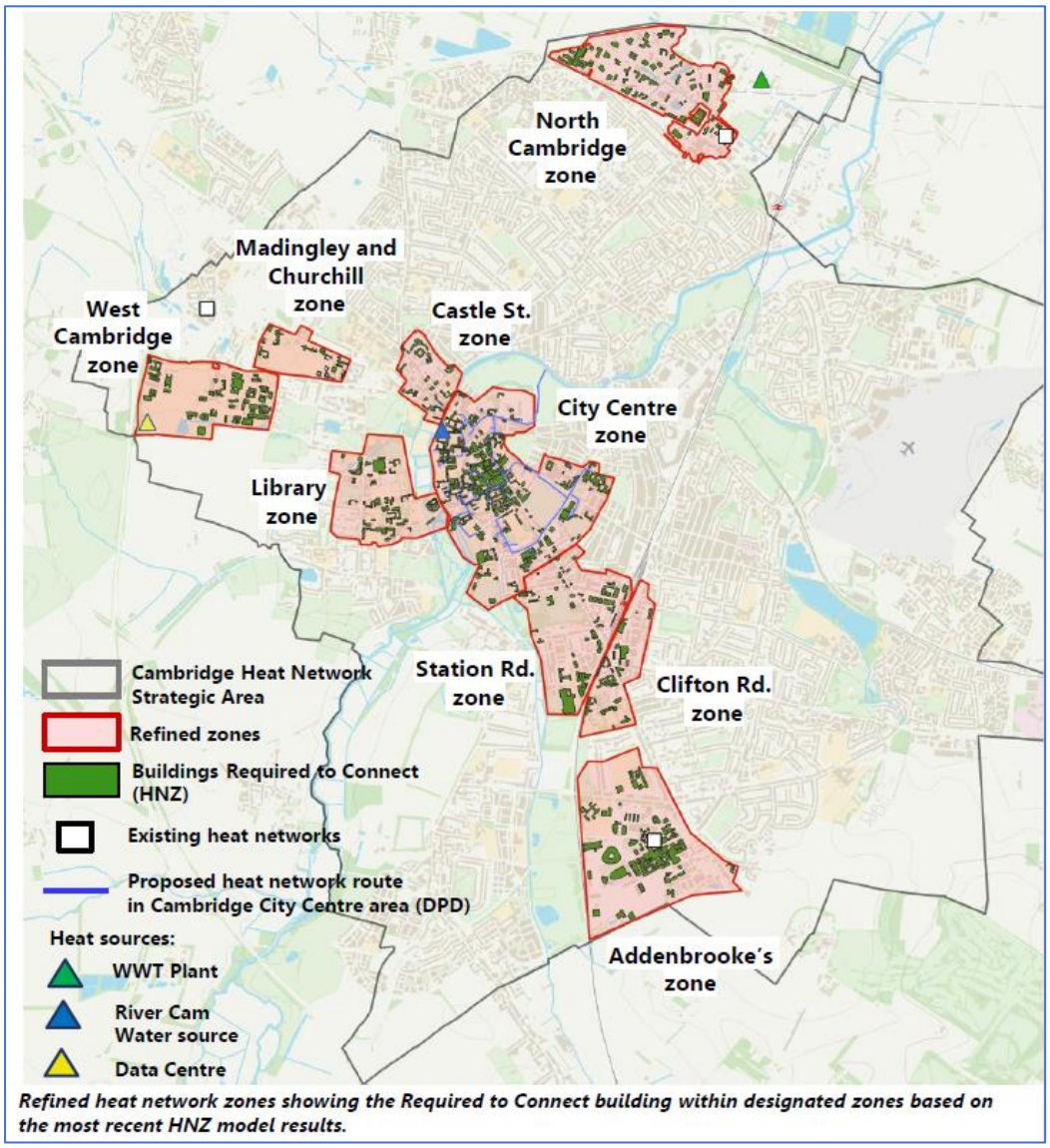
3.5.2 Early Zoning Studies by Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) indicated potential Heat Zoning for Cambridge City, opening up the opportunity for the City to land within the hands of potential Heat Network Developers who first reach gateway signoffs for heat network Incumbency Rights.

3.5.3 The current work undertaken by officers has targeted early consideration of Zoning implications for the Council and funding partners, ensuring that the Council positions itself with the greatest level of control of a heat network, should these Regulations be put in place as forecast.

3.5.4 There is identified additional expansion capacity of c. 45% within the core Minimum Viable Product area, formed of commercial heat loads which may be required to connect to a heat network within Cambridge City Centre, should Zoning be enacted.

3.5.5 Expansion opportunities are identified across the Council and Strategic Partner's pre-emptive Zoning Refinement Study and highlights c. 600% additional heating demand expected to be captured by government regulations, providing significant long-term expansion opportunities across the City.

3.5.6 Linked to these expansion opportunities is a further opportunity for infill residential connections, at a cost competitive to property-by property retrofit. Such residential expansion is, however, only realisable as a viable proposition once a core heat network is delivered and active (discussed further in Part 9).



Refined heat network zones showing the Required to Connect building within designated zones based on the most recent HNZ model results.

Figure 2: Heat Network Commercial Load Expansion opportunity, as identified by Zone Refinement Study

4 Corporate Plan and Council Vision

4.1 This project meets 3 of the Councils 4 key priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan for 2022-2027.

4.1.1 Leading Cambridge's response to the climate and biodiversity emergencies and creating a net zero council by 2030;

4.1.2 Tackling poverty and inequality and helping people in the greatest need;

4.1.3 Modernising the council to lead a greener city that is fair for all.

4.1.4 This Project fully enshrines the vision of the Council, working collaboratively with partners, and ensuring "one Cambridge Fair for all", and focussing outcomes on:

I. Residents enjoying a high quality of life and exemplar public services, establishing a New utility and significant improvements to air quality

II. Decarbonisation and sustainability, as a core objective of this project

III. Innovation, leading on renewable infrastructure delivery

IV. Ensuring Development Is sustainable and inclusive

5 Development Programme

5.1 Figure 3 below outlines the development programme. This is a ten year phased programme.

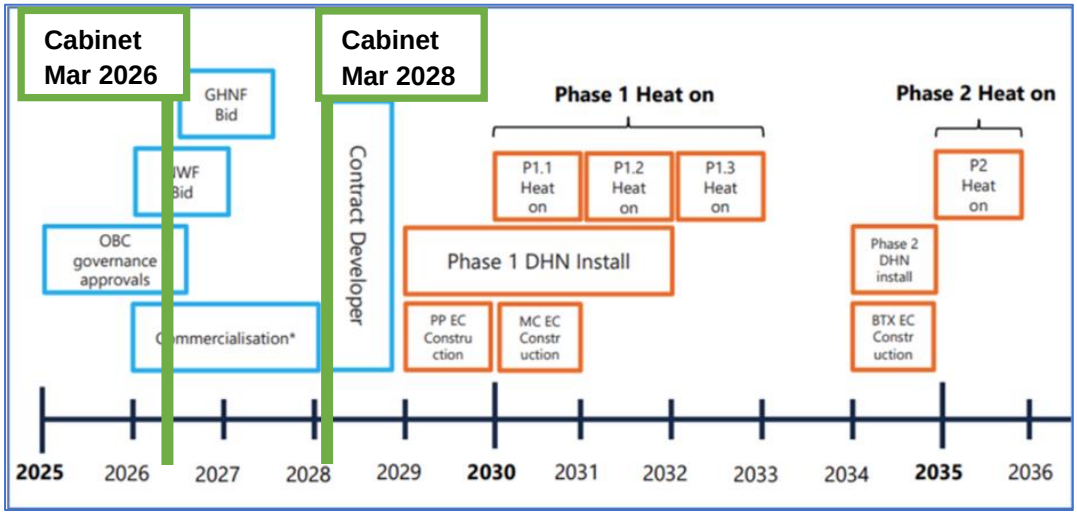


Figure 3: Heat Network Delivery Phasing

5.2 Phase 0 (blue): applying for grant funding, market testing and developing the Final Business Case.

5.3 Next steps toward delivery would be to proceed to Pre-Commercialisation, and to commence Commercialisation should Government funding be realised. Bridge Funding is needed to carry programme through gateways to:

5.3.1 Develop, strengthen and de-risk the Business Case

5.3.2 Market testing with specialist Design Build Operate and Maintain (DBOM) specialists or alternatively potential concession partners

5.3.3 Seek legal advice on delivery model, Joint Venture and Company structure

5.3.4 Establishment of an appropriate Joint Venture Holding Company for a JV customer Owned Energy Company, should this favoured approach be realised

5.3.5 Procurement of early specialist contractors for derisking activities

5.3.6 establishment of Power Purchase Agreements with potential consumers

5.3.7 Key Stakeholder consultation and engagement

5.4 If the decision is to proceed with further technical work, officers would produce a further report for Cabinet and then to Full Council no later than March 2028 outlining, if officers are minded to recommend, the final Investment proposals, development costs, and to seek approval to enter into the main Design, Build, Operations and Maintenance contract with a specialist heat network developer.

5.5 Figure 3 (5.1) outlines the phased approach to installation, and then operating the Cambridge City Centre Heat Network.

6 Benefits and Risks

6.1 Benefits

6.1.1 Council control of decarbonisation and expansion

6.1.2 Fast-tracked decarbonisation in Cambridge City Centre and helping to work towards the Council's vision of a net zero Cambridge

6.1.3 Reducing the emissions of Council buildings, playing a significant role in progress towards the Council's net zero targe

6.1.4 Reduction of c506,000 tonnes of CO2 (93%) against business as usual, and within a fast-tracked timeline (7.1% of which directly attributed to Council emissions, refer Part 10)

6.1.5 Reduction of c2.5 million m3 of gas usage, leading to significant local air quality improvements across the City.

6.1.6 Linked Biodiversity improvements targeted at 20%, to align with Council Planning targets.

6.1.7 Electrical infrastructure improvements to accommodate large-scale move away from gas usage, as well as possibility to link electrical events and mooring infrastructure to works at Midsummer common (associated smaller-scale decarbonisation).

6.1.8 Long term expansion opportunities (+600% commercial expansion capacity indicated), and ability to direct such expansion.

6.1.9 Disruption mitigation through single project approach, and linked clearly to roadway improvements.

6.1.10 Subject to overall business viability, opportunity to link to social value undertakings.

6.2 Dependencies and Risks

Risk	**Mitigation**
Decision making cycles require coordination across 20 partner institutions	Early engagement and long lead-in periods allowed. Confirming bridging approvals of support provide sufficient comfort to proceed, while investment and final connection undertakings are retained for formalisation once delivery has been sufficiently derisked for Council and Partners.
Financial Risk – Costs of investment and connection are High, however remain lower that the option of decarbonisation at an individual level	Several Strategic Partners and additional external stakeholders have expressed an interest in providing support and investment, together with expressing interest in connecting Partner investment is led by associated benefit of long-term facilitation and shared control as opposed to direct financial return
Viability reliant on grant funding	Funding bid is seen as competitive but would aim to maximise funding. Strong partnership undertaking, commitments to Social Value and expansion opportunity will increase opportunity for successful grant bid

Risk	Mitigation
Reliant on significant borrowing	Any improvement in GILTS Rates will also improve the NPV On-lending margins assumed in line with Subsidy Control
Grid Capacity	Mitigated through Interim gas usage, Early engagement with UKPN, and later stage move to 100% electrical generation
Planning	Planning Permissions will be required. Location of appropriate energy centres has been difficult, and development will include significant constraints. Selected sites have been through 3 rounds of pre-application advice and are considered deliverable, subject to appropriate Design and Conditioning. Agreement with Conservation and Historic England to agree design principles for energy infrastructure which fits local context
River Source heating - Offtake	Engagement with Environment Agency – current indication well within comfortable offtake levels of both flow and temperature.
Highways Disruptions	Disruption is a key consideration however it must be seen in context. Should 20 Strategic Partners and other commercial property owners in Cambridge city centre progress standalone decarbonisation activities, the cumulative city impact will also be higher, and can be expected to be over an extended period, as opposed to the heat network programme with dedicated construction periods. Early engagement with highways authorities has commenced but it is flagged that Political-level support and engagement between City and County will be a key requirement to ensuring deliverability. We

Risk	Mitigation
	have also partnered with the CPCA on pilot consideration of Multi-Utility Tunnels, specifically considering East Rd.
Archaeological risk	Archaeological risk is considered high within the city centre. Early engagement and studies are being undertaken as priority derisking works and additional contingencies have been factored into cost considerations together with exploratory core sampling.
reliance on interim gas usage	In common with many new UK heat network projects, interim gas usage for peak heating demand is needed to reduce early capital, thereby ensuring project viability by maximising the number of connections in the Minimum Viable Product, with linked connection recharge reduction and later (15-20yr) spend. This is a time limited exercise, with a longstop date of 20years currently considered, after which electric boilers will be used for peak heating, making the heat network fully electrified. As a result, the decarbonisation achieved during the full 40 years has reduced from a 97% to 93% reduction. This however will remain under review.

7 Financial Implications

7.1 The estimated cost of £121m is made up of:

7.1.1 connection costs of £70.5m (£75m as inflated over time in the Financial Model). This is split £4.1m to Council and £66.4m other customers at current value;

7.1.2 grant of £19.7m;

7.1.3 lending by the council of £18.4m;

7.1.4 and equity funding of £7.9m (£4m Council and £3.9 from other investors)

7.2 Modelling for a Council led JV shows a nominal post tax equity IRR of 12% compared to a funding eligibility target of at least 10%. The NPV is positive for the council due to the on lending and is 0 for other equity investing partners. This is based on a standardised counterfactual and does not take into account preferential lending rates which each Partner may have access to.

7.3 Partner investment remains subject to individual consideration of benefit and return, with long term control and surety of supply being a shared core value between partners and Council. An investment decision is on this basis of benefit.

7.4 This project is however fully reliant on grant funding from the government to be viable, and proposals to proceed are subject to such successful receipt of Funding from the Green Heat Network Fund.

7.5 Given the complexities of the project, sensitivities to cost overruns have been considered, including a worst-case scenario 30% cost overrun, ensuring that return hurdle rates remain met and can be balanced through shared consumer/investor/developer risk.

7.6 Additional consideration of full electrification at early stages is covered in Part 10, however the current approach to ensure flexibility and cost-effective benefit to all parties is reflected in the model for interim gas usage to subsidize peak heating demand.

7.7 Once operational, additional equity investment at points of network expansion would be met through Business-as-usual investment management and budgetary processes.

7.8 To ensure timely delivery within target timeframes, avoiding delays which would reduce consumer interest given pressures to replace existing eating infrastructure, bridge funding of a pre-commercialisation period is proposed.

7.9 £600,000 of funding to cover pre-commercialisation activities will be applied for from the Council's Climate Change Fund, which is subject to the application meeting the fund's criteria and being approved by the Council's Net Zero Programme Board and Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Environment. This funding request would only be made subject to Cabinet approval to proceed with the next stage of work. This expenditure is undertaken at risk as ability to proceed with full heat network delivery is reliant on successful funding bid to the Green Heat Network Fund. The next round of funding from GHNF is expected to open for bidding in March/April 2026, with outcomes expected to be reported by September/October 2026. Successful bidding is targeted to coincide with the early establishment of a Joint Venture Vehicle, and proceeding to procurement of a specialist Design, Build, Operate and Maintenance contracting partner.

7.10 Should pre-commercialisation not be undertaken, there would a delay period of 6-9 months, which will strongly impact ability of partners to rely on heat network connection, in the face of ageing heating infrastructure which needs to be replaced, and pressure to develop timeous decarbonisation plans. Internal funding aims to streamline all processes to maximise buy in from partners and other potential consumers. There is also significant competition for expertise in the sector, which will increase over time. A rapid approach to retain delivery momentum balances risk and opportunity for successful delivery and adoption.

7.11 Pre-commercialisation expenditure will additionally be subsidized by any underspend carried forward from the DPD Study. Such underspend is expected currently to be c£98,000, and has been jointly sourced from council and academic partner contributions.

8 Legal Implications

8.1 Specialist legal Services are appointed to advise on all aspects of Project delivery and delivery vehicle establishment.

9 Equalities and socio-economic Implications

9.1 The ability to deliver a City Centre Heat network as proposed relies on Government funding to ensure viability, and as part of this funding application is assessed against a set measure of Social Internal Rate of Return (SIRR).

9.2 This SIRR assesses the overall return value of a project to society, both economically and socially. It considers the full range of costs and benefits, both private and social, associated with a project. The SIRR is calculated in much the same way as the financial IRR, except that it instead considers both the private and social costs and benefits over the lifetime of the project.

$$Social\ IRR = Economic\ IRR + Carbon\ Abatement\ Value + Air\ Quality\ Damage\ Cost$$

9.3 To calculate the SIRR the costs and benefits are measured against the counterfactual where the proposed project is not implemented. As with a financial IRR, the SIRR is expressed in monetary terms. Therefore, to calculate the SIRR, it is first necessary to put a monetary value on all the relevant costs and benefits. The social benefits included are:

9.3.1 Air quality damage costs - The Green Book supplementary guidance provides air quality damage costs from primary fuel use in pence per kilowatt hour. These are used to evaluate the impact of the change in air quality of a proposed heat network

9.3.2 Carbon abatement value - The Green Book supplementary guidance provides guidance on the value to society in saving one tonne of carbon. Therefore, the net social impact on carbon emissions can then be given a monetary value using DESNZ carbon prices. This can be used to compare the carbon emissions associated with supplying heat through the counterfactual heating technology and the proposed heat network.

9.4 Using the above methodology, the Social Impact for the Network as proposed returns a social value IRR of 47.9% post grant funding (20.5% pre-grant), well exceeding the target SIRR of "3.5% or greater". It is worth noting that the transitional gas option being adopted shows a greater SIRR than a full electric scenario (25.2% post grant) as the calculation considers both carbon/air quality abatement and overall project Rates of financial return.

9.5 In addition to standard Market Transformation social value commitments required by GHNF, the project aims to deliver strategic added value by capitalising upon both the strength of its strategic partnership and Cambridge's academic prowess. It is proposed to achieve this through shared commitment to social value and education, with potential avenues being investigated for reinvesting into expansion of the CCCHN, addressing of fuel poverty, and linked education/training.

9.6 In accordance with the Public Sector Equality Duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Council has given due regard at this early stage to the potential equalities implications of the proposed study. National public health evidence, including from the UK Health Security Agency, demonstrates that the health impacts of poor air quality and climate change are not evenly distributed. Older people and disabled people, in particular, are at greater risk of adverse health outcomes from heat, air pollution and related environmental stressors.

9.7 There is also strong evidence that people living in areas of socio-economic deprivation are disproportionately exposed to environmental harms; while poverty is not a protected characteristic under the Equality Act, it frequently intersects with protected characteristics and may therefore compound disadvantage.

9.8 As this decision relates to commissioning further technical work rather than implementation of specific measures, no direct equalities impacts arise at this stage. However, should the project proceed to the development of options or interventions, a full Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken to assess distributional impacts in detail and to inform mitigation measures.

9.9 A specific point of note is the focus on commercial heat usage for the heat network Minimum Viable proposition. Case studies both locally and abroad have shown clearly that bringing residential connections into a heat network in a cost-viable manner requires an active base network first being established. We note that this project as identified is a Minimum Viable Product, which allows such activation for the City. Future expansion into both residential and commercial heating supply is treated as a Primary Critical Success Factor by all Partners to ensure shared long term benefit across the City.

Critical Success Factors Table

Primary
1. Help decarbonise individual Estates, while enabling potential future heat network expansion
2. Provide cost-competitive & reliable low carbon heat: a. Offer low carbon energy that is better value over contract lifetime against counterfactual(s) b. Provide long-term reliability and at minimum, heat supply availability in line with industry standards
Secondary
1. Maximise social value & education
2. Minimise disruption & share the benefit from construction across the city
3. Showcase sustainability leadership & innovation

10 Climate Change and Environmental implications

10.1 Climate Change Strategy

10.1.1 In discussion around the 2026-2031 Climate Change Strategy, being brought to this meeting of the cabinet as a separate item, much has been said about the direct control the Council has on Carbon Emissions in the city, being only c0.7% direct emission attribution. Action will be needed by the city's institutions and businesses alongside the council to address city-wide emissions.

10.1.2 It has separately been noted that net zero targets are ambitious, and large scale operational changes are required to meet these. These targets are shared by the Academic Partners which have collaborated on the DPD Stage of work looking at a city centre heat network.

10.1.3 The proposals set out in this report, aim to address both the above points. Progressing toward a Joint Venture Partnership where the Council holds a controlling share ensures that direct guidance of decarbonisation can be enshrined in the long term management of the City. Likewise, investment by partners who have significant and long-term investment in the city ensure that all work to a coordinated outcome to the benefit of the City.

10.1.4 Should Market appetite indicate that a Joint Venture as preferred may not be best suited, there remains a fallback to a potential Concession model. Such a Concession would require facilitation by the Council and Academic Partners, and as such there would remain some ability to ensure core requirements are met, however there would be a loss in terms of the ability to directly guide expansion and city investment at scale, and a risk that it won't progress if the market doesn't judge it to be an attractive proposition.

10.2 Transitional arrangements

10.2.1 Bringing forward a large scale infrastructure project holds significant risk, and any increase on upfront capital requirements has significant downstream effects on financial viability.

10.2.2 A key cost item are Substation and electrical grid capacity works required for any significant new electrical usage loads, and the costs associated with meeting these.

10.2.3 Through the DPD stage an “ambitious” full electric and 100% degassed network proposal has been favoured by all partners, given shared decarbonisation commitments. This by necessity has however been reviewed against financial pressures; a full electric option reduces overall financial returns to a level which cannot comfortably be accommodated.

10.2.4 These cost pressures also need to be considered against the value added by such expenditure, and the Council and its parties have a duty of care to ensure that finances are utilised appropriately and provide value for money.

10.2.5 A full upfront move to 100% electrical generation would require c4.5% increase capital expenditure, but also a signficant 6.95% increase in lifetime fuel costs which would be met by both operator and consumers. This would be offset by only a c4% improvement in carbon emmissions reduction.

10.2.6 Ultimately such immediate reliance on 100% electric heating generation loads signficant risk to project deliverability, as well as increases costs to all parties which funds could be best used elsewhere, for example on fabric/insulation and secondary network efficiency imrpovements.

	modelled usage	Reduction against BAU	Carbon reduction over 40 yrs	Social IRR	Financial IRR
	tCO2e (40yrs)	tCO2e (40yrs)			
Business as Usual (counterfactual data)	546,000	-	-		
Ambitious full electric	17,400	528,600	**97%**	**25.2%**	**9.7%**
Transitional gas usage	39,900	506,100	**93%**	**47.9%**	**12%**

	tCO2e (40yrs)	tCO2e per year (to yr20)
Difference Interim vs full electric	22,500	1125
CCC portion of carbon emissions (7.1% of load)	1,598	80

10.2.7 Put forward as a current preferred option is an interim usage of gas boilers which would accommodate peak periods of usage (10-15% of overall generation), to be utilised for a fixed period of 17-20yrs (boiler lifespan) and moving to fully electric generation at point of replacement.

10.2.8 This proposal and evidence base echoes findings of the Governments recently published Heat Zoning Consultation response, which considers that 100% electric isn't realistic in the short term, as well as specialist advice from numerous sources, such as the Danish Board of District Heating.

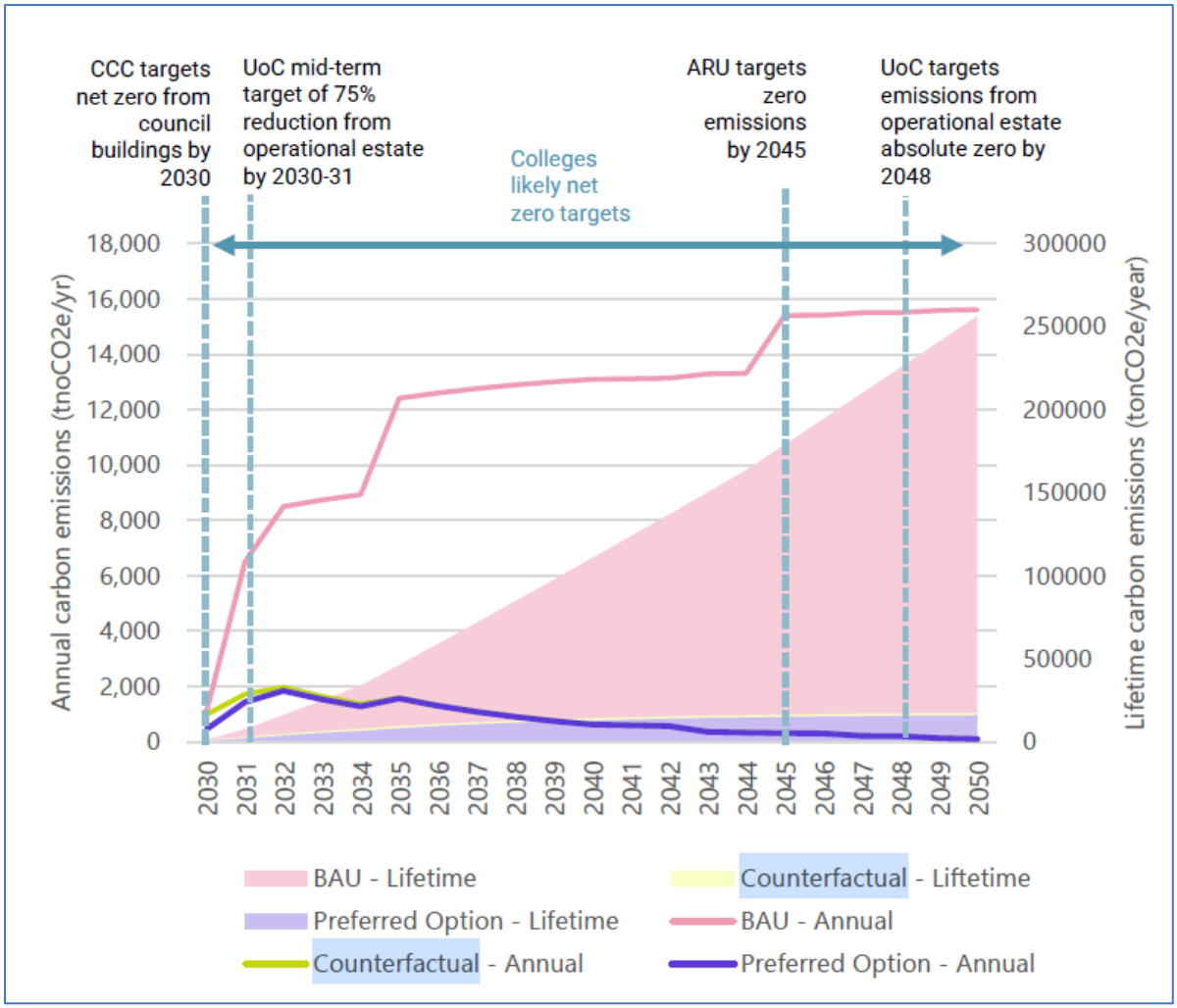


Figure 4: Annual Carbon Emissions forecasts

10.3 Climate Rating Tool

10.3.1 A Climate Rating Tool Assessment has been completed and confirms this project as High Positive Impact.

11 Procurement Implications

11.1 It is proposed that the currently procured Specialist team be retained through pre-commercialisation stages to ensure continuity through this period. This will be conducted through Compliant procurement procedures.

12 Community Safety Implications

12.1 None for this stage of the project.

12.2 Should a full heat Network delivery in future come forward this will as noted be subject to final Cabinet signoff. Delivery will however be undertaken in line with compliance regulatory arrangements covering infrastructure works, and no additional safety implications are identified.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

13 Appendices

Appendix 1: Memorandum of Agreement (Draft)

Appendix 2: Outline Business Case (Partially redacted)

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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UPDATED MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT,

CAMBRIDGE CITY-CENTRTE HEAT NETWORK

1 Introduction

2 This updated Memorandum of Agreement (**MoA**) for the 'Cambridge City-Centre Heat Network Project' (**Project**) is between the following "**Strategic Partners**":

2.1 Cambridge City Council (as lead partner), which has facilitated the Project, has committed in principle to connect to the heat network and is considering becoming the majority shareholder through equity investment.

2.2 University of Cambridge, which is considering connection and equity investment.

[redacted]

2.5 Cambridgeshire County Council. Whilst not having any anchor heat loads in Cambridge city-centre, Cambridgeshire County Council provides strategic support through its energy, highways and archaeology teams.

3 Status

This MoA is not legally binding. No legal obligations or legal rights shall arise between Strategic Partners, who enter into the agreement intending to honour their obligations.

4 Background

4.1 The Project commenced in December 2021 ("**Start Date**"), with Detailed Project Development taking place between Spring 2024 and Winter 2025. It produced an Outline Business Case, which is now subject to formal governance review and feedback by individual Strategic Partners in Q1 2026.

4.2 This MoA builds upon the original Memorandum of Agreement between the same Strategic Partners for Detailed Project Development. This MoA will be used to confirm how Strategic Partners intend to collaborate during Pre-Commercialisation and Commercialisation Stages of the Project. It does not represent a final decision to proceed with the Project or to proceed with the Project in any specific manner.

Shared Vision

Our Vision for the Cambridge City-Centre Heat Network is to set a new standard for sustainable urban living. It is about making Cambridge a model city for the future, where history is preserved, the environment is protected and new technologies help the city thrive.

Cambridge City Council, the University of Cambridge, certain University Colleges, ARU and Cambridgeshire County Council are working together to develop the Business Case for the Cambridge City-Centre Heat Network.

We aim to remove existing and polluting gas boilers from individual buildings, replacing them with a renewable heat network. Our ambition is to connect individual buildings from both the Cambridge City Council, University of Cambridge, University Colleges and ARU estates by 2030.

5 Project Objectives

The Strategic Partners have the following objectives for the Project:

5.1 **Make Cambridge Greener Quicker:** heat networks can be the most cost-effective way to quickly decarbonise cities. We aim to test this further, with the ambition of providing Cambridge city-centre with clean and renewable heating. By avoiding harmful energy sources, we keep the air clean and protect the city's older buildings. We also help to protect against rising energy costs, positioning Cambridge as a leader in sustainable urban living and a case study for historic cities with sustainability ambitions. We will offer insights into collaborative strategies, delivering a heat network that balances modern energy needs with conservation.

5.2 **Strategic Collaboration:** by working together, Strategic Partners can de-risk their own decarbonisation by strategically addressing shared challenges in planning, conservation, power limitations, decarbonisation funding and infrastructure construction. This collaboration opens additional public sector funding opportunities, more cost-effective energy efficiency upgrades, and unites efforts towards shared carbon reduction goals.

5.3 **Spread the Benefits across Cambridge:** we provide a starting point for broader heat network expansion across Cambridge, further bolstering the Project's Business Case. The public sector, universities, schools, houses and businesses can all connect and use cleaner energy, making the entire city a healthier and better place to live for everyone.

5.4 **Boost the Local Economy and Innovation:** the heat network could be more than a way to keep buildings warm. It could also be the launchpad for a 'Living Lab for the city of Cambridge.' This could help improve the heat network's operational performance, reduce costs and help create a circular economy. Combining this new infrastructure with the established strategic partnership and Cambridge's academic expertise, could enable researchers to explore new energy generation technologies, innovative

financing options and behaviour change strategies. This could lead to new inventions, smarter ways to use renewable energy and help make Cambridge a sustainable energy leader.

5.5 **Future-Proof Cambridge:** the heat network will play a pivotal role in reducing the cost of electricity upgrades as we electrify heat. We will reduce the city's peak electricity consumption during high tariff periods, helping Cambridge efficiently manage its energy system. The heat network will fully integrate with both existing buildings and new developments.

6 Pre-Commercialisation Workstreams

6.1 As is detailed in the Management Case, the following workstreams have been identified for the Pre-Commercialisation and Commercialisation Stages:

a) Programme management

b) Strategic Partner governance and quality assurance

c) Stakeholder engagement and communications

d) Technical derisking and betterment

e) Planning and architectural derisking

f) Procurement

g) Commercial derisking and development

h) Financial management

i) Joint venture set-up

j) Heat network digital twin (externally funded)

7 Principles of Effective Collaboration

7.1 All Strategic Partners agree to adopt the following principles in respect of their participation in the Project:

a) Collaborate and share knowledge to increase the Project's chances of success, responding promptly to support requests.

b) Acknowledge that success is not guaranteed - all Strategic Partners proceed at risk.

c) Act in good faith in all dealings with the other Strategic Partners and stakeholders, promoting common interests. Achieving Project objectives depends on mutual support and co-operation as outlined in this MoA.

d) Commit adequate resources to achieve project goals, understanding that each Strategic Partner's resource may vary. Note that heat network programme

management resource for Pre-Commercialisation Stage is being funded by Cambridge City Council.

e) Follow legal requirements and best practice, including public procurement, data protection and freedom of information laws.

f) Provide updates on any internal decisions or changes to programme that may implicate the Project, timing, phasing, physical connection points, or likelihood to connect.

g) Communicate openly about significant risks, issues and opportunities, and collaborate to address risks and seize opportunities. Report any concerns to the Cambridge City Council for resolution.

h) Prepare for heat network connection through any necessary secondary heat network installations/upgrades.

i) Over time, seek to reduce the heat supply flow and return temperatures below 80°C/60°C through energy efficiency improvements at connections across the heat network. Reducing the heat network temperature over time will deliver collective financial and carbon benefits, and cost-competitive customer tariffs. The potential to reduce temperature is limited by the heat supply requirements of the customers and would require all connections to be compatible with the lower temperature regime.

8 Updated Governance Arrangements

8.1 As the Project moves from Detailed Project Development into Pre-Commercialisation and Commercialisation, governance arrangements have been reviewed to align with a likely future Preferred Delivery Model of a customer owned energy company.

8.2 The likely approach for the Preferred Delivery Model is a 51:49 joint venture between Cambridge City Council and up to eight Strategic Partners (such Strategic Partners having elected to take an equity role as well as a potential customer role). This is to be finalised in Pre-Commercialisation and Commercialisation, and the final delivery model needs to be ready to go live at Final Investment Decision in c. summer 2028. Ahead of this, all potential customers and equity investors need to be given the opportunity to influence further Project development through derisking and optimisation.

8.3 Strategic Partners may subsequently choose to update their customer and/or equity investment positions. The new governance arrangements need to be flexible enough to accommodate any such changes. For this reason, the following governance updates are recommended for Pre-Commercialisation and Commercialisation Stages:

a) **Cambridge City Council continues as lead partner**: facilitates Project development, including development of the joint venture customer owned energy company; procurement of DBOM contractor; and securing public-financing for

the Project. Regular meetings will also be arranged with Cambridge City Council finance and procurement officers. Cambridge City Council will take all decisions with regard to Pre-Commercialisation and Commercialisation but will consult with the Shareholder Committee.

b) **Steering Group is replaced by a Shareholder Committee**, which is open to all potential equity investors and customers. This becomes the new strategic decision-making body until the joint venture is established.

c) **Core Group is maintained for operational decision making** until the heat company is established. The Core Group takes operational decisions, monitors progress and provides recommendations to the Steering Group and then its replacement Shareholder Committee.

d) **Expert Advisory Group continues to provide due diligence** during Pre-Commercialisation and Commercialisation.

e) **Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA)** for all Strategic Partners at the point at which the Project moves into Commercialisation Stage.

9 Shareholder Committee

9.1 The Shareholder Committee provides overall strategic oversight and direction to the Project during Commercialisation Stage. It does not provide day-to-day decision making as to the Project, which shall rest with Cambridge City Council. Cambridge City Councillors provide political input into the reports before they go to Shareholder Committee, to ensure ongoing political buy-in.

a) **Frequency of meetings:** Quarterly

b) **Chair:** Cambridge City Council Senior Officer

c) **Vice Chair**: University of Cambridge Senior Officer

9.2 **Attendance:** The Committee is open to all potential equity investors and prospective heat network customers to promote transparency and fair participation. The Cambridgeshire County Council is invited to attend. Advisors/consultants may be invited to present updates and recommendations but will not have voting rights.

9.3 **Voting representatives:** To streamline decision-making, voting will be exercised through three voting blocks, with one voting representative each from (i) Cambridge City Council, (ii) the University of Cambridge, and (iii) the University Colleges.

9.4 **Voting:** Decisions will be taken by simple majority of the voting representatives. Only the three voting representatives may vote. As lead partner, Cambridge City Council needs to support each decision.

9.5 **Secretariat:** Minutes, actions and key decisions will be issued promptly after each meeting for review and agreement.

9.6 **Transition to HeatCo:** The Shareholder Committee will stand down 6–12 months prior to Final Investment Decision, at which point governance will transfer to the HeatCo Board (replacing both the Shareholder Committee and Core Group). The respective roles of equity investors and customers will be set out in the HeatCo governance documentation at that time.

10 Potential Contributions in Kind

10.1 During the Pre-Commercialisation and Commercialisation Stages, Strategic Partners may (but are not obliged to) offer contributions in kind (**Contributions in Kind**) to support development of the Project. Contributions in Kind are intended to assist Project development and de-risking and may improve the Project's affordability and investability.

10.2 Any Contribution in Kind is voluntary and provided at the contributing party's own risk. Nothing in this MoA creates any entitlement to:

a) equity, profit share, preferential customer terms, exclusivity, appointment as supplier/contractor, or priority connection; or

b) reimbursement, compensation, or other financial return,

unless and until expressly agreed in writing in a separate legally binding agreement (for example a Connection Agreement, Land/Wayleave/Lease, Heat Supply Agreement, Shareholders' Agreement, or other Project contract).

10.3 No Contribution in Kind shall be assumed or relied upon for procurement, delivery, funding, or Business Case purposes unless it is documented in a written "**Contribution Schedule**" signed by the Cambridge City Council and the contributing party. Each Contribution Schedule shall (as applicable) set out:

a) a description of the contribution (e.g. land/access rights, plant room space, utilities capacity, data, surveys, design input, river abstraction infrastructure, energy centre hosting, thermal storage hosting);

b) the timetable and conditions precedent (including any necessary internal approvals);

c) responsibilities for costs (including design, surveys, enabling works, permits, utilities upgrades, operation and maintenance, insurance, and reinstatement);

d) any assumptions, dependencies, and interfaces with other works;

e) health and safety, and site access requirements;

f) any necessary third-party consents;

g) the valuation approach (if relevant to the Business Case), clearly stating whether such valuation is for modelling purposes only or intended to form part of future commercial terms; and

h) termination/withdrawal arrangements (including notice periods and consequences).

10.4 Unless expressly agreed otherwise in a Contribution Schedule, each contributing party remains responsible for the condition, performance and safety of any asset, site or information it provides, and bears its own costs and risks in making the Contribution in Kind available. The Cambridge City Council does not accept responsibility for any loss or cost incurred by a contributing party as a result of offering a Contribution in Kind.

10.5 A Strategic Partner may propose to amend or withdraw a Contribution in Kind at any time prior to the relevant binding contract being signed. The Strategic Partner shall provide reasonable notice and use reasonable endeavours to mitigate any material adverse impact on the programme. Any withdrawal or change will be documented and reflected in the Project plan and Business Case.

10.6 For the purposes of the Outline Business Case only (and subject to clause 8.3), indicative Contributions in Kind currently under consideration include arrangements in relation to:

a) Parkside Pool Energy Centre (Cambridge City Council)

b) Midsummer Common Energy Centre (Cambridge City Council)

c) Midsummer House River Abstraction (Cambridge City Council)

d) BT Exchange Energy Centre (Christ's College)

[redacted]

11 Pre-Commercialisation and Commercialisation Funding

11.1 Subject to formal internal approvals and budget availability, Cambridge City Council intends to fund the Pre-Commercialisation Stage at its own risk as an initial contribution towards its anticipated future equity investment in the Preferred Delivery Model. Pre-Commercialisation funding may be supported by the roll-forward of any uncommitted underspends from the Detailed Project Development stage where individual Strategic Partners have confirmed in writing that such underspends may be applied to Pre-Commercialisation costs. All Pre-Commercialisation expenditure is at risk and does not, of itself, create any entitlement for any Strategic Partner to equity, preferential customer terms, reimbursement, or any other commercial return, save as may later be agreed in separate legally binding agreements.

11.2 Any uncommitted underspend arising from Pre-Commercialisation and/or Commercialisation budgets (i.e. funds not contractually committed and not required to

meet outstanding liabilities) shall be retained by and returned to Cambridge City Council as the primary funder of those stages, unless otherwise agreed by Cambridge City Council in writing.

11.3 Progression to Commercialisation Stage will be subject to:

a) approval by the Shareholder Committee to proceed;

b) a successful application to the Green Heat Network Fund (**GHNF**) (or any successor scheme), and compliance with any associated grant conditions; and

c) confirmation of the overall Commercialisation budget and funding plan.

11.4 The Commercialisation Stage funding decision is currently anticipated to be taken in October 2026. While the GHNF application is expected to seek up to £1 million of Commercialisation funding, the Strategic Partners acknowledge that additional funding may be required (for example, to progress to RIBA Stage 3 design for energy centres and pipework in advance of Final Investment Decision). Any requirement for additional funding, and the proposed sources of that funding, shall be presented to the Shareholder Committee for consideration and (where applicable) approval. If GHNF funding is not secured, or if funding is otherwise insufficient, the Cambridge City Council may pause, rescope or discontinue the Project without liability, subject to any existing contractual commitments.

12 **Detailed Project Development funding**

12.1 Detailed Project Development was funded (at risk) as follows:

a) Cambridge City Council £180,000; University of Cambridge £180,000; Heat Network Delivery Unit (HNDU) £272,500; Contributing Colleges £330,000; and ARU £30,000. **Total**: £992,500.

b) "**Contributing Colleges**": Christ's £30k; Clare £20k; Corpus Christi £30k; Jesus £30k; King's £20k; Peterhouse £30k; Queens' £20k; Trinity £50k; Trinity Hall £50k; and St John's £50k. **Total:** £330,000.

12.2 Detailed Project Development contributions do not confer any right to equity. As such:

a) If the Project does not proceed: Contributing Colleges bear their own Detailed Project Development contributions, and no amounts are sought from non-contributing University Colleges.

b) If the Project proceeds: the intention is that the Contributing Colleges' total contributions are indexed by CPI from 31 December 2024 to the calculation date, and recovered from University Colleges that connect, via a Connection Charge allocated in proportion to heat demand served (recognising phased connections).

12.3 For clarity, at the date of this MoA, participating University Colleges who are Strategic Partners but have made no Detailed Project Development contribution are: Downing; Emmanuel; Gonville and Caius; Hughes Hall; Pembroke; Sidney Sussex; and St Catharine's.

13 Intellectual Property (IP)

13.1 For the purposes of this MoA:

a) "**Background IP**" means any intellectual property, know-how, information, software, data, documents, designs, methodologies and other materials that are generated prior to, or outside the scope of, the Project, including all academic intellectual property.

b) "**Results**" means all information, know-how, reports, drawings, designs, models, software, data, inventions and other outputs generated in the course of the Project.

c) "**Project IP**" means the intellectual property rights in the Results.

13.2 Strategic Partners intend that Background IP will remain the property of the relevant Strategic Partner (or its licensors). Nothing in this MoA is intended to transfer ownership of any Background IP.

13.3 Given Cambridge City Council's proposed role as primary funder and facilitator for Pre-Commercialisation and Commercialisation, The intention is that (unless otherwise agreed in writing), the Project IP created through the Project will be held by Cambridge City Council for the purposes of developing, procuring, delivering and operating the heat network and associated assets (and, where relevant, transferred or made available to any future delivery vehicle such as HeatCo). Nothing in this clause 13.3 or this clause 13 as a whole will grant a licence or change the ownership of any intellectual property as between a Strategic Partner and Cambridge City Council. This clause 13.3 only records the manner in which Strategic Partners are content for Cambridge City Council to instruct future work (and deal with future intellectual property) in respect of the Project.

13.4 Strategic Partners may enter into appropriate legally binding arrangements to give effect to this intention (including ownership/assignment and/or licence arrangements, as appropriate).

13.5 Strategic Partners recognise that certain Background IP may need to be used to progress the Project. Strategic Partners intend to negotiate and agree in writing (at the relevant time) any licences required to use a Strategic Partner's Background IP for Project purposes, including (where necessary) rights for Cambridge City Council (and any future HeatCo, funders, and delivery/operations contractors) to use and share that

Background IP for design, procurement, construction, commissioning, operation, maintenance and future expansion.

13.6 Strategic Partners intend that no licence to use, sub-licence or otherwise exploit any intellectual property rights (whether Background IP or Project IP) will be granted or implied unless and until expressly set out in a separate written agreement.

13.7 Strategic Partners intend that improvements or modifications to a Strategic Partner's Background IP will not affect ownership of the underlying Background IP. Where an improvement/modification is developed as part of the Project, the Strategic Partners intend to address ownership and/or licensing of that improvement in the relevant written agreement, taking account of Cambridge City Council's need to deliver and operate the heat network and the Strategic Partner's continuing rights in its Background IP.

13.8 Strategic Partners acknowledge the importance of academic teaching, publication and research. Strategic Partners intend that the University of Cambridge and ARU (and their staff/students) will be able to use Results for academic teaching, publication and academic research, subject to (i) protecting Confidential Information, and (ii) reasonable prior review arrangements to avoid prejudicing any intended protection of IP or Project commercialisation, to be set out in a separate written agreement.

14 Confidentiality

14.1 "**Confidential Information**" is identified as information which is not in the public domain, and which is marked or otherwise indicated in writing to be confidential, or which ought reasonably to be regarded as confidential owing to its nature. Each Strategic Partner agrees to use reasonable endeavours to keep information confidential and not to publish or disclose in any way such Confidential Information, other than to those of its employees, students, directors, officers, advisors or representatives who have a need to know such information for the purposes of the Project.

15 Signatures

15.1 This MoA shall commence on the date of signature by all parties, and subject to no mutual agreement to extend the MoA, shall expire two years later, or on the completion of Commercialisation Stage (whichever comes sooner). Any party may terminate / exit this MoA by giving at least three months' notice in writing to the other parties at any time.

Signed for and on behalf of by:

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Project:City Centre District Heat Network Comemrcialisation **Date:** 10/02/26 **Your Name:Jaques van der Vyver**

1. IMPACT ON CARBON EMISSIONS (MITIGATION OF CLIMATE CHANGE)

	HOW WILL THIS PROJECT/PROPOSAL AFFECT THE FOLLOWING KEY AREAS:	WHAT IS THE IMPACT CONSIDERED TO BE? *See guidance in the purple box, below, to help you assess the degree of the negative and positive impacts e.g. High, Medium or Low*		CLIMATE CHANGE RATING: *Use drop down list*	WILL THE PROJECT MOVE CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL CLOSER TO THE OBJECTIVE OF BEING NET ZERO CARBON BY 2030? *Use drop down list*	WILL THE PROJECT MOVE THE CITY CLOSER TO THE OBJECTIVE OF A NET ZERO CARBON CAMBRIDGE BY 2030? *Use drop down list*	PLEASE DETAIL HERE THE ACTION THAT WILL BE TAKEN TO AVOID, MITIGATE OR COMPENSATE FOR THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS AND MAXIMISE POSITIVE IMPACTS?		HAS A NET ZERO CARBON OPTION BEEN CONSIDERED? PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS.
1	ENERGY USE	Positive Impact:	Energy use will be reduced or renewable energy will be used	High Positive	Yes	Yes	**Consider:** - Reducing demand for energy - Specifying energy efficiency measures (e.g. insulation, low energy lighting) - Generating renewable energy (e.g. heat pumps,	Large scale move to renewable heating infrastructure for council and third party commercial heating requirements. This signifcantly fast tracks decarbonisation activities	Yes. Interim Peak usage supplemented by Gas is considered the most cost effective measure, with a target move to fully electric technlogy
		Nil Impact:	No extra energy use is involved						
		Negative Impact:	More energy (gas and/ or electricity) will be consumed (by CCC or others)						
2	WASTE GENERATION	Positive Impact:	Less waste will be generated OR amount of waste that is reused/ recycled will be increased	High Positive	Yes	Yes	**Consider:** - Will resources be reduced or reused? - Will you use recycled goods? - Will recycling facilities be increased?	Construction waste will be generated however mitigated and control in line with sustainability practices. Single large scale project as opposed to separate undertakings by all 21 partners and other central city commercial properly owners will have a signficantly higher cumulative impact	
		Nil Impact:	No waste will be generated						
		Negative Impact:	More waste will be generated (by CCC or others)						
3	USE OF TRANSPORT	Positive Impact:	The use of transport and/or of fossil fuel-based transport will be reduced	Nil			**Consider:** - Will you purchase an electric vehicle? - Will you specifiy the use of public transport? - How will you reduce the need to travel or transport goods?	NA	
		Nil Impact:	No extra transport will be necessary						
		Negative Impact:	CCC or others will need to travel more OR transport goods more often/ further						
4	SUSTAINABLE FOOD	Positive Impact:	Food will be locally grown and/ or meat-free	Nil			**Consider:** - Use of locally grown/ produced food - Reducing use of imported food - Reducing use of meat	NA	
		Nil Impact:	No change in supply of food						
		Negative Impact:	Food will travel long distances and include meat						

2. IMPACT ON RESILIENCE (ADAPTATION) TO THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

	HOW WILL THIS PROJECT/PROPOSAL AFFECT THE FOLLOWING KEY AREAS :	WHAT IS THE IMPACT CONSIDERED TO BE? *See guidance in the purple box, below, to help you assess the degree of the negative and positive impacts e.g. High, Medium or Low*		CLIMATE CHANGE RATING: *Use drop down list*	WILL THE PROJECT HELP CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL TO BE MORE RESILIENT TO THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE?	WILL THE PROJECT HELP CAMBRIDGE TO BE MORE RESILIENT TO THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE? *Use drop down list*	PLEASE DETAIL HERE THE ACTION THAT WILL BE TAKEN TO AVOID, MITIGATE OR COMPENSATE FOR THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS AND MAXIMISE POSITIVE IMPACTS?		HAS A NET ZERO CARBON OPTION BEEN CONSIDERED? PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS.
5	HEATWAVES	Positive Impact:	Increased/ improved shade & natural ventilation	Low Positive	Yes	Yes	Consider: Building orientation and installing measures such as Brise Soleil to reduce heat gain and plant hydration methods.	Long term ability to be utilised for linked cooling demands but not currently implemened in this fashion	Yes. Interim Peak usage supplemented by Gas is considered the most cost effective measure, with a target move to fully electric technlogy
		Nil Impact:	No impact on existing levels of shade & ventilation						
		Negative Impact:	Lack of or reduced shade (e.g. from trees or buildings) & natural ventilation						
6	WATER AVAILABILITY	Positive Impact:	Provision made for an enhancement of water efficiency measures to minimise the impact on water resource availability	Nil			Consider: Managing water use efficiently, installing measures to use less water such as low water use taps, planting drought resistant plants and using rainwater for irrigation.		
		Nil Impact:	Levels of water use will not be changed						
		Negative Impact:	Water use will increase and/or no provision made for water management = Negative Impact						
7	FLOODING	Positive Impact:	Sustainable drainage measures incorporated, positive steps to reduce & manage flood risk	Nil			Consider: The installation of measures to reduce the speed and increase the absorption of rainwater e.g. green roofs, SuDS, permeable paving etc. and alternative arrangements (business continuity)		
		Nil Impact:	Levels of surface water run-off & flood risk are not affected						
		Negative Impact:	Levels of surface water run-off will increase, no management of flood risk						
8	HIGH WINDS / STORMS	Positive Impact:	Exposure to higher wind speeds is being actively managed & reduced	Nil			Consider: the need to install stabilisation measures and ensure robust structures resilient to high winds		
		Nil Impact:	No change to existing level of exposure to higher wind speeds						
		Negative Impact:	Exposure to higher wind speeds is increased or is not managed = Negative Impact						
9	FOOD SECURITY	Positive Impact:	Opportunities & resources for local food production are increased/ enhanced	Nil			Source food locally, and provide meat-free catering to reduce vulnerability to food shortages and reduce emissions from transport and farming of food		
		Nil Impact:	No change to opportunities & resources for local food production						
		Negative Impact:	Opportunities & resources for local food production are reduced						
10	BIODIVERSITY	Positive Impact:	Biodiversity will be protected/ enhanced	Medium Positive			Provide net gain mitigation if required and seek enhancement in projects of all types and scale	Targetting 20% Biodiversity gain through planning process as adopted Council objective, exceeding the 10% compliant position. Footprint of impact is however limited	
		Nil Impact:	Level of biodiversity will not change						
		Negative Impact:	Biodiversity will decrease						

Weighing up the negative and positive impacts of your project, what is the overall rating you are assigning to your project?: **High Positive**

This overall rating is what you need to include in your report/ budget proposal, together with your explanation to be included in the red box below

In the box below please summarise the projects impacts (the reasons for the ratings given in column E above) to explain how the overall rating for the project/ proposal has been derived (Cell E37). Please also highlight any negative impacts your project may have and how you plan to avoid, mitigate or compensate for these (as you will have detailed in column I above).

Negative impacts relate to disruption of traffice and city services through the construction period however this must be seen against cumulative impact of standalone decarbonisation which would otherwise occur over an extended period.

Guidance on Assessing the Degree of Negative and Positive Impacts:

Note: Not all of the considerations/ criteria listed below will necessarily be relevant to your project

Low Impact (L)	* No publicity
	* Relevant risks to the Council or community are Low or none
	* No impact on service or corporate performance
	* No capital assets; or capital assets with lifetime of less than 3 years
Medium Impact (M)	* Local publicity (good or bad)
	* Relevant risks to the Council or community are Medium
	* Affects delivery of corporate commitments
	* Affects service performance (e.g.: energy use; amount of waste; distance travelled) by more than 10%
	* Capital assets with a lifetime of more than 3 years
High Impact (H)	* National publicity (good or bad)
	* Relevant risks to the Council or community are Significant or High
	* Affects delivery of regulatory commitments
	* Affects corporate performance by more than 10%
	* Capital assets with a lifetime of more than 6 years

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Transition Plan – Guildhall and Corn Exchange

To: Antoinette Nestor, Cabinet Member

Meeting: Cabinet

Date: March 24th 2026

Report by:
Sam Scharf, Director of Communities
Email: sam.scharf@cambridge.gov.uk

Wards affected:
TBC

Director Approval: Sam Scharf confirms that the report author has sought the advice of all appropriate colleagues and given due regard to that advice; that the equalities impacts and other implications of the recommended decisions have been assessed and accurately presented in the report; and that they are content for the report to be put to the Cabinet/Cabinet Member for decision.

1. Recommendations

1.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Approve progression to planning submission for a temporary performance and events venue to support the transition period during the closure of the Corn Exchange and Guildhall, subject to statutory processes and continued engagement.
2. Note that preliminary expenditure within the £1million approved provision will be incurred prior to a planning application and September Cabinet decision on the Civic Quarter project.
3. Approve progression to procurement of required venue infrastructure, equipment and ancillary services, in preparation for a final decision in September.
4. Note the indicative programme and key delivery milestones.
5. Note that alternative transition options have been considered and assessed.

2 Executive Summary

The Corn Exchange and Guildhall are scheduled to close from December 2026 as part of the approved Civic Quarter Programme.

Without a managed transition, there will be a two-year absence of cultural and civic provision from these two venues which currently attract audiences of over 200,000 annually and support civic events, conferencing and community programmes.

As identified in the September Cabinet report[1], further work was required to ensure a successful transition during closure. This report responds to that requirement following

[1] (Public Pack)Agenda Document for Cabinet, 25/09/2025 17:00

exploration of the options recommended by specialist consultants Blue Horizons[2].

A number of scenarios have been considered:

- Do nothing
- Meanwhile use of existing sites
- Phased construction
- Temporary venue
- High quality modular venue

This report seeks approval to progress the temporary venue option to planning and preparatory procurement only. It is estimated that c£60,000 of costs ahead of any final decision will be incurred covering legal, planning and specialist venue and sound consultants.

A final decision on implementation will be taken alongside the wider Civic Quarter decision in September 2026.

No new financial approval is sought beyond the £1m earmarked provision agreed through the 2026/27 Budget.

3. Purpose

3.1 Both the Corn Exchange and Guildhall are scheduled to close from December 2026 for major refurbishment within the Civic Quarter Programme. Without a managed transition, there will be a two-year absence of cultural and civic provision from these two venues which currently attract audiences over 200,000 and support civic events and large-scale conferencing and community programmes.

Alongside this there is projected impact on secondary economic activity of £21.6million in business and income in the city.

As highlighted in the Cabinet paper in September 2025[3] this report responds to the challenge of providing a structured transition plan that maintains visibility, protects staff, maintains promoter and stakeholder relationships, and contributes to the rapid recovery on reopening. Three scenarios have been considered: do nothing, a temporary venue, and a larger more permanent venue.

This report recognises that an earmarked provision has been made within the 26/27 Budget for the potential costs of a temporary venue and sets out the principles for considering a continuation of activity, a focus on a temporary venue rather than the other options and outlines the programme of work ahead of any final decision for the Civic Quarter project planned for September 2026.

A final decision regarding any temporary venue will be considered following any required planning decision and alongside the wider Civic Quarter Project in September 2026. Preparing for such a transition requires work ahead of this date.

[2] Business Continuity Scenario Analysis for Cambridge Guildhall and Corn Exchange Redevelopment

[3] (Public Pack)Agenda Document for Cabinet, 25/09/2025 17:00 (P.20; 6.7.2)

This report does not set out any financial details further to the funding already approved, with this modelling being carried out for the whole programme in the coming months.

3. Alternative options considered

3.1 The options identified in September have been assessed for feasibility operationally and economically. The alternative options outlined below are not recommended for differing reasons.

Do nothing
Under this option, the Corn Exchange and Guildhall would close for the duration of the works with no interim provision. Permanent staff would be redeployed to other events, decant activity and future programming with no continuation of any of the activities currently programmes into either venue over the closure period.

Although the retention of permanent staff is already modelled through the closure from a operational and economic perspective, this option still increases the likelihood of losing specialist staff. Alongside this it creates risks from pauses in promoter engagement and allowing audience habits to form elsewhere. Re-engagement with key stakeholders could take 12–24 months post-reopening, as was found following Covid.

This option presents the most significant financial, operational and reputational risk related to the recovery assumptions within the Civic Quarter business plan.

Meanwhile Use of Existing Sites
This option was explored through engagement with city partners and venue operators. Capacity, technical specification, booking availability and commercial viability constraints mean that existing venues cannot accommodate the scale, production requirements or conferencing function currently delivered by the Corn Exchange and Guildhall. As such, this option would not meet the strategic objectives identified in September and has not been progressed further.

Phased construction
Phased construction is not a realistic option for the Corn Exchange itself – it will be impossible to keep the venue open and undertake works. It has been looked at to consider doing the Corn Exchange after the Guildhall which is possible. The impact of this would add c.£1m due to higher preliminary (operational costs) and other programmatic costs. There would be no gain in the closure of the Corn Exchange with this option and cost of closure would need to still considered.

High-quality modular venue
The September Appendix 9 Business Continuity Scenario Analysis identified a high-quality modular venue as the preferred long-term continuity option in strategic terms.

This option looked at a larger demountable venue with a 25–30-year lifespan, potentially capable of generating a long-term operating surplus. While attractive in principle, and the recommended option within the initial papers in September, progressing this model would

require significant additional capital approval, site strategy and longer-term infrastructure decisions beyond the scope of the current transition planning.

Initial investigations were carried out on this option with a number of sites across the City. The enabling works, planning and longer-term considerations linked to the wider cultural infrastructure strategy presented significant constraints to develop this as an option for a transition venue.

Given lead-in time and scale, this option does not meet the immediate strategic purpose of managing the closure period and is not recommended for progression at this stage.
The early assessments developed for this will rather feed into the longer term infrastructure planning separately of this.

4. Key considerations

4.1 The report presented to Cabinet[4] set out a Civic Quarter appraisal that modelled a total of £12.3million to be set aside before the project breaks even and produces a surplus for the council after debt financing.

- the Guildhall and Corn Exchange are closed for a period and then ramping up,
- commercial income takes time to reach the new projected levels,
- but debt charges start immediately.

Further to this, the Cabinet paper reflected that further work was needed to ensure a successful transition. Material to immediate decisions requested within this report, this provision already assumed no redundancies for those salaried staff covering events across Corn Exchange and Guildhall. The rationale for this covers requirements for decant, redeployment to either a temporary building or wider events (with many staff covering more than just these venues) and requirements to programme and plan for the reopening.

4.2 The defining strategic principles set out below were set out help appraise options that support the operational and financial risks of the Civic Quarter future business plan and more widely Councils Vision. These were developed from the initial work set out in the September[4] Cabinet Report.

a) Enable a successful reopening and rapid return to sustainable trading
b) Maintain cultural visibility and prevent audience drift
c) Retain specialist staff and organisational capability
d) Preserve key stakeholder and client relationships
e) Provide continuation of economic and cultural activation of the City Centre

[4] Business Continuity Scenario Analysis for Cambridge Guildhall and Corn Exchange Redevelopment (p.27)

4.3 Temporary venue option

This option proposes the provision of a demountable temporary venue of approximately 1,000 capacity, operating for an 18-month stretch during the closure period. Current work is exploring sites that would locate a venue in the City Centre. Work remains to identify a suitable site.

Any proposal identified would be subject to planning permission, supporting a mixed programme of live music, comedy, talks, conferences and civic events. Modelling indicates that this option could retain approximately 50–60% of the Corn Exchange programme, maintain relationships with regular promoters and clients, and provide continued visibility for the Corn Exchange brand. While the venue would not replicate the full specification of the permanent venue, it would act as an effective operational bridge to reopening.

The net additional costs modelled are within the £1m provision approved by Full Council (26 February 2026). Continued work alongside the wider modelling of the Civic Quarter continues and is proposed to be complete in July. This will explore any changes to the costs within the closure period and any impacts of the temporary venue on the future business plan, a requirement within the strategic principles.

Other important considerations supporting this investment include maintaining a positive reputation for the City, supporting the wider development of Cambridge as a city providing a comprehensive cultural offer in line with its Vision. Specialist advisers (Blue Horizons) advise that while this option carries short-term cost, it reduces long-term financial and reputational risk and supports recovery assumptions within the Civic Quarter model.

Specific work on the modelling for a temporary venue include:

- Development of the financial modelling set out within the original report to minimise additional costs and bring in line with the provisions set out in 26/27 budget.
- Site identification and viability – working to assess a number of potential locations, alongside any required legal and planning considerations.
- Site visit and continued dialogue with similar real life case studies – Orchard West Theatre in Dartford. This includes reviewing costs, programme, cultural activity.
- Programme modelling on the frequency, type of bookings and related income and attendance.
- Soft engagement with key stakeholders including:
    - Regular clients
    - Current and potential promoters
    - Community organisations who may benefit from the venue throughout the period

4.4 A site visit to Orchard West (Dartford) highlighted:

- Importance of early planning engagement
- Realistic programming assumptions
- Clear communications strategy
- Strong operational mobilization

These lessons are informing current development work and have meant adjustments particularly to initial programme planning and operational management.

4.5 Officers appraised the option against the strategic objectives set out from the Councils Vision, Cultural Strategy and Business case assumptions

a) Enable a successful reopening and rapid return to sustainable trading
The transition strategy seeks to ensure that the Corn Exchange and Guildhall reopen with strong booking pipelines, retained expertise and sustained demand.

The temporary venue supports this by:

- Maintaining active relationships with promoters, agents and conference clients;
- Enabling forward booking discussions for the refurbished venues during the works period;
- Preserving operational knowledge and commercial capability within the staff team.

Without interim provision, recovery following reopening is likely to be delayed by 12–24.

b) Maintain cultural visibility and prevent audience drift
Extended absence from the market risks audiences forming new habits elsewhere and promoters deprioritising Cambridge within touring schedules.

The temporary venue would:

- Maintain a visible city-centre cultural presence;
- Sustain engagement with core audiences through a reduced but consistent programme;
- Support experimentation with formats and partnerships that inform future programming.

c) Retain organisational capability
The venues rely on a small pool of specialist technical and programming staff. Potential loss of this expertise would significantly increase recruitment costs and delay reopening. The temporary venue enables continued employment, skills utilisation and professional development, protecting organisational resilience.

d) Preserve key stakeholder and client relationships
The venues support a wide ecosystem of universities, conference clients, promoters and civic partners.

The temporary venue provides a credible interim offer, maintains confidence and supports proactive engagement ahead of reopening.

e) Provide continuation of economic and cultural activation of the City Centre
The Corn Exchange and Guildhall support footfall, secondary spend and civic programme.

The temporary venue sustains cultural activity, economic contribution and civic function during the works period.

The temporary venue represents a proportionate, time-limited intervention, designed to mitigate risk rather than replace permanent provision.

6 Next steps

6.1 An indicative programme of technical milestones is set out below:

- Cabinet consent to progress: March
- Pre-application engagement and preparation: March - July
- Planning submission: July (subject to pre-planning application)
- Planning determination: August – September
- Civic Quarter Project decision: September
- Procurement and mobilisation: June - December
- Installation and commissioning: January - February
- Opening: April 2027

All dates are indicative and subject to gateway decisions along the way. Further detail will be developed that sets out timeframes for public engagement, further stakeholder engagement and detailed procurement activity.

A defined date for planning will be determined by engagement through a pre-planning application. Subject to the potential requirements for consideration this timetable move. Current plans are for the venue to be programmed from April 2027 which provides for a short delay in a decision.

7. Vision

7.1 This proposal directly relates to the Councils Vision where:

Arts, sports, and culture are thriving

- Cambridge celebrates the city's diversity through a vibrant arts and cultural scene, including music, festivals, sports, and food and drink.
- Accessible arts, sports and culture provide spaces for people of all ages to come together to enjoy the city, both during the day and at night.

The continued activation of the City over the eighteen-month period of closure will maintain and enhance the culture offer to the City.

8. Consultation, engagement and communication

8.1 This proposal has built on consultation through the Civic Quarter Project governance

structures, with a number of internal team and work with our specialist consultants, Blue Horizons.

Within the public Budget Papers [5]an earmarked reserve has been identified of £1million specifically for this purpose should planning be achieved and the Civic Quarter project approved.

In the development of the proposal, engagement has taken place with promoters, wider users of the events venues from conference users to those that use it for graduations and exams. Early engagement with planning and environmental health specifically through a Pre Planning Application will be fundamental to the development of a proposal to be submitted for Planning.

9. Anticipated outcomes, benefits or impact

9.1 The decision sought:

- enables progression to planning and preparatory activity
- does not commit to delivery
- maintains options ahead of September and enables turnaround of a solution subject to decisions.

10. Implications

10.1 Relevant risks

Two categories of risk are relevant:

Risk of inaction

- Audience and promoter loss
- Reduced speed of recovery
- Reputational decline
- Increased long-term financial pressure

Risk of action

- Planning delay and/or refusal
- Cost pressure within £1m provision
- Programming constraints
- Delivery complexity

At this stage, the principal risk relates to progression to planning without certainty of final delivery; however, failure to progress at this stage would remove the option entirely due to programme constraints.

At this stage, approval is sought only to progress to planning and preparatory work. A further decision will be required alongside the Civic Quarter determination.

[5] (Public Pack)Agenda Document for Council, 26/02/2026 18:00

10.2 **Legal Implications**

We are engaged with appropriate legal professionals to support through the Pre-Planning Application process and to support with wider considerations regarding the potential use of particular sites.

10.3 **Equalities and socio-economic Implications**

The proposal supports continued access to cultural and civic events during the closure period and helps maintain inclusive provision. An Equality Impact Assessment will be completed alongside the planning submission.

10.4 **Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental implications**

Sustainability principles will be applied to temporary infrastructure and developed ready for any Planning Application

10.5 **Procurement Implications**

Limited preparatory procurement activity may be required to protect programme timelines, in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules. No contractual commitments will be entered into prior to the September 2026 decision related to progressing with a temporary venue.

10.6 **Community Safety Implications**

Any proposal would be submitted to the Safety Advisory Group for consideration, which would include any licensing requirements

11. Background documents

11.1 A list of documents used to develop this report:

- Cabinet – Cambridge Civic Quarter Reports: Cambridge Civic Quarter: Scrutiny committee and Cabinet reports - Cambridge City Council
- Appendix 9 Business Continuity Scenario Analysis for Cambridge Guildhall and Corn Exchange Redevelopment
- Full Council – Budget (Public Pack)Agenda Document for Council, 26/02/2026 18:00

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Sam Scharf, Director of Communities, sam.scharf@cambridge.gov.uk

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Cambridge City Council Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

This tool helps the Council ensure that we fulfil legal obligations of the Public Sector Equality Duty to have due regard to the need to –

(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;

(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Guidance on how to complete this tool can be found on the Cambridge City Council intranet. For specific questions on the tool please contact the Community Equity Team at equalities@cambridge.gov.uk.

Also, once you have drafted the EqIA please send this to equalities@cambridge.gov.uk for checking.

1. Title of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service
Proposal for a temporary venue during the proposed closure of Cambridge Corn Exchange and the Guildhall

2. Webpage link to full details of the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service (if available)
Not yet available

3. What is the objective or purpose of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?
As part of the Civic Quarter redevelopment project there are proposals to close the Corn Exchange and The Guildhall for refurbishment for 2 years. As a response to this loss of provision in the City, the Council is being asked to consider the principle of establishing a temporary venue in the City whilst works are being undertaken. This venue would aim to continue a diverse programme serving the needs of the regional population. This venue would draw upon our existing Cultural Services team, networks and production capital.

4. Responsible Team and Group
Civic Quarter Project Team – Property, in consultation with Cultural Services, Communities, City Services and Corporate Hub.

5. **Who will be affected by this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?** **(Please tick all that apply)**	☒ Residents ☒ Visitors ☒ Staff

Please state any specific client group or groups (e.g. City Council tenants, tourists, people who work in the city but do not live here):

Cultural Services staff – who live across the region

Visitors to the city to access cultural offer shops restaurants parking etc

Residents and Audiences who live region wide

Click here to enter text.

6. **What type of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service is this?**	☒ New ☐ Major change ☐ Minor change

7. **Are other departments or partners involved in delivering this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service? (Please tick)**	☒ Yes ☐ No

If 'Yes' please provide details below: All City Council departments in the context of the full Civic Quarter project. Main Service provision in focus is the cultural offer delivered by Cultural Services. Liaison also with County Highways, Shared Planning, Universities, Clients and audiences of the Corn Exchange and Guildhall Halls.

8. What research methods/ evidence have you used in order to identify equality impacts of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?

- Information on profile of audience from ticketing system
- Ensuring the safety and health of older people at mass gathering events | The BMJ
- Home | Campaign to End Loneliness
- Perceptions of personal safety and experiences of harassment, Great Britain - Office for National Statistics

9. Potential impacts

For each category below, please explain if the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service could have a positive/ negative impact or no impact. Where an impact has been identified, please explain what it is. Consider impacts on service users, visitors and staff members separately.

(a) Age - Please also consider any safeguarding issues for children and adults at risk

Having a temporary venue would allow us to offer our current cultural programme which caters for all ages. Without a temporary venue there will be a much more limited cultural offer. Still having a temporary venue means that there will be less high profile music concerts due to the nature of the temporary infrastructure.

A temporary site would provide similar facilities, and similar proximity to car parking and public transport as our permanent venues.

Older audiences may feel less safe at night in a more unfamiliar setting, If the council was not to have a temporary venue, the reduction in cultural events might result in an increased risk in isolation to older audience members. Older people are more likely to experience loneliness generally, which links to isolation.

If we are unable to offer hours to zero-hour staff during the closure period (which may be the case without a temporary venue), some experienced staff may choose to find work elsewhere. This may result in a loss of valuable experience and expertise when the Corn Exchange reopens.

(b) Disability

The temporary venue infrastructure would conform with current accessibility standards in our permanent venues, including relating to level access, and could result in improvements in accessibility of facilities like bar services, information points, access to stages, as this can be built into to a proposed structure. Disabled toilet facilities would be provided and clear access to ground floor seats. There would be opportunity to provide an accessible dressing room, improving upon the current facilities at the Corn Exchange. Flooring would be assessed to ensure it is smooth and level from public pathways and parking areas. Hearing loops will need to be included in the structure and in the design and layout they would need to consider dementia awareness and needs of neurodiverse people generally.

The ONS finds that disabled people are especially less likely to feel safe walking alone after dark, particularly in an unfamiliar setting. Some audience members may be uncertain of the facilities in a

temporary venue at first, and may feel less comfortable going to a venue that is not established and permanent. Clear and proactive marketing including information on accessibility would need to be carried out throughout the period. Moreover, disabled people can experience hate incidents and hate crime. This may mean that some disabled members of our staff and audience may require additional support when leaving the venue late at night until they feel it is a safe route back to their vehicles or public transport. Security and Supervisors would need to monitor and adapt and increase support accordingly and the council would also work with Purple Flag partners to ensure audience members feel and are safe.

If we were to not provide a temporary venue, there would be fewer accessible cultural offers in the city for people to access.

(c) Gender reassignment

Some members of our staff and audience may require additional support when leaving the venue late at night until they feel it is a safe route back to their vehicles or public transport. Security and Supervisors would need to monitor and adapt and increase support accordingly and the council would also work with Purple Flag partners to ensure audience members feel and are safe. This might be the case for LGBTQ+ who can experience hate incidents and hate crime.

Gender neutral toilets would need to be provided if there was a temporary venue as well as gender neutral dressing rooms and adjacent shower for performers.

Maintaining an alternative venue during the two years the Corn Exchange and Guildhall are closed would mean there is a greater programme of cultural events, which can include activities around well-established equality, diversity and inclusion dates like LGBTQ+ History Month.

(d) Marriage and civil partnership

No equality impacts have been identified specific to this equality group.

(e) Pregnancy and maternity

The venue would comply with current guidance in the same way as a permanent venue does in relation to the provision of baby changing facilities and level access that people using prams and

buggies would benefit from. There would also be more opportunity to provide quiet spaces and private breastfeeding spaces within the site plan.

(f) Race – Note that the protected characteristic 'race' refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

Some members of our staff and audience may require additional support when leaving the venue late at night until they feel it is a safe route back to their vehicles or public transport. Security and Supervisors would need to monitor and adapt and increase support accordingly and the council would also work with Purple Flag partners to ensure audience members feel and are safe. This might be the case for people of racially diverse backgrounds who can experience hate incidents and hate crime.

Providing a temporary venue would enable the council to continue to provide a diverse programme of events, which also embrace and celebrate the ethnic diversity of our audiences and population. This includes activities around well-established equality, diversity and inclusion related dates such as Black History Month.

(g) Religion or belief

Some members of our staff and audience may require additional support when leaving the venue late at night until they feel it is a safe route back to their vehicles or public transport. Security and Supervisors would need to monitor and adapt and increase support accordingly and the council would also work with Purple Flag partners to ensure audience members feel and are safe. This might be the case for people of different religious backgrounds who can experience hate incidents and hate crime.

(h) Sex

The temporary venue would provide female and male toilets, with safety information specific to women and men (e.g. domestic abuse information, Ask Angela). The programme will continue to aim to provide a diverse programme reflecting the diversity of our audiences and population.

Research by the ONS finds that four out of five women and two out of five men felt unsafe walking alone after dark in a park or other open space. Some members of our staff and audience may require additional support when leaving the venue late at night until they feel it is a safe route back

to their vehicles or public transport. Security and Supervisors would need to monitor and adapt and increase support accordingly and the council would also work with Purple Flag partners to ensure audience members feel and are safe.

(i) Sexual orientation

Some members of our staff and audience may require additional support when leaving the venue late at night until they feel it is a safe route back to their vehicles or public transport. Security and Supervisors would need to monitor and adapt and increase support accordingly and the council would also work with Purple Flag partners to ensure audience members feel and are safe. This might be the case for LGBTQ+ who can experience hate incidents and hate crime.

Maintaining an alternative venue during the two years the Corn Exchange and Guildhall are closed would mean there is a greater programme of cultural events, which can include activities around well-established equality, diversity and inclusion dates like LGBTQ+ History Month.

(j) Other factors that may lead to inequality – in particular, please consider the impact of any changes on:

- **Low-income groups or those experiencing the impacts of poverty.**
- **People of any age with care experience – this refers to individuals who spent part of their childhood in the care system due to situations beyond their control, primarily arising from abuse and neglect within their families. The term "Care experience" is a description of a definition in law, it includes anyone that had the state as its corporate parent by virtue of a care order in accordance with the Children Act 1989 and amendments.**
- **Groups who have more than one protected characteristic that taken together create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. (Here you are being asked to consider intersectionality, and for more information see: https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/1_l59kt25q).**

Our Zero based hours workforce have a varied profile:

- Approximately a quarter (24%) are students
- 61% are work for the council as secondary employment
- Around 10% are retired and utilise the work for social opportunities and enjoyment
- Around 11% rely on the income from the zero hour work as their only job and work the maximum number of hours for the business they can

10. Action plan – New equality impacts will be identified in different stages throughout the planning and implementation stages of changes to your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service. How will you monitor these going forward? Also, how will you ensure that any potential negative impacts of the changes will be mitigated? (Please include dates where possible for when you will update this EqIA accordingly.)

We will monitor through audience survey forms, and staff profiles and recruitment statistics and data to see if there is staff retention issues and take action accordingly. During the delivery of a temporary venue there will be close monitoring on the reality of and perception of safety late at night. If this is a concern, additional security measures can be put in place

Once potential spaces have been identified and as part of the exploration of which space will be best, a new EqIA will be produced. This would also consider the impact of having the temporary venue on a space in light of what already happens there culturally which might be impacted. There is opportunity to partner with those events to enhance a diverse offer for the City. There is the opportunity to work with purple flat partners and street pastors to support staff and audiences. Equality impacts would also need to be considered alongside the design of a temporary structure.

11. Do you have any additional comments?

N/a

12. Sign off

Name and job title of lead officer for this equality impact assessment: Frances Alderton

Names and job titles of other assessment team members and people consulted: Graham Lewis (Community Equity Officer), and Helen Crowther (Equity and Community Power Manager)

Date of EqIA sign off: 10 March 2026

Date of next review of the equalities impact assessment: TBC (in line with further stages of work

Date to be published on Cambridge City Council website: 16 March 2026

All EqIAs need to be sent to the Community Equity Team at equalities@cambridge.gov.uk

CONSULTATION ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CENTRALLY LED URBAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION FOR GREATER CAMBRIDGE:

To: Leader, for Cabinet, 24 March 2026

Report by: Stephen Kelly, Joint Director, Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service

Wards affected: All

Director Approval: Robert Pollock confirms that the report author has sought the advice of all appropriate colleagues and given due regard to that advice; that the equalities impacts and other implications of the recommended decisions have been assessed and accurately presented in the report; and that they are content for the report to be put to the Cabinet/Cabinet Member for decision.

1. Recommendations

1.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

Consider the feedback from the Council meeting on 19th March and advise the Leader on the preparation of the final response to the consultation on the proposal to establish a Centrally Led Urban Development Corporation for Greater Cambridge.

2. Purpose and reason for the report

2.1 On 4th February 2026 the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) launched a public consultation on the establishment of a Centrally Led Urban Development Corporation for the Greater Cambridge area. The consultation runs until 1st April 2026 and contains 13 specific questions. This report follows consideration of the matter by a meeting of the Full Council on 19th March 2026.

3. Alternative options considered

3.1 Not submitting a response to the consultation. However, given the potential significance of the proposals on the governance and future development of the Cambridge this option is not supported.

4. Background and key issues

4.1 On 19th March 2026, members of the Council received a report on the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) consultation proposing the establishment of a Centrally Led Urban Development Corporation for Greater Cambridge. The report to the Council meeting, setting out details of the consultation is included at paragraph 15. That report includes background information on Development Corporations and details of the specific proposals contained in the consultation. The report also included details of the 13 questions posed in the consultation and preliminary responses to each question drawn from informal member engagement up to that point.

4.2 At the time of publication of this report, the Council meeting has not taken place. Officers are not therefore in a position to add to the report prepared for the Council meeting. A summary of Council's comments in respect of the consultation will therefore be provided to the Cabinet meeting along with any additional information arising from the Council discussion.

5. Corporate Plan and Council Vision

5.1 The Objectives for the Urban Development Corporation comprise the following:

- Transformational economic growth
- Infrastructure Led Development
- Innovative Investment
- Environment and Climate
- Inclusion and Equality.

These objectives are broadly consistent with the Corporate Plan and Council Vision objectives. Establishment of an Urban Development Corporation with dedicated resources to realise the objectives listed could have a positive impact upon the delivery

of the Council objectives. The transfer of planning powers from the City Council to the Urban Development Corporation may nevertheless impact upon the ability of the City Council to directly control and influence the delivery of its current Corporate Plan and Vision objectives.

Corporate plan 2022-27: our priorities for Cambridge - Cambridge City Council

Our vision - Cambridge City Council

6. **Consultation, engagement and communication**

Officers convened an 'All Member Briefing' on Wednesday 11th March to brief Members on the proposals and answer technical questions about the proposals to inform the Council meeting on 19th March 2026. The Councils has used social media and a press statement to inform the public about the consultation and encourage residents to respond to it. The

Anticipated outcomes, benefits or impact

The Council meeting and associated report is expected to improve Member understanding of the proposals and enable them to provide informed insights to help shape the Leader's final submission to MHCLG on behalf of the Council.

7. **Relevant risks**

7.1 There is no decision for Cabinet at this stage. Risks to delivery of the Council's objectives will depend upon the Government intended course of action in response to the consultation feedback.

8. **Financial Implications**

8.1 No direct impact from this report. The establishment of a Centrally Led Urban Development Corporation with planning powers has the potential to result in significant financial implications. The precise impact will nevertheless depend upon the Government's actions in response to the consultation.

9. **Legal Implications**

9.1 None at this time.

10. **Equalities and socio-economic Implications**

10.1 None at this time. Responsibility for completing an EQIA rests with MHCLG.

11. **Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental implications**

11.1 None.

12. **Procurement Implications**

12.1 None

13. **Community Safety Implications**

13.1 None

14. **Background documents**

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

14.1 Consultation Paper (MHCLG)

https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/establishing-a-development-corporation-in-greater-cambridge

Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980

15. **Appendices**

15.1 Report and Appendices to Full Council meeting 19 March 2026

Agenda for Council on Thursday, 19th March, 2026, 6.00 pm - Cambridge Council

16. To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

Stephen Kelly Director of Planning stephen.kelly@greatercambridgeplanning.org

REPORT TITLE: Local Nature Reserve Designations

To: Cabinet 24th March 2026

Cabinet Member: Cllr Martin Smart, Cabinet Member for Nature, Open Space and City Services

Report by:
Guy Belcher, Biodiversity Manager

Tel: 01223 458532 Email: Guy.Belcher@cambridge.gov.uk

Wards affected:

Cherry Hinton

Director Approval: Director James Elms confirms that the report author has sought the advice of all appropriate colleagues and given due regard to that advice; that the equalities impacts and other implications of the recommended decisions have been assessed and accurately presented in the report; and that they are content for the report to be put to the Cabinet/Cabinet Member for decision.

1. Recommendations

1.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

Non-Key Decision

1. Approve the proposed Local Nature Reserve (LNR) designations of Fulbourn Road Open Space, Cherry Hinton
2. Approve the proposed Local Nature Reserve (LNR) designation of Church End, Cherry Hinton

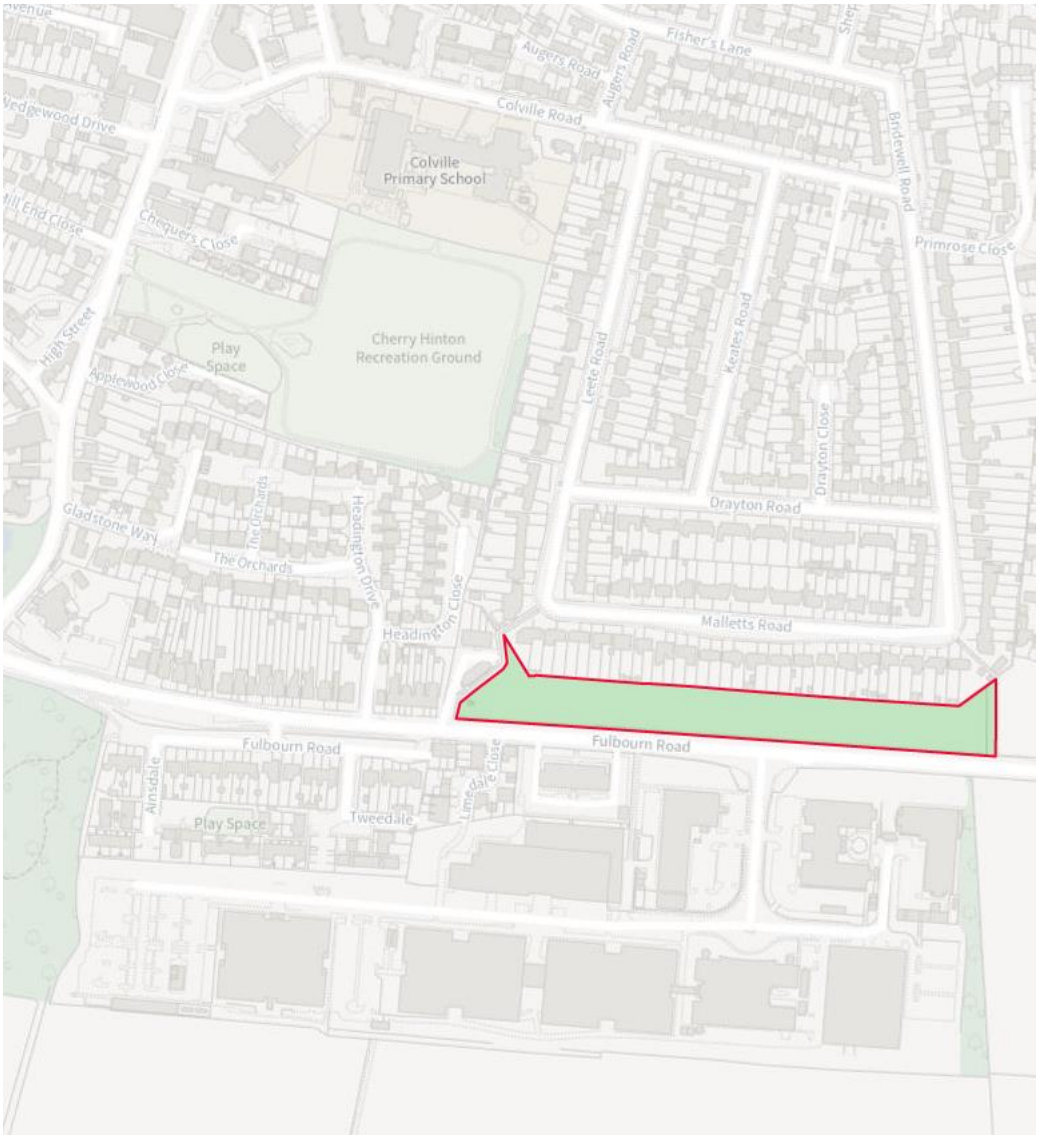
2. Purpose and reason for the report

2.1 Following December 2025 Cabinet Approval a joint public consultation on the draft Biodiversity Strategy midterm review and a draft new Urban Forest Strategy was run on

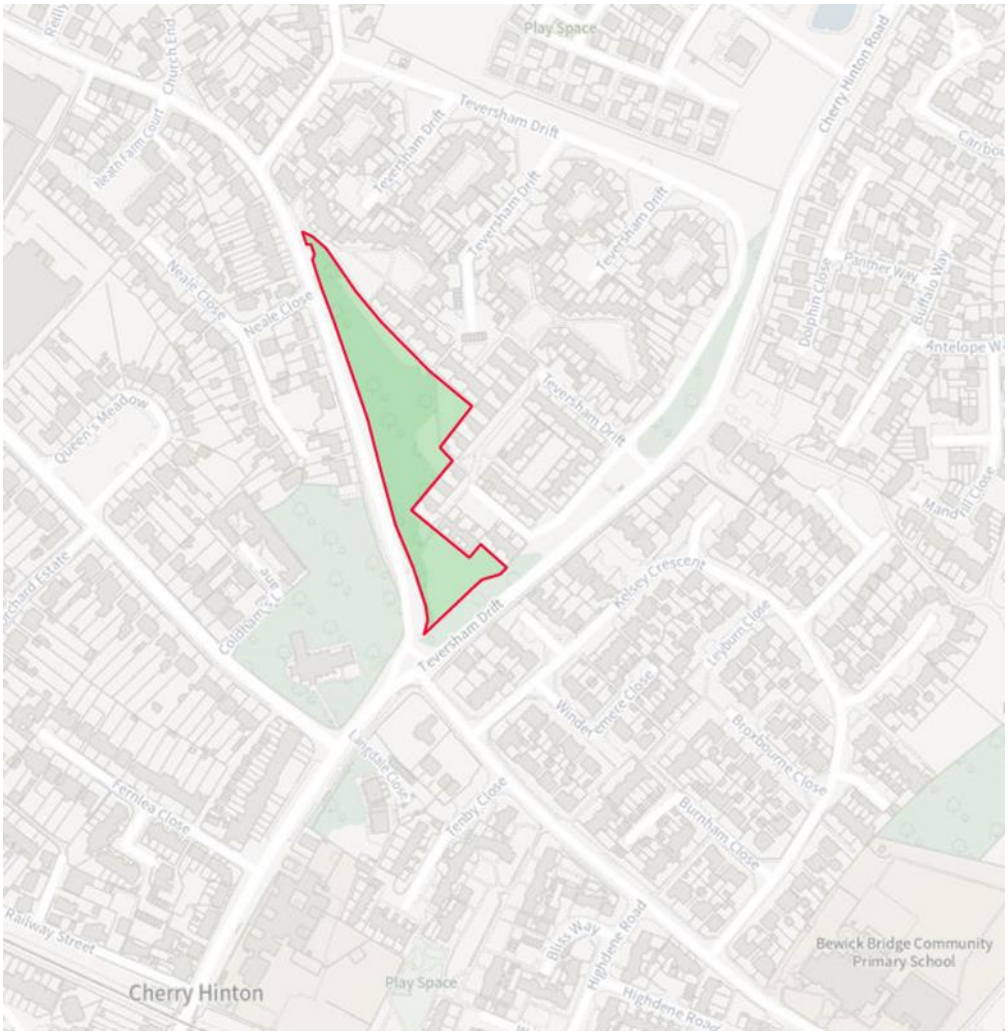
the City Council Go Vocal consultation portal from 7th January to 10th February, with a further one-week extension for emailed responses, as requested by specific groups.

The strategy action plan includes the proposed designation of two new Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), both within Cherry Hinton. These have been supported through the consultation, and if approved we will seek formal declaration though the statutory Natural England process during 2026.

The proposed LNR sites are:



Fulbourn Road Open Space, Cherry Hinton



Church End, Cherry Hinton

3. Alternative options considered

3.1 **1. To not designate the two new proposed LNRs in Cherry Hinton**.

This option is not recommended as it would fail to provide statutory protection, greater recognition and enhanced management of two important public open spaces for nature in the ward.

4. Background and key issues

4.1

*'Our **Biodiversity Strategy** vision is that over the next **5** years Cambridge will see a "measurable net gain" in biodiversity **compared with the 2020 Biodiversity Audit baseline**, both within **every ward of** the city and the surrounding countryside, including the extent and quality of priority habitats and populations of priority species. Wildlife habitats will be protected, enhanced and where possible expanded and linked.*

*The very best wildlife habitats will form part of a much wider Cambridge Nature Network that will permeate the whole of the city **and link to the wider Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy**. Everyone who lives or works within Cambridge will have access to **nature rich** greenspaces **within walking distance of** their home or place or work, and there will be a greater awareness and understanding of biodiversity with opportunities to be involved and collaborate in local wildlife enhancement projects and monitoring.'*

The proposed designations will contribute to this vision by providing statutory protection to these two small sites, in recognition of their existing wildlife value and potential for enhancement of habitat and public access through adoption of a new management plan.

5. Corporate plan

5.1 The Local Nature Reserve designations seek to address the following corporate priorities (2022 – 2027):

- **Responding to the climate and biodiversity emergencies and creating a net zero council by 2030**

  Through protecting priority woodland and grassland habitats and enhancing their management to mitigate impacts of climate change on both communities and nature.

- **Tackling poverty and inequality and helping people in the greatest need**

  Seeking to ensure everyone living or working in Cambridge has easy access to safe, high-quality, nature rich, natural green spaces, promoting wellbeing and social inclusion.

- **Modernising the council to lead a greener city that is fair for all**

  Ensuring that we meet our Biodiversity duty through seeking opportunities to protect and enhance nature across our estate and services.

6. Consultation, engagement and communication

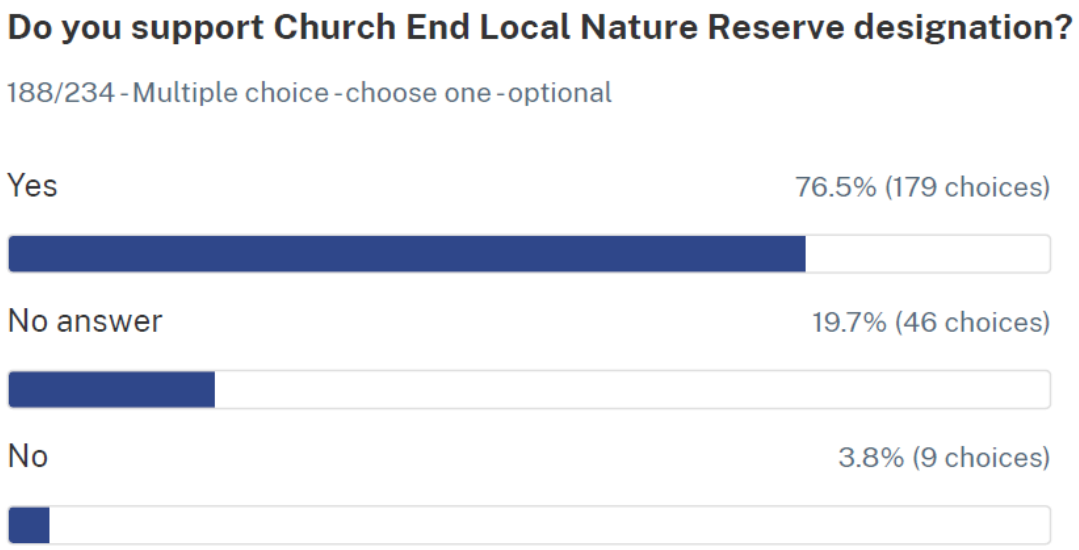
To inform the midterm review of the Biodiversity Strategy we promoted a public consultation on a draft revised Biodiversity strategy between 6th January and 10th February 2026 on our consultation portal. A total of 256 respondents provided a strong and constructive level of engagement.

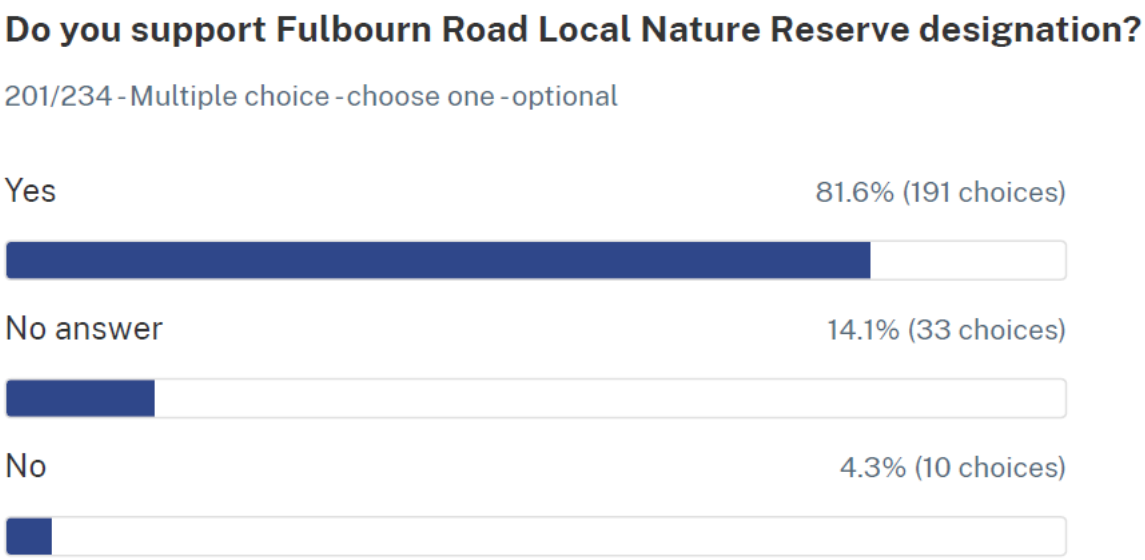
Overall, feedback demonstrated very high levels of support for the strategic direction of the Biodiversity Strategy. Over 92% of respondents either strongly supported or supported the Strategy's vision, with fewer than 4% expressing opposition. Respondents consistently emphasised the importance of restoring priority habitats, enhancing ecological connectivity, and embedding biodiversity considerations across Council services.

A recurring theme throughout the consultation was the need to provide more space for nature, with 62% stating that current provision in parks is not sufficient and calling for increased wildflower meadows, wetlands, ponds, long grass, and deadwood habitats.

Specific questions on the proposed LNR designation were included within the consultation, with site notices and flyers posted through neighbouring properties doors to ensure residents and site users had the opportunity to comment.

Responses to the LNR designations question demonstrated strong support for both sites.





7. Anticipated outcomes, benefits or impact

7.1 Designation of the two new LNRs is expected to deliver the following outcomes:

Statutory protection for the existing biodiversity value of these City owned public spaces.

Greater recognition of their biodiversity significant within local communities.

Enhanced management and monitoring to maximise the sites potential for both wildlife and public access to natural green space.

8. Implications

8.1 Relevant risks

Risk 1: If the decision is made to approve the designation of two additional Local Nature Reserves in Cherry Hinton:

Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) place statutory responsibilities on the local authority to protect and manage the sites' ecological value, maintain safe public access, and comply with relevant environmental legislation. Key risks include habitat degradation, protected species impacts, and failure to meet legal or policy requirements, all of which can expose the authority to regulatory scrutiny, challenge from stakeholders, and reputational harm. Public safety responsibilities—such as managing trees, fire risk, and visitor pressure—also create operational and liability risks on council-owned land.

Financial and resource pressures can affect the council's ability to maintain LNRs to required standards, leading to deterioration of ecological condition and increased long-term costs. Misalignment between partners, contractors, volunteers, or grazing agreements can introduce governance risks, while climate-related impacts such as flooding, drought, and disease increase the need for resilience measures. Collectively, these factors present ongoing legal, environmental, financial, and reputational risks that require active and sustained management

Risk 2. If these important natural green spaces are not designated as Local Nature Reserves (LNRs): the local authority loses a key statutory mechanism for safeguarding their long-term ecological value. Without designation, these sites are more vulnerable to habitat degradation, incremental development pressure, reduced protection for priority species, and land-use changes that can undermine their environmental function. The absence of LNR status also weakens the authority's ability to apply robust management

frameworks or defend sites against external threats such as recreational overuse, pollution, or adjacent development impacts.

There are also strategic and reputational risks. Undesignated sites may be perceived as lower priority, leading to reduced investment, fewer opportunities for community involvement, and weaker alignment with local and national biodiversity duties. Failing to designate important green spaces can be challenged by stakeholders, undermining trust and the authority's credibility in delivering nature recovery commitments. Collectively, this can result in loss of biodiversity, reduced public access to quality nature areas, and missed opportunities for funding, partnerships, and statutory recognition of the council's environmental leadership.

8.2 **Legal Implications**

Designation of the two sites as Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) is a statutory act under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, requiring the Council to hold a legal interest in the land, which is satisfied through existing ownership by the Housing Service. Upon designation, the Council assumes a formal duty to manage and protect the land for nature conservation purposes and must consult Natural England as the statutory consultee during the declaration process. The designation also commits the Council to ensuring that any future use of the sites is compatible with their protected status, including the potential application of byelaws to safeguard habitats and restrict inappropriate activities. These obligations reinforce the Council's statutory biodiversity duties under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and require that any future changes to land use or management follow the formal procedures for amending or revoking an LNR designation.

Equalities and socio-economic Implications

An assessment of the Biodiversity Strategy midterm review included the proposed LNR designations and found that the strategy and associated actions will have overall positive equality impacts across Cambridge's communities.

The actions promote equitable access to nature, health and wellbeing benefits, and

inclusive community engagement. No negative or disproportionate impacts were identified, and equality outcomes will be monitored through annual reporting.

8.3 **Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental implications**

8.4 The overall impact of the Biodiversity Strategy midterm review is assessed as being moderately positive in terms of reducing impacts of climate change and enhancing biodiversity.

The proposed LNR designations contribute by providing healthy local nature green spaces and tree canopies to aid climate mitigation and adaptation. contributing to:

- Carbon storage and sequestration, supporting the Council's net zero targets.
- Urban cooling and shade, reducing the impacts of extreme heat.
- Stormwater management, helping reduce local flood risk.
- Biodiversity enhancement, contributing to species protection and habitat connectivity.

Procurement Implications

8.5 There are no procurement implications arising directly from this decision to approve the designation of the two Local Nature Reserves

Community Safety Implications

8.6 There are no community safety implications arising directly from this decision to approve the designation of the two Local Nature Reserves

Following designation any specific site project design or management reviews will consider community safety audits to ensure that the sites continue to be safe, inviting and accessible to all.

Financial

8.7 The LNRs will be manged by the existing City Services staff, operational, tree and LNR revenue budgets. Specific habitat enhancement project identified will seek external funding

9. Background documents

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

N/A

10. Appendices

10.1 Appendix A Biodiversity Strategy 2022-2030 - Cambridge City Council (current)

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Guy Belcher, Biodiversity Manager, tel: 01223 458532, email: Guy.belcher@cambridge.gov.uk

REPORT TITLE: Authority Monitoring Report for Greater Cambridge 2024-2025

To:
Councillor Katie Thornburrow Cabinet Member for Planning and Transport

Committee (23rd March 2026)

Report by:

Mark Deas

Senior Policy Planner

Tel: 01954 713284/ 07857 665 001

Email: Mark.Deas@greatercambridgeplanning.org

Wards affected: All

Director Approval: Director Stephen Kelly confirms that the report author has sought the advice of all appropriate colleagues and given due regard to that advice; that the equalities impacts and other implications of the recommended decisions have been assessed and accurately presented in the report; and that they are content for the report to be put to the Cabinet/Cabinet Member for decision.

1. Recommendations

1.1 It is recommended that Cambridge City Cabinet:

Agree the Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council - Authority Monitoring Report for Greater Cambridge 2024-2025 (included as Appendix A) for publication on the Councils' websites.

Delegate any further minor editing changes to the Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council - Authority Monitoring Report for Greater Cambridge 2024-2025 to the Joint Director of Planning, in consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member for Planning and Transport.

2. Purpose and reason for the report

2.1 Local planning authorities are required to publish information monitoring progress of the implementation of their Local Plan Timetable and planning policies included in their development plan documents at least on an annual basis in an Authority Monitoring Report (AMR). The AMR is also required to give details of what action the Council has taken relating to the duty to co-operate, details of any neighbourhood development orders or neighbourhood development plans made, and once the Council has an adopted Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule, information relating to the collection and spending of CIL monies.

3. Alternative options considered

3.1 To not publish the Authority Monitoring Report for Greater Cambridge 2024-2025.

This option has been rejected because Local authorities have a statutory duty to publish an Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) under The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and accompanying regulations.

4. Background and key issues

4.1 The AMR for Greater Cambridge 2024-2025 covers the period from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. The AMR includes indicators to measure the performance of the Councils' adopted planning policies as set out in the Cambridge Local Plan 2018, the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018, and the four adopted Area Action Plans for Northstowe, Cambridge East, Cambridge Southern Fringe, and North West Cambridge. It also includes indicators to measure change in the area against the objectives set out in the Sustainability Appraisals that accompany each of the adopted plans and to look at the wider effects of its planning policies on the district. The AMR includes details on the action the Councils have taken relating to the Duty to Co-operate and of any neighbourhood plans made.

Authority Monitoring Reports were formerly known as Annual Monitoring Reports. They were renamed by government.

The AMR for Greater Cambridge 2024-2025 accompanying this report has three chapters. Chapter 1 provides some background and context. Chapter 2 includes sections on the progress against the Local Plan Timetable, what actions the Councils have taken relating to the duty to co-operate and the current status of Neighbourhood Plans. Chapter 3 sets out a topic by topic analysis of the Greater Cambridge area including the impact of various policies.

Key findings from the AMR for Greater Cambridge 2024-2025 include:

- There has been significant recent progress against the Local Plan Timetable. Although much of this has occurred after the 2024-2025 monitoring period it is still worthy of note:

- The latest Local Plan Timetable became effective on 26 November 2025 and commits to submitting the Greater Cambridge Local Plan for examination by December 2026;

- Regulation 18 public consultation on the draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan took place between 1 December 2025 and 30 January 2026;

- The withdrawal of funding from MHCLG for the relocation of the Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant has resulted in key policies from the proposed North East Cambridge AAP being incorporated into the Local Plan rather than being pursued through a separate AAP.

- The South Newnham Neighbourhood Plan was made in 2024-2025, the first Neighbourhood Plan in Cambridge. Although no new Neighbourhood Plans were made in South Cambridgeshire during the monitoring year, four were made in the following months (Pampisford; Thriplow & Heathfield; Harston; and, Stapleford & Great Shelford).

- Combined annual housing completions in 2024-2025 for Greater Cambridge,

reflecting the joint development strategy of the two adopted Local Plans 2018, was 2,264 dwellings. Of these, 1,735 were delivered in South Cambridgeshire and 529 were delivered in Cambridge. The average annual delivery rate required over the plan period 2011 to 2031 is 1,675 dwellings a year. The average annual delivery rate achieved between 2011 and 2025 is 1,711 dwellings.

- A total of 9,900 dwellings were permitted in South Cambridgeshire during the 2024-2025 monitoring year. The majority of these dwellings (9,000) were the result of three outline planning permissions: Waterbeach New Town East (4,500 dwellings, S/2075/18/OL), Darwin Green Phase 2/3 (1,000 dwellings, 22/02528/OUT) and Bourn Airfield New Village (3,500 dwellings, S/3440/18/OL).

- There were 687 affordable dwellings completed in Greater Cambridge in 2024-2025. This is 30% of all housing completions. There was a significant increase in affordable housing completions in Cambridge compared with the previous year due to both completions on strategic sites - Darwin Green (105 dwellings) and Land north of Cherry Hinton (29 dwellings), and on a number of Cambridge Investment Partnership schemes (125 dwellings). Permissions granted in 2024-2025 have been broadly in line with affordable housing policy requirements.

- In the 2024-2025 monitoring year there was a net gain of 10,893 sqm of employment floorspace in Cambridge and a net gain of 51,956 sqm in South Cambridgeshire. The largest completions were 11,316 square metres of R&D space on Granta Park (21/03822/FUL) and 8,916 square metres of new office development at Lockton House in Cambridge (20/04826/FUL).

- There remain considerable commitments for employment space. In South Cambridgeshire there was 259,631 square metres of employment space with full or detailed planning permission at 31 March 2025. In Cambridge there was 148,852 square metres of employment space with full or detailed planning permission at 31 March 2025.

- There was a small net loss of retail space in South Cambridgeshire in 2024-2025 (402 square metres) but a much bigger loss in Cambridge (7,317 square metres). The

net loss of 7,317 square metres in Cambridge in 2024-2025 was almost half of the loss experienced over the plan period. This was due to switches from retail to leisure uses in both the Grand Arcade and Lion Yard.

- Planning policies in both Council areas continue to have a positive impact on climate change adaptation and mitigation measures. For example, levels of all measured pollutants were below their respective national air quality objectives in 2024-2025 and there were small increases in renewable energy capacity in both districts.

- Both Councils have policies that seek to protect and enhance priority species and habitat. These policies continued to be effective throughout the monitoring year. One new County Wildlife Site was selected in 2024-2025 and another County Wildlife Site was extended.

- Green Belt policy continues to be applied effectively. In 2024-2025 there were no developments granted permission within the Cambridge Green Belt that were inappropriate and / or did not demonstrate very special circumstances to warrant approval.

- There have been no significant changes to the number of listed buildings or entries on the Historic England Buildings at Risk register in either Cambridge or South Cambridgeshire.

- Quality of life indicators continue to be generally favourable for the Greater Cambridge area. Life expectancy exceeds the national average for men and women in both Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire and deprivation levels are well below the England average across a range of indicators.

- The AMR includes two appendices. Appendix 1 lists all of the indicators across the plans and provides data where it is available. A traffic light system is used for target based indicators to quickly illustrate whether the target is being met and where potential issues may be arising. The appendix identifies only one red flag. This relates to Policy 6

of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018, which seeks to increase retail floorspace by 14,141 square metres over the period 2011 to 2022. However, dramatic changes in shopping trends mean that although there was a gross increase in retail floorspace in Cambridge, in net terms, there was a decrease of 7,707 square metres. There are also a small number of amber flags. The majority of these were concerned with the progress of allocations such as West Cambridge and Clifton Road where schemes are still being progressed or retail related issues. Appendix 2 provides the detailed data behind the quantifiable indicators.

5. Corporate plan

5.1 *Leading Cambridge's response to the climate and biodiversity emergencies and creating a net zero council by 2030*

The AMR monitors the contribution our development plans are making to climate change adaption and mitigation measures

Tackling poverty and inequality and helping people in the greatest need

The AMR monitors the contribution our development plans are making to health and well-being in our local communities

Building a new generation of council and affordable homes and reducing homelessness

The AMR monitors the contribution our development plans are making to housing, and in particular affordable housing, in the area

6. Consultation, engagement and communication

6.1 In compiling the AMR Council officers and external organisations have provided information and data for the indicators included. The final AMR will be published on the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service website. Local planning authorities are not required to undertake consultation on their Authority Monitoring Report prior to

publication. However, the report is a joint report for South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council and needs signing off by both Councils. The report was considered by South Cambridgeshire District Council at their Cabinet meeting on 3 February 2026.

7. Anticipated outcomes, benefits or impact

7.1 *Consider the anticipated outcome of consideration of this report. For example, it may be that a new major policy or statutory plan is being developed to improve service delivery for a particular group of the population; or a review of existing policy is expected to streamline current processes. What will be different as a result of this decision (what does good look like)? And how will we know – what are the appropriate measures?*
The annual production on an AMR is a statutory requirement. The report monitors the impact and effectiveness of current planning policies and is used to inform the development of new policies in emerging development plans. The report also includes a wide range of data concerning Greater Cambridge which can be used to inform and shape a wider set of Council initiatives and priorities beyond land use planning.

8. Implications

8.1 Relevant risks

There are no risks in publishing this report. It is a monitoring report and has no financial or legal risks (other than we are required to publish it). There are no reputational risks. The AMR 2024-2025 demonstrates planning policies continue to have a positive impact on the sustainable development of Greater Cambridge and the quality of life of its residents.

Financial Implications

8.2 There are no financial implications. It is a monitoring report with no recommendations concerning finance.

Legal Implications

8.3 There are no legal implications (other than we have a statutory duty to publish an AMR).

Equalities and socio-economic Implications

8.4 As this is a monitoring progress rather than about making explicit changes to practices or policies it will not need an EqIA. There are no equalities implications of this report. This has been confirmed by the equalities lead at Cambridge City Council.

Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental implications

8.5 The AMR is a monitoring report and has no impacts on net zero, climate change and environmental issues. However, the AMR monitors the impact of planning policies on climate change and the environment. It covers a wide range of relevant issues such as: carbon dioxide emissions; renewable energy; sustainable design and construction; flood risk; water quality and resources; air quality; protected wildlife and geological sites; development in locations of environmental importance; and, biodiversity net gain requirements.

The ARM would have a Nil impact as the proposal will not have a climate change impacts.

Procurement Implications

8.6 The are no procurement implications. The AMR is written by Council staff.

Community Safety Implications

8.7 There are no community safety implications. The AMR does include a small range of crime data.

9. Background documents

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to

Information) Act 1985

9.1 The adopted Cambridge Local Plan 2018, the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018, and the four adopted Area Action Plans for Northstowe, Cambridge East, Cambridge Southern Fringe, and North West Cambridge, and their accompanying Sustainability Appraisals are published on the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning website:

- Local Plans
- Area Action Plans

10. Appendices

10.1 Appendix 1: Authority Monitoring Report for Greater Cambridge 2024-2025

Appendix 1 to Appendix 1

Appendix 2 to Appendix 1

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Mark Deas, Senior Policy Planner, tel: 01954 713284/ 07857 665 001, email: Mark.Deas@greatercambridgeplanning.org

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STRATEGIC POLICY AND PARTNERSHIPS REPORT 2025/26

To: Cllr Cameron Holloway, Leader

Cabinet 24 March 2025

Report by: David Kidston, Strategy Lead

Tel: 01223 457043 Email: david.kidston@cambridge.gov.uk

Wards affected:

Director Approval: The Chief Executive Robert Pollock confirms that the report author has sought the advice of all appropriate colleagues and given due regard to that advice; that the equalities impacts and other implications of the recommended decisions have been assessed and accurately presented in the report; and that they are content for the report to be put to the Cabinet/Cabinet Member for decision.

1. Recommendations

1.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Endorses the work programme for the council's Strategy team for 2026/27 as set out at 4.2 in this report, including keeping abreast of public sector reform initiatives that will impact upon the council
2. Notes the achievements and progress of the key strategic economy, health and community safety-related partnerships that the council is engaged with, as detailed in section 5 of this report.
3. Endorses the importance of partnership working in the context of a changing public sector landscape

2. Purpose and reason for the report

2.1 This report provides:

- An overview of some of the key public sector reforms that will impact on the council in 2026-27.
- An annual report on the work of the key strategic partnerships that the council was involved in 2025-26 and an overview of their priorities for 2026-27.

3. Background

3.1 As part of the Our Cambridge organisational redesign programme, the council developed Partnership By Default principles to enable partners, communities and the council to achieve outcomes together (see Appendix B for a list of these principles). This report provides an update on the key achievements during 2025/26 of the strategic partnerships that the council is engaged in and a summary of their key priorities for 2026/27. Background information about each of the partnerships is provided in Appendix B.

4. Public sector reform

4.1 The Government has initiated a number of key public sector reforms which will impact significantly on the wider public sector landscape and how the council works with partners, communities and residents in Cambridge in future.

4.2 It is proposed that during 2026/27 the council's Strategy team will keep abreast of key Government reforms and policy initiatives and work with council services and partnerships to maximise opportunities arising from these reforms. Some of the key reforms and initiatives are listed below and further detail is provided in Appendix C:

- Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and devolution
- Integrated Care Board (ICB) reforms
- Police Service reforms
- Better Care Fund
- Place-based Budget Pilots
- Pride in Place
- Better Futures Fund
- Social Outcomes Partnerships
- Impact Economy
- Test, Learn and Grow

5. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care System (ICS)

5.1 During 2025/26, the council's partnership working with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ICS on preventative health issues has included:

- Working with the ICS to establish a Finding Help Forum to provide a space for agencies and case workers to support individuals with complex needs to navigate help, advice and services. The Forum helps ensure the right pathway of help or treatment is offered, based on what matters to the individual.

- Managing a programme grant-funded by the ICS which created opportunities for several partnership projects, including innovative intergenerational projects with local schools and assisted living and setting up a men's health partnership with Cambridge United Foundation.
- The ICB funded the £1.8 million WorkWell programme across Cambridgeshire and surrounding areas up to March 2026 to support those with health conditions to maintain or return to work. The programme is being delivered in Cambridge by CPSL Mind.

6. Cambridge Community Safety Partnership ("the CSP")

6.1 The Cambridge CSP seeks to understand the community safety issues that residents, visitors and local businesses are experiencing and select issues where it can take collective action to make a difference. Following its annual evidence-based Strategic Assessment, the CSP decided on the following priorities and activities for 2025 – 2027:

- Preventing violence and exploitation – by developing a process for businesses and venues to raise concerns about risks to children outside the home; working with specialists to help prevent young people being at risk of or becoming involved in violence; and exploring funding for taxi marshals and St Johns Ambulance provision in the nighttime economy.
- A neighbourhood approach - including a community Hate Crime awareness campaign, a localised response to ASB hotpots, and working with communities to identify opportunities to utilise crime prevention funding in their neighbourhoods.
- Tackling acquisitive crime - including developing a crime prevention pack for retail workers, scoping a retail crime prevention pilot, supporting retailers to give best evidence and continuing to address cycle crime.

6.2 Key achievements for the CSP during 2025/26 included:

- Creating Key Stage 2 education content to raise awareness of criminal exploitation and making this available to schools.
- Collaborating with parents to create a series of parent resources related to serious violence.
- Training 2,141 people in local businesses and organisations to identify predatory behaviour and address violence against women and girls.
- Developing an Open Space Guardianship scheme to patrol city centre open spaces during the night-time economy to help identify vulnerable people and enable them to get home safely.

7. Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA)

7.1 Some of the CPCA's key achievements in 2025/26 included:

- Developing the Local Growth Plan, which sets out a 10-year economic vision. The plan projects a doubling of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough economy by 2050 (to £61bn GVA) and sets a Mayoral aspiration to triple its size by 2050 (£97.2bn GVA). It identifies key regional growth sectors and a series of Opportunity Zones for investment, including 'Global City Cambridge'.
- Progressing the Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy to support the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan. The strategy will sit under the umbrella of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP), which sets out the CPCA's vision for integrated transport networks, including bus, walking, cycling and rail.
- Publishing a Bus Franchising Scheme, which will bring the bus system in the region under greater public control. The scheme will allow the CPCA to set all bus routes, timetables, fares and service standards.
- Launching a formal five-year Strategic Place Partnership (SPP) with Homes England to support housing, regeneration and sustainable development in the region. The partnership is developing a pipeline of investment-ready major housing and regeneration sites, including Northstowe and Waterbeach new town.
- Hosting a pavilion at the UK Real Estate Investment & Infrastructure Forum (UKREiiF) in Leeds to promote investment opportunities and housing and infrastructure schemes across the region. City Council officers were represented in talks at the pavilion.
- Providing funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) to the City Council to: extend the community wealth building approach taken in Abbey to North Cambridge; begin a new strand of work on Inclusive Innovation and continue work to support markets and market traders in the city.
- Using the UKSPF funds allocated to the region to: fund the Region of Learning team, working as part of the CPCA skills team, to extend digital badge delivery across the region; and progress work to establish a Local Visitor Economy Partnership, a Destination Management Plan and place brand development for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

7.2 The key priorities for the CPCA in 2026/27 include:

- Applying for Established Mayoral Strategic Authority (ESMA) status, which would grant the CPCA new statutory powers and funding, including an Integrated Settlement allowing it to set its own funding priorities without national Government constraints.
- Producing the Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy – which is a responsibility of the CPCA but a key requirement for timely submission of the emerging local plan and one

of the biggest risk factors in its delivery.

- Delivering a proposal for a Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) and associated Destination Management Plan (DMP)
- Concluding the current independent review of the bus franchising scheme and developing the first franchised bus services for launch in 2028.
- Considering a final business case from the City Council for £1.5m CPCA funding for the market square element of the Civic Quarter project.
- Coordinating attendance at UKREiiF 2026

8. Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP)

8.1 During 2025/26 some of GCP's key achievements were:

- Confirmation in June 2025 that they had passed the second government gateway review, linked to releasing the final tranche of city deal funding.
- Progressing work on additional guided busways and travel hubs, including the Cambourne-to-Cambridge scheme, Cambridge Southeast Transport Phase 2 (CSET 2) and the Waterbeach-to-Cambridge scheme. A public inquiry into the Cambourne-to-Cambridge proposals took place from September to November 2025. The inspectors report and Secretary of State decision is expected during 2026.
- Progressing work on the Greenways network across Greater Cambridge, as part of the wider active travel network between Cambridge and surrounding communities. Major works on the Horningsea Greenway were completed and the Cowley Road section of the Waterbeach Greenway opened, improving links to Cambridge North Station. Work also progressed on the Barton, Comberton, Horningsea, Haslingfield and Linton routes.
- Beginning passenger trials of autonomous buses between Madingley Road Park & Ride and Eddington (Cambridge West Innovation District). The project is part of the Connector pilot scheme and is funded by the Government's Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CCAV).
- Reappointing Form the Future until March 2027 to continue delivering the GCP Skills Programme, which focuses on preparing young people for careers in high-growth sectors. Over the past 10 years the programme has created 700 apprenticeships and connected more than 10,000 pupils with employers who provide apprenticeships. However the future of the programme beyond this is not confirmed and it is a priority for the city to consider whether and how this work can be carried on.
- Agreeing a biodiversity net gain strategy across the programme

8.2 The key priorities for GCP in 2026/27 include:

- Submitting Transport and Works Act Orders (TWAOs) for the Waterbeach-to-Cambridge public transport scheme.
- Preparing for a public inquiry into the CSETs, which is likely to be held in 2026, with the public enquiry into the Waterbeach-to -Cambridge scheme to follow in due course.
- Construction of relocated Waterbeach railway station
- Progressing delivery of the Greenway network

9. Cambridge Growth Company (CGC) and Development Corporation

9.1 In October 2025, government announced an initial £400 million funding to support the delivery of affordable homes, infrastructure and business expansion led by the CGC and its successor body.

9.2 In February 2026, government launched a statutory public consultation on proposals for a centrally-led Greater Cambridge Development Corporation as its preferred delivery vehicle for infrastructure investment in the area. The aim of the urban development corporation would be to address barriers to future economic growth in the area, including housing affordability and supply, transport and wider infrastructure. Officers are preparing a response to the public consultation and members will discuss the proposals at an extraordinary meeting of full Council on 19 March 2026.

10. East-West Rail Partnership and Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor

10.1 Government views the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor as vital to national growth prospects. The East West Rail (EWR) project proposes to construct a new rail link between Oxford and Cambridge via Bletchley and Bedford. The plans include expanding the central station in Cambridge and creating a new East Cambridge station. The City Council responded to the East West Rail Company's third non-statutory consultation on the Development Consent Order (DCO) for the EWR, which ran from November 2024 to January 2025. The City Council continued to engage with the EWR project during 2025/26 and remains a member of the East West Main Line Partnership, along with 19 other local authorities along the route.

10.2 The Oxford-Cambridge Pan-Regional Partnership (PRP) was created to coordinate cross regional efforts to promote economic and sustainable development. The PRP was formally closed in May 2025 when Government funding ceased. The City Council is engaging with England's Economic Heartland (the sub-national transport body for the area stretching from Swindon to Cambridgeshire), which is taking forward the PRP's legacy activities.

11. Fast Growth Cities (FGC)

11.1 The key achievements of the FGC group of six councils (Cambridge, Norwich, Milton Keynes, Oxford, Swindon and Peterborough) during 2025/26 included:

- Jointly commissioning Inner Circle Consulting to produce the 'Case for Cities' report, along with Exeter, Ipswich, Gloucester, Lincoln and Reading councils. The report argues that cities can act as engines of national growth, providing Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and devolution help to address key barriers.
- Jointly commissioning Stonehaven to produce an economic report, which highlights that the six cities could potentially generate a total of £21bn in additional real GVA by 2035. The leaders of the six councils jointly wrote to the government in February 2026 requesting investment to improve water infrastructure, transport connectivity and housing affordability and supply in order to unlock and manage this potential growth.
- Co-producing materials for investors to promote the shared economic opportunities in their cities.

11.2 During 2026/27 the Fast Growth Cities group will continue to make the case for investing in and otherwise supporting the economies of fast growth cities in the national economic interest.

12.0 Innovate Cambridge

12.1 During 2025/26 Innovate Cambridge moved from strategy development to a delivery phase. Key achievements included:

- Publishing the Innovate Cambridge Strategy, which sets out a 10-year vision, including "creating value and impact for the local community" and "supporting the local community to lead on sustainable, inclusive and green growth". It includes targets for economic, social and environmental impact.
- Taking part in a study trip to Cambridge, Massachusetts and Paris to learn from the success of the innovation economy in those regions and draw lessons to support Cambridge UK's innovation ecosystem.
- Announcing its first Advisory Council in 2025 chaired by Professor Dame Ottoline Leyser (UKRI), and including Baroness Sally Morgan, Roxanne Varza (Station F), Tim Rowe (Cambridge Innovation Centre, US) and entrepreneur and investor Hermann Hauser (Arm).
- Supporting 'The Cambridge Pledge' as a vehicle for successful entrepreneurs to invest in Greater Cambridge Impact and play their part in addressing inequality. Innovate Cambridge's Executive Director continues to play a key role on the fund's Development Board.

- Forming the Cambridge × Manchester Innovation Partnership to support innovation start-ups and scale-up existing innovation businesses. The partnership is supported by universities and local authorities and has secured £4.8 million in Government funding

13. Community Wealth Building and the Impact Economy

13.1 The Council's Community Wealth Building Strategy and Shaping Abbey work featured as a national case study for the Government's Civil Society Covenant. The Council has taken forward a number of partnership projects and programmes during 2025/26 to deliver the strategy:

- Engaging with the Social Impact Advisory Group (SIAG), which advises Government on mobilising private investment and philanthropic capital to deliver positive social impact. Following the final report of the SIAG in November 2025, the Government launched the Office for the Impact Economy to work more effectively with investors to deliver social impact.
- The Included programme is building clear pathways to fulfilling careers in Cambridge from early years to early adulthood. It is designed for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, including those not in education, employment or training (NEET). The programme will bring together and extend existing programmes provided by partners to create a stronger system and cumulative impact.
- Greater Cambridge Impact (GCI) is a new social investment vehicle which has been set up to bring innovation to tackling poverty and inequality. It brings together funding from the Council and other partners to invest in projects that support: disadvantaged young people; children in care and care-experienced young people; families facing crisis or poverty; and people who are homeless. GCI recently announced that it has reached its first investment milestone by securing total investment of £6.25m.
- The Cambridge Pledge has been established to enable entrepreneurs, businesses and individuals in the Cambridge innovation ecosystem to make donations and contribute a percentage of their future wealth to GCI over time.
- Voluntary & Community Sector infrastructure partnership - The Council is part of a steering group of public and voluntary sector infrastructure organisations who have agreed to work closer together as partners, investors, and allies to the Voluntary, Community, Social Enterprise and Faith (VCSEF) sector, identifying opportunities to collaborate, simplify and streamline processes and funding opportunities.

14. Cambridge Business Improvement District (BID) and Visit Cambridge

14.1 During 2025/26, the visitor economy has been a key focus of the council's partnership work. Key activities have included:

- Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) - working with the BID, the CPCA and Visit

England to explore the potential for a LVEP for Greater Cambridge. LVEPs are a key policy tool for Visit England (VE), bringing together public and private sector partners to grow the visitor economy for the benefit of residents, tourists and businesses. The CPCA is now taking forward feasibility and development work for a possible LVEP.

- Destination Management Plan (DMP) - the BID and Visit Cambridge partners (including Kings College and Curating Cambridge) jointly commissioned a draft Destination Management Plan (DMP) using funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF). The DMP will provide a strategic vision and joint plan with wider stakeholders to manage and develop Greater Cambridge as a visitor destination. It will focus on the needs of visitors, businesses and residents and on improving economic, social and environmental impacts. Depending on the outcome of LVEP proposals, the Council will convene key stakeholders to consider how elements of the DMP can be delivered.

14.2 Key partnership work with the BID and Visit Cambridge to promote the visitor economy in 2026/27 will include:

- developing a shared vision for the city centre shaped by public engagement and working with key partners including the BID, commercial landlords, the universities, cultural organisations, NGOs and transport providers.
- Working with the CPCA to deliver a proposal for a Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) and associated Destination Management Plan (DMP)

15. Partnership By Default

15.1 In addition to the strategic partnerships mentioned above, the Council has adopted a "partnership by default" principle (see Appendix B), and works in partnership with statutory, VCSEF and private sector partners to achieve a range of policy priorities and objectives. These include membership of:

- Community Rail Partnerships for Ipswich to Cambridge and more recently Cam Valley (covering Meldreth, Shepreth, Foxton, Whittlesford Parkway and Shelford stations, and to cover Cambridge South station upon opening)
- Cambridge Ahead's Policy Group, Skills Group and Transport Group.
- Cambridge Investment Partnership (CIP), an equal partnership between Cambridge City Council and The Hill Group to deliver new council homes and market-sale homes and associated commercial and community facilities.
- The RECAP Cambridgeshire partnership for joint waste strategy, policy and procurement.
- Conservators of the River Cam, the statutory navigation authority.
- Action on Energy Cambridgeshire, a partnership of Cambridgeshire councils to

promote and deliver retrofit and energy advice for residents;

- the Cambridge City Leaders Climate Change Group (an informal group of private and institutional leaders committed to working together collaboratively to tackle climate change) and co-convened by the Council and Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL)
- the Cambridge Food Justice Alliance (CFJA) and the Cambridge Sustainable Food (CSF) network, which promote food justice programmes and sustainable food practices across the city. For example, in February 2025 we jointly delivered food justice conference, which helped strengthen partnerships and collaboration across the local food ecosystem.

15. Implications

Financial Implications

15.2 As shown in the table below, the Council makes an annual financial contribution to a number of strategic partnerships:

Partnership	Annual contribution
East West Mainline Rail Partnership	£1,545
Cambridge to Ipswich Community Rail Partnership	£1,000
Cam Valley Community Rail Partnership	£1,000
Cambridge BID (via levy)	£59,000
Community Safety Partnership	£16,000

15.3 Financial contributions to some of the partnerships is variable:

- Fast Growth Cities – in both 2022 and 2023 the Council contributed £5,000 to support research carried out by the FGC, but it has only contributed £500 during 20205/26.
- Innovate Cambridge - in 2024/25 the City Council made a contribution of £50,000 to the partnership, to help fund its work to advance sustainable and inclusive development of the innovation ecosystem in the Cambridge area, but no contribution was made in 2025/26.
- The Council has funded Cambridge Sustainable Food through its Community Grants and Sustainable City Grants for a number of years. In 2025/26 this funding totalled £38,000.

15.4 The Council does not make regular annual financial contributions to the other partnerships featured in this report (e.g. Greater Cambridge Partnership, Innovate

Cambridge, Visit Cambridge, Action on Energy).

Legal Implications

15.5 There are no direct procurement implications arising from the decisions in this report.

Equalities and socio-economic Implications

15.6 An Equality Impact Assessment has not been produced as there are no equalities impacts arising from the decisions recommended in this report. It is expected that continued engagement in the strategic partnerships mentioned will support the Council achieving its equalities objectives.

Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental implications

15.7 There are no direct environmental implications from this report. It is expected that continued engagement in strategic partnerships will support the Council achieving its environmental objectives, not least working with a wide range of stakeholders through RECAP, Action on Energy and City Leaders' Climate Change Group.

Procurement Implications

15.8 There are no direct procurement implications arising from the decisions in this report.

Community Safety Implications

15.9 Continuing to work with the Community Safety Partnership will enable the Council to achieve its community safety ambitions, as described in paragraphs 6.1 and 6.2

16. Background documents

16.1
- Inner Circle Consulting report – A Case for Cities
- Fast Growth Cities Economic Analysis report, February 2026

17. Appendices

17.1
- Appendix A – Partnership by Default principles
- Appendix B – Background information on Strategic Partnerships
- Appendix C – Public sector reforms

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact David Kidston, tel: 01223 457043, email: david.kidston@cambridge.gov.uk

Appendix A – Partnerships by Default principles

Cambridge City Council's principles for collaborative working:

- **Working in partnership will be the norm not the exception in the way we work:** Before we develop any new work, we will find out who else is, could or should, be working in the space and actively engage with them.
- **We commit to ongoing engagement with potential and existing partners to identify alignment and shared purpose for collaboration:** By partners we mean other organisations (including statutory partners and businesses) and residents and communities.
- **Our partnership working will be driven towards what is of most benefit to communities:** we will ensure that communities' voices are heard, understood, and advocated and we will look for opportunities to undertake community engagement alongside partner organisations. By communities, we mean both geographic communities and communities of interest. For example, this can include residents, workers, and businesses with a relationship to the city.
- **We will listen to and seek out perspectives from a diverse range of stakeholders:** We recognise that different perspectives lead to a fuller understanding of a situation. We will also facilitate and support those who might not have the strongest voice to share their perspectives.
- **In establishing our own role in a partnership, we will play to our strengths:** sometimes we will be the right organisation to lead/convene, at others we will be better placed to take a supporting or capacity building role and/or simply be a source of information. Where our contribution is significant and/or may change the way we deliver services, this will need approval as part of the city council's formal decision-making process.
- **We will demonstrate openness and transparency with partners:** We value feedback, evaluation, and improvement when working in partnership. Subject to GDPR compliance, we will also share any data that informs partners of performance of the city relating to outcomes we are aiming to achieve together.
- **We will ensure there are governance arrangements in place that are appropriate to the partnership in question:** Partnerships can take a wide range of forms, from very light touch through to formal legal arrangements. Governance arrangements need to be appropriate to meet the needs of the specific partnership,

working to the principle that they should be as simple and as easy to understand as possible.

Appendix B – Background information on strategic partnerships

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care System (ICS)

The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Integrated Care System (ICS) brings together a range of partner organisations to work together to improve the health and wellbeing of local people in the region. It includes health and care organisations, local councils and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector organisations.

The Council sits on the current core health partnerships within the ICS: the Integrated Care Board (ICB) South Strategic Board, the Integrated Neighbourhood Executive Board, and the Preventative and Personalised Care Board. The Council has significant opportunities to influence and promote the preventative health agenda through its connections to partners, as well as playing a coordinating role to help attract external funding.

Cambridge Community Safety Partnership (CSP)

The Cambridge CSP is a statutory partnership under the Crime and Disorder Act 1997, requiring Local Authorities, Police, Fire Service, Probation and Health partners to come together to formulate and implement strategies to tackle crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour. Cambridge City Council co-ordinates and chairs the Cambridge CSP. The Executive Councillor for Community Safety is a voting member of the CSP and attends the CSP meetings where the work of the partnership is reported.

The Cambridge CSP also has the statutory responsibility to oversee any Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews (previously known as Domestic Homicide Reviews) and subsequent learning action plans, where the victim was a Cambridge City resident.

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA)

The CPCA was established as a Mayoral Combined Authority for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area in 2017. It delivers and funds projects and partnerships to drive

economic growth, improve transport connectivity, create employment, develop skills and build homes across the region.

Cambridge City Council is one of seven constituent members of the CPCA. The Leader of the Council has delegated participation in the CPCA Board to the Cabinet Member for Communities. City Council officers participate in the CPCA's officer level 'Place Directors' Group as well as sub-groups and working groups that spring from it.

The CPCA was issued with a Best Value notice in January 2023, which was lifted in September 2024 following the implementation of an Improvement Plan[1]. In March 2026, 18 months after the Best Value notice was lifted, the CPCA will become eligible to apply to Government for Established Mayoral Strategic Authority (EMSA) status. The CPCA is preparing to apply for ESMA status in September 2026.

Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP)

The Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) was established to deliver the Cambridge City Deal investment in transport, housing and skills. The council is represented on the GCP Executive Board by the Leader. 3 City Councillors (currently Cllrs Bick, Smith and Thittala) are also members of the GCP Joint Assembly. City Council officers participate in the GCP's officer level 'Leadership Group' (which includes officers from all constituent members) as well as the various sub-groups and working groups that spring from it.

Cambridge Growth Company and proposed Development Corporation

The Cambridge Growth Company (CGC) was established in 2024 by government to drive sustainable growth and boost the knowledge economy in Greater Cambridge. The CGC Advisory Council includes the Leaders of Cambridge City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council, alongside the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

CGC is a subsidiary of Homes England and is chaired by Peter Freeman. To date CGC has coordinated investment and enabling infrastructure to accelerate progress on key sites, including preparatory work for a future acute hospital at Cambridge Biomedical Campus, the relocation of Waterbeach Station and the Cambridge South East Transport (CSETs).

Government has proposed that the CGC would be replaced by a Greater Cambridge Development Corporation. As part of the statutory consultation on the proposals, government has proposed that the Development Corporation's Board would include

[1] https://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/news/combined-authority-no-longer-under-best-value-notice-as-government-recognises-improvement/

the leaders of Cambridge City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, and the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Fast Growth Cities (FGC)

The Fast Growth Cities group is an informal partnership of councils representing cities that are experiencing high levels of growth, fuelled by knowledge-intensive economies. They are Cambridge, Norwich, Milton Keynes, Oxford, Swindon and Peterborough.

Innovate Cambridge

Innovate Cambridge was launched in 2022 to define the future of the Greater Cambridge life sciences and technology “ecosystem”. The council’s partnership with Innovate Cambridge has focused on work to ensure that social inclusion and sustainability lie at the heart of its strategy to ensure that Cambridge remains the leading innovation cluster in Europe.

Cambridge Business Improvement District (BID)

Cambridge BID is a body funded by businesses in the BID area (which encompasses Cambridge city centre, Hills Road and Station Road) to deliver additional services and initiatives. The Executive Councillor for Culture, Economy & Skills sits on the Board of the Cambridge Business Improvement District (BID). The BID have undertaken many ongoing initiatives and activities to support local businesses and enhance the city for residents and visitors, including:

- Street Cleaning - funding additional street cleaning and a rapid response service to help keep city centre streets clean, deal with graffiti and fly tipping.
- Safety - the BID is a key partner in the Purple Flag Group, which works to help keep Cambridge safe, particularly in relation to the night-time economy. This includes providing funding for taxi marshals to help people to get home safely, street pastors to help people in distress and a communication network run by the police and Cambridge Business Against Crime (CAMBAC) for venues to alert each other about suspicious behaviour. Cambridge has retained Purple Flag status since 2019.
- Supporting free arts and cultural events to bring vibrancy to the city - including the Cambridge Christmas Lights, the Out of the Ordinary street arts festival, Cambridge Arts Festival, the Standing Tall trail, markets, fairs and open-air screenings. The BID also provides grant funding to locally organised events throughout the year.

- Promoting the visitor economy by providing mobile Welcome Ambassadors, the Love Cambridge Gift Card and website (which encourages people to shop locally and promotes local independent businesses), managing the Visit Cambridge website, and promoting overnight stays by visitors.

Appendix C - Public sector reforms

Integrated Care Board (ICB) reforms

The NHS is going through a period of significant reorganisation. From April 2026, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care Board (ICB) will be abolished and merged with Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes ICB and Hertfordshire and West Essex ICB. Together, they will form a larger NHS Central East ICB cluster. In future, some services will be commissioned at a regional level or by each ICB cluster. There will also be scope for joint commissioning of neighbourhood health services with new unitary councils created through Local Government Reorganisation.

Policing reform

Government set out a number of proposed reforms to the structure and governance of policing across England and Wales in the Policing White Paper in January 2026 including:

- Creating a new National Police service (bringing together the National Crime Agency and the Counter Terrorism Policing to deal with complex cross-border crimes.
- Abolishing elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC), including the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough PCC, and transferring their powers to Mayoral Combined Authorities in 2028.
- Merging some of the current 43 police forces to create fewer, larger forces. In the proposed new structure, local policing would be delivered through Local Policing Areas (LPAs), which would operate at the level of local towns, cities and boroughs

Better Care Fund

The Better Care Fund (BCF) programme supports the NHS and local government to successfully deliver the integration of health, housing and social care services. The BCF aims to promote reform which supports:

- person-centred care and support
- increased focus on prevention rather than sickness
- people living independently at home for as long as possible (the shift from hospital, nursing home or long-term residential care to home)

BCF funding is composed of mandatory contributions from the NHS through Integrated Care Boards (£5.6bn total nationally) and local authorities through the

Local Authority Better Care Grant (£2.6bn) and Disabled Facilities Grant (£0.7bn). Local areas can also voluntarily pool additional funding through the BCF where they are assured that this represents value for money.

Place-based Budget Pilots

5 Place Pilots were announced alongside the Budget on in November 2025. The government is planning to work with five mayoral strategic authorities to test how the pooling of public service budgets in local areas could break down siloes, unlock more funding for prevention and help deliver better outcomes. The Place Pilots could potentially build on the learning from the Total Place initiative in 2009, which involved pilots in 13 areas focussing on collaboration and innovation between frontline services, including local authorities, primary care trusts, police authorities and third sector organisations.

Pride in Place

The Government launched its Pride in Place Strategy in September 2025, which aims to bring about renewal in communities that have experienced austerity and decline. The related Pride in Place program aims to empower local people (including community leaders, volunteers and grassroots organisations) to improve their neighbourhoods and establish long-term change in these areas. Government originally allocated a total of £5 billion funding to hundreds of local communities through the programme. In February 2026, the Government announced that a further £800 million would be invested in 40 new areas across England.

Better Futures Fund

The Better Futures Fund aims to bring together government, local communities, charities, social enterprises, investors and philanthropists, to deliver place-based solutions to the structural and root causes of poverty for children, young people and their families.

Government will contribute £500m to the BFF, with the aim of raising another £500 million from local government, social investors, and philanthropists. This funding is expected to support a 10-year programme. The first phase of the programme is expected to launch in summer 2026 for areas that already have a track record of commissioning through Social Outcomes Partnerships (SOPs). A second wider phase is expected from 2027 onwards.

Impact Economy

The government's Social Impact Investment Advisory Group (SIIAG) defines the Impact Economy as a diverse ecosystem of purposeful organisations with a shared aim of delivering a strong economy in which everyone benefits. The impact economy is supported by philanthropic capital, social investment and institutional impact investment.

The SIIAG produced its final report and recommendations to government in November 2025. One of the report's recommendations was to create the Office for the Impact Economy (OIE) to provide strategic leadership and coordination within government and work more effectively with investors, purpose-led businesses and philanthropists to deliver social impact. The aim is to support growth and lever in additional funding alongside public investment.

Test, Learn and Grow

The Test, Learn and Grow (TLG) program is a £100 million initiative aimed at reshaping public services across the UK. It is an iterative place-based approach to redesigning services, involving a "test and learn culture". The programme brings together cross-government teams of policymakers ("innovation squads"), together with communities and local government frontline workers, to understand what is not working and rapidly reshape services.

The approach was initially trialled in four areas, including Sheffield and Liverpool, and government extended the programme to a further 10 local authorities in July 2025. The City Council expressed interest becoming an 'Test, Learn, and Grow' accelerator area as part as part of its joint LGR proposal with South Cambridgeshire and East Cambridge District Councils.

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Update to Risk Management Strategy and Framework

To:
Cabinet

Report by:
Jane Wilson, Chief Operating Officer
Tel: Email: jane.wilson@cambridge.gov.uk

Wards affected:
All

Director Approval: Director Jane Wilson confirms that the report author has sought the advice of all appropriate colleagues and given due regard to that advice; that the equalities impacts and other implications of the recommended decisions have been assessed and accurately presented in the report; and that they are content for the report to be put to the Committee.

1. Recommendations

1.1 That Cabinet approve:

1. The revised Risk Management Framework and Strategy attached as appendix A.
2. Delegation of authority to approve minor changes and amendments to the Chief Operating Officer.

2. Purpose and reason for the report

2.1 Following a number of changes, including of staff structures, the introduction of the Performance Management Framework, and the changes to Council governance, the Risk Management Strategy and Framework have been through a major review. Following the review, it was publicly considered by the Civic Affairs and Audit Committee on 9 March 2026. The Civic Affairs and Audit Committee has the role of overseeing the effective management of risk by Officers and any significant updates or revisions to this strategy and framework was therefore presented to that Committee for oversight and

recommendation to Cabinet, in line with our new constitution.
n.b. the Strategy and Framework was brought to the Civic Affairs Committee in February 2024 for visibility of minor changes and amendments.

3. Background and key issues

3.1 The focus of this update has been to ensure that it sets out in clearly understood terms the purpose of risk management and the way that we achieve that purpose in practice.

The strategy sets out the purpose of having a risk management process and highlights the new Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act, legislation, which came into force 1 September 2025 and brought in the offence of 'failure to prevent'.

The framework provides more detail on how we carry out that risk management process, which has the risk management cycle at its core. It also highlights how staff are supported and trained to use the process, and the recording systems in use across the Council

4. Corporate plan

4.1 The Risk Management Strategy and Framework links to all parts of the Corporate Plan, as it supports effective delivery of all aspects of the Council's work
Corporate plan 2022-27: our priorities for Cambridge - Cambridge City Council

5. Consultation, engagement and communication

5.1 The Council's leadership team and Executive Councillors have been consulted on the updated Risk Management Strategy and Framework.

6. Implications

6.1 Relevant risks

The risk is in not having an up-to-date risk management strategy and framework

Financial Implications

6.2 There are no financial implications

Legal Implications

6.3 The updated policy refers to the new Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act. This legislation requires all organisations to identify whether any of their activities could be subject to fraud and set out what they are doing to manage the risk of fraud.

Equalities and socio-economic Implications

6.4 There are no equalities or socio-economic implications associated with this report.

Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental implications

6.5 The proposals in this report have no climate change impact.

Procurement Implications

6.6 There are no procurement implications

Community Safety Implications

6.7 There are no community safety implications

7. Background documents

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

7.1 Risk Management Strategy and Framework

8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix A – Draft updated Risk Management Strategy and Framework

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Jane Wilson, Chief Operating Officer, Tel: 07795 542512, email: jane.wilson@cambridge.gov.uk



CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

RISK MANAGEMENT

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Version Control

Version	Date	Updated by	Summary of change
1.0	22/09/2021	Stephanie Fisher	Approved by Civic Affairs Committee
1.1	06/12/2022	Jonathan Tully	Added guidance on scoring risks at residual stage.
1.2	04/01/2024	Stephanie Fisher	Update to reflect structural and operational changes
1.3	01/09/2025	Stephanie Fisher	Finance Scores Revised
1.4	08/12/2025	Claire Tunesi	Updated hyperlinks
1.5	10/02/2026	Stephanie Fisher	Full Review of Document

Risk Management Strategy

Introduction

Effective risk management is critical to ensure any organisation maintains its services, progresses towards achieving its strategic aims, and provides assurance it is operating on sound corporate governance principles.

Governance

Good governance enables the Council to pursue its vision effectively as well as underpinning that vision with mechanisms for control and management of risk. Our governance framework is designed to ensure that the Council is doing the right things, in the right way, for the communities it serves in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner.

Risk Management is a key element of Cambridge City Council's Governance Framework, and our Risk Management Strategy & Framework are designed to manage risk to a reasonable level.

Internal Audit regularly reviews systems of internal control, providing independent assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the controls in place to manage risks and agreeing actions with management to improve controls where needed.

The Civic Affairs and Audit Committee of the Council has the role of overseeing the effective management of risk by officers, and updates or revisions to this framework and strategy are presented to that committee for oversight and agreement.

Aims and Objectives

The objective of the risk management process is to identify, evaluate and control risks and opportunities.

Risks are the possibility that an unwanted or uncertain action or event will cause injury, loss, damage or adversely affect the Council's ability to achieve its objectives.

Opportunities also need to be considered, providing the benefits and rewards outweigh the potential risks.

Our strategic aim is to:

- integrate risk management into the Council's culture.
- raise awareness of the need for risk management by all those responsible for managing risk.
- maintain an ability to anticipate and respond to changing social, environmental and legislative changes.

Risk Appetite

Defining our risk appetite provides a consistent structure for the management of risks, including decision-making and allocation of resources to manage risks.

Our current risk appetite is determined by reference to risk scores, with the aim to ensure that all operational risks have a score of 10 or below (green or yellow risks). Risks will be regularly reviewed to ensure that the residual risk score remains within the agreed risk appetite level.

We recognise there may be circumstances where it may be appropriate to accept or tolerate amber risks, outside of the established risk appetite level. In such circumstances the rationale for proceeding should be discussed and agreed with the relevant Director(s) and fully recorded within the 4Risk system.

There is no tolerance for red risks, if a red risk is identified there will be immediate actions put in place to reduce the level of risk.

Any amber or red risks are automatically reported to Cabinet in the Quarterly Performance Report. A red risk will be reported to the relevant Executive Councillor at the earliest possible opportunity.

Fraud Risks

The new Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act, which came into force 1 Sept 2025, requires all organisations to identify whether any of their activities could be subject to fraud and set out what they are doing to manage the risk of fraud. The Council is therefore required to demonstrate reasonable procedures are in place to prevent officer/agent fraud which either intentionally or unintentionally benefits the Council.

We have introduced additional fields in our risk register to capture fraud risk information to demonstrate compliance with the legislation.

Our Processes

The Risk Management process involves identifying:

- potential risks and opportunities,
- what might cause the identified risks/opportunities to occur, and
- the consequences of a risk materialising or failing to pursue opportunities.

Our agreed approach is to identify controls that are currently in place to mitigate each risk and establish any additional actions required to further reduce the likelihood of the risk arising and/or the impact should it occur.

The greater the understanding of risks that the Council is exposed to, together with the causes and consequences of these risks, the more informed future decision making can be. Learning from other existing or previous risks is an important part of building our understanding.

Our processes, roles and responsibilities, performance and training information are detailed within the Risk Management Framework below. OBJ

Risk Management Framework

Why do we need a risk management framework?

Risk management is about being risk aware and finding ways to do something that best minimises risks and maximises opportunities. The key is to identify what those risks might be and how to accommodate them in our activities.

A public service organisation must identify, analyse and prioritise risks, as well as manage and control risks in a cost-effective manner to maximise the quality and efficiency of its service provision and protect its reputation.

Effective risk management is critical to ensure the Council maintains services, progresses towards achieving its objectives, and provides assurance that the Council is operating in line with the agreed governance framework.

The Account and Audit (Amended) Regulations 2015 recognises that a system for managing risk is a key part of an internal control framework.

Framework aims

The aims of the Council's Risk Management Framework are to:

- Build a practical, risk-aware culture.
- Use one clear, consistent approach.
- Support better decision making by identifying key risks early.
- Protect service delivery and corporate objectives.
- Reduce disruption, harm and cost.

Risk Management Cycle

At the heart of good risk management is the risk management cycle. The four steps of this process drive our practical approach to risk management.



1. Identifying risks and controls

Identifying risks, and any controls we already have in place, is the responsibility of everyone associated with the Council. All Officers are expected to identity and flag potential risks within their area of work. Members can also flag risks.

Operational staff should report actual and potential risks to their managers, and where appropriate log them on one of our risk management systems, alongside the controls they have in place.

2. Analyse and Score Risks

Council managers are responsible for managing risks within their area. This includes carrying out the analysis and scoring of risks and recording them in the appropriate risk management system. Guidance to help with scoring is available in Appendix C: Risk Categories.

It is crucial to recognise that analysis and scoring is only one step in the risk management cycle and that being aware of and recording a risk does not complete the risk management process.

3. Identify Actions

Council managers should work with relevant colleagues (including where appropriate their line manager) to identify and develop actions to reduce the level of a risk when the risk score indicates that an action is necessary. Actions can be one off or can be the establishment of ongoing controls.

Our risk appetite currently indicates that any risk that is amber or red requires action to reduce the level of risk, or at minimum to identify and agree with their director that an amber risk is unavoidable.

- Yellow risks could require actions, particularly if the risk level could grow.
- Risks that are green with current controls do not require additional actions.

Actions should be primarily identified by risk managers; however, actions can also be identified as the result of Internal Audit activity.

Our risk scoring heat map in Appendix B shows the relationship between a risk score and whether that score indicates a green, yellow, amber or red risk.

4. Monitoring, Reporting and Review

Risk managers should monitor and review their risks on a regular basis, particularly where they are aware of any changes.

To ensure all risks are regularly reviewed, the Council also runs a formal process every quarter, where all risks, controls and actions are reviewed. This provides assurance that the framework is being followed.

All our risks are considered operational, and they are each linked up to at least one of seven strategic risk areas that have been identified for the Council. The aggregated scores for our operational risks provide a clear overview of the strategic risk level for the Council.

The quarterly review is used as the basis for quarterly reports to Directors and Chief Officers, and on to Cabinet, where the strategic risk levels and any amber or red operational risks are reported publicly.

Directors and Chief Officers should ensure that risks in their areas are well managed, and that any areas requiring whole Council action are recognised and the relevant action put in place. Cabinet

members are similarly responsible for ensuring that risks in their areas are properly reviewed and challenged, at minimum on a quarterly basis, and that any new or emerging risks are properly recorded.

Partner and Contractor Risks

Some of our activity is delivered by partners or contractors. In such circumstances the risks relating to service delivery may not sit with CCC, however there may be residual risks which we cannot transfer which need to be considered using the process outlined above and recorded within our own risk management systems.

For shared services, the Shared Service Boards for these services are responsible for ensuring that risks are recorded in the relevant risk registers (e.g., CCC/SCDC/HDC), and that suitable processes are in place for the escalation of risks and provision of assurance.

Communication and Training

The Risk Management webpages on our intranet are regularly updated and enhanced. They include:

- Supplementary guidance
- Training and reference materials
- Intelligence on emerging risks

We are developing a suite of Risk Management training tools to support officers and members. This includes self-serve videos on how to use the 4Risk system as well as regular Risk Management drop-in sessions, focussing on various elements of the Risk Management process. Details of all available resources are published on the Risk Management Intranet pages.

Appendices

Appendix A: Risk Management Systems

The following systems are the agreed risk management systems for the Council. The default system is 4Risk, and there are high level risks in place within 4Risk to ensure that risks in the other systems are included in our strategic risk position.

Environment	System	Purpose
 Corporate Risk Register	4Risk	Holds the corporate Risk Register, and it the primary data source for risk reports. It includes risks from across the Council, organised by Group. It also includes actions agreed as the result of Internal Audit reports
 Project management	Smartsheet	Risks specifically related to the delivery of projects.
 Business continuity	Excel or Word	To support agile and quick development of risks and controls in an emergency.
 Health and safety	MyCompliance	Health & Safety risks with limited impacts and where the wider, umbrella risks are already reflected in the corporate risk register.
 Thematic development	Excel or Word	Working papers for the development of thematic risk registers – e.g., Financial Resilience or Information Governance. These are typically strategic and cross cutting documents and can be used as reference tools for identifying operational risks.
 Building Compliance	SafetyCulture/ Teams Software	Systems specifically designed to monitor fire safety and asbestos compliance respectively.

Appendix B – Risk Scoring

The process of scoring a risk starts with the consideration of both its impact, and its likelihood:

The tables below give an overview of scoring for impact and for likelihood.

Score	Impact	Description (more details in the matrix below)
5	Critical	The consequences of this event occurring could cause the failure of a number of services or result in the Council having its powers removed through government intervention.
4	Significant disruption &/or damaging	Significant – the consequence of such an event occurring could cause the failure of the service or bring the Council into serious disrepute.
3	Noticeable effect	This type of risk event would have a significant impact on a service's ability to provide its full range of activities. The result of this is that the integrity of the service/Council would be called into question by, for example an inspection service.
2	Limited disruption	These types of events can normally be dealt with through the normal day to day management of the service and internal control mechanisms.
1	Virtually no impact	These events may be recognized internally but generally have no external impact and can be resolved quickly.

Score	Likelihood	Description
5	Dead Cert	In this case the event(s) may have already happened in the recent past. Without controls it will happen again and may even occur despite controls. Projected increase in insurance premiums. 91 -100% chance of the event occuring.
4	Probable	The event is more likely to happen than not but there remains some possibility it will not. 66 -90% chance of the event occuring.
3	Strong possibility	There is an even chance that this event may occur. 36-65% chance of the event occuring.
2	Some possibility	These events are not likely to occur but there remains some possibility it will. 11-35% chance of the event occuring.
1	Little chance	These events will only occur in exceptional circumstances. 0-10% chance of the event occuring.

The overall risk score is the product of the two: impact x likelihood, so a risk with an impact or 3 and a likelihood of 2 is scored as 6 (3x2)

Risks can be assessed and scored at three stages:

- The **inherent risk** is what could happen before any mitigating controls are used - *the worst-case scenario*.
- The **residual risk** is what could happen after our controls have been implemented - *where we are today*.
- The **target risk** is what we could achieve if we implement further actions - *where we could be in the future*.

We score risks on the 4Risk system at the **residual risk** stage - *where we are today*. This helps us to understand what our greatest risks are, and how to prioritise resources best.

We also capture inherent risk scores. The provision of inherent risk scores enables us to evaluate the effectiveness of existing controls to mitigate risks.

It is vital to understand the difference between residual and inherent risk, particularly because we need to ensure our risk controls are properly monitored.

A very significant inherent risk, with the proper controls in place can become quite a low risk, so long as the controls are effectively maintained. Where that is the case, we need to make sure the residual score is accurate or we could end up using more resources to manage what is already a low risk.

However, we also need to make sure that the controls are properly maintained, otherwise a low risk can become a much higher risk very quickly. Financial risks are a good example of well-maintained controls reducing a very high inherent risk to a low residual risk.

Once a risk has been scored the following heat map shows whether it is a green, yellow, amber or red risk.

Risk score: Heat Map

Impact						
	5	*5-10 Medium*	*5-10 Medium*	*12-15 Significant*	*16-25 High*	*16-25 High*
	4	*1-4 Low*	*5-10 Medium*	*12-15 Significant*	*16-25 High*	*16-25 High*
	3	*1-4 Low*	*5-10 Medium*	*5-10 Medium*	*12-15 Significant*	*12-15 Significant*
	2	*1-4 Low*	*1-4 Low*	*5-10 Medium*	*5-10 Medium*	*5-10 Medium*
	1	*1-4 Low*	*1-4 Low*	*1-4 Low*	*1-4 Low*	*5-10 Medium*
		1	2	3	4	5
		Likelihood				

Appendix C: Risk Categories

Risk categories are available in 4Risk as an additional way to categorise risk beyond their group and the risk score. The category descriptions below can also help where there is uncertainty on the level of impact.

Risk Category	Risk Description	Virtually no impact	Some limited disruption	Noticeable effect	Significant disruption & / or damaging	Critical
	Score	1	2	3	4	5
Business Continuity	Failure to adequately plan and manage processes for unforeseen events (Civil Emergency Plan, Business Continuity Plans, IT failure)	Insignificant disruption on internal business – no loss of customer service. Less than 1 hour.	Some disruption on internal business only – no loss of customer service. Interruption of half a day.	Noticeable disruption to Council – would affect customers (loss of service no more than 48 hours).	Major disruption to the Council – serious damage to organisation's ability to service customers (loss of service for more than 48 hours but less than seven days).	Loss of service delivery for more than seven days.
Change Management	Ineffective management of change, inadequate capacity and knowledge.	Ad hoc officer resistance. Insufficient resources (time/officers) resulting in minor slippage on planned implementation timescales.	Minor levels of resistance. Insufficient resources (time/officers) resulting in minor slippage on planned implementation timescales.	Lack of awareness or desire to support the change at officer level. Noticeable levels of resistance. Insufficient resources (time/officers) resulting in noticeable slippage on planned implementation timescales.	Lack of awareness or desire to support corporate change amongst Senior Management. Significant levels of resistance. Insufficient resources (time/officers) resulting in significant slippage on planned implementation timescales.	Lack of awareness or desire to support corporate change at strategic level (SLT/Members). High levels of resistance. Insufficient resources (time/officers) resulting in major slippage on planned implementation timescales.

Risk Category	Risk Description	Virtually no impact	Some limited disruption	Noticeable effect	Significant disruption & / or damaging	Critical
	Score	1	2	3	4	5
Environmental (incl Climate Change)	Failure to properly identify/manage environmental impact.	Minimal or no impact on the environment.	Minor impact on the environment.	Moderate impact on environment.	Major impact on environment.	Catastrophic impact on environment.
Equalities / Social Exclusion	Failure to manage equalities/social exclusion (including duties for specific vulnerable groups).	Minor impact – queries able to be resolved	Risk of delay to initiatives and/or diversion of resources to resolve issues	Extended delays to projects and initiatives to ensure equalities considerations properly addressed	Adverse impacts for people with protected characteristics; risk of challenge; reputational damage	Legal challenge over legal compliance; significant reputational impact
Financial	Failure to effectively manage the Council's assets and finances including budget monitoring, financial priorities, medium/long term planning, fraud prevention.	The total level of financial impact is likely to be less than £50,000.	The total level of financial impact is likely to be between £50,000 and £150,000.	The total level of financial impact is likely to be between £150,000 and £500,000.	The total level of financial impact is likely to be between £500,000 and £3 million.	The total level of financial impact is likely to be over £3 million.

Risk Category	Risk Description	Virtually no impact	Some limited disruption	Noticeable effect	Significant disruption & / or damaging	Critical
	Score	1	2	3	4	5
Governance	Inappropriate internal governance.	Minor weaknesses in governance risk and control identified. Management can easily and quickly rectify and implement improvements.	Independent and external assurance reporting identifies moderate weaknesses in governance risk and control.	Reporting in the Annual Governance statement required. Independent and external assurance reporting identifies major weaknesses in governance risk and control.	Reporting in the Annual Governance statement required. Best Value Notice Issued External inspection conducted under section 10 of the Local Government Act 1999.	Reporting in the Annual Governance statement required. Best Value Notice Issued Intervention and appointment of external parties / Commissioners to take over key functions in relation to governance and operations.
Health & Safety	Failure to manage health and safety effectively leading to a prosecution under the Corporate Manslaughter Act or other health and safety legislation.	Physical No injury/claims.	Minor injury/claims (first aid treatment).	Violence or threat or serious injury/claims (medical treatment required).	Extensive multiple injuries/claims. HSE inspection.	Loss of life. HSE inspection.
IT & Technology	Failure to properly manage IT, data and the Council's website.	Out of date links on Council's website Ad-hoc access issues for individual users.	IT issues which impact individuals for an extended period or a small group of users, for a short period, but does not cause disruption to customer service.	Outages due to hardware/software failures affecting larger number of users within a service impacting on customer service/service operations.	Frequent outages due to hardware/software failures causing significant disruption to multiple service operations.	Major IT outages due to failure or Hardware causing major disruption to service delivery. Software no longer supported by suppliers.

Risk Category	Risk Description	Virtually no impact	Some limited disruption	Noticeable effect	Significant disruption & / or damaging	Critical
	Score	1	2	3	4	5
Legislation	Failure to ensure compliance with legislation.	Minor civil litigation or regulatory criticism	Minor regulatory enforcement	Major civil litigation and/or local public enquiry	Major civil litigation setting precedent and/or national public enquiry	Section 5 notice, Section 151 or government intervention or criminal charges.
Major Projects	Failure to adequately manage and control major CCC projects.	Insignificant cost increase Schedule slippage	<5 percent over project budget	5 – 10 percent over project budget	10 - 25 per cent over project budget	25 percent over project budget
Partnerships	Failure to adequately manage and control partnerships working and joint agency activity and key contractor relationships.	Minor partnership friction	Some delay to projects	Project over-run against time and cost budgets, need for greater investment of senior officer time	Projects and initiatives not delivered; reputational damage and loss of trust impacting on future funding and partnership proposals	Irreconcilable breakdown in partnerships with loss of facility for joint working + reputational damage
Performance and Objectives	Ineffective performance monitoring arrangements.	Minimal impact on performance	Underperformance not detected or reported early, opportunity to mitigate may be missed	Underperformance not reported resulting in inefficiency, cost, delay and poor service	Major impact on performance requiring costly intervention to recover; reputational damage and impact on officer-member trust	Total absence or failure of performance management resulting in service failure, complaints, reputational and relational damage, potential need for external intervention

Risk Category	Risk Description	Virtually no impact	Some limited disruption	Noticeable effect	Significant disruption & / or damaging	Critical
	Score	1	2	3	4	5
Physical Property & Assets	Failure to properly manage property and other assets, to prevent damage, loss or theft.	Minor damage or loss to physical fabric that does not prevent ongoing use	Minor damage or loss to physical fabric that does not prevent ongoing use but disruption due to alternative arrangements or during repairs.	Damage or loss to physical structure that prevents ongoing use pending repair	Significant damage or loss to physical structure that prevents ongoing use for extended period pending substantial repair.	Catastrophic damage or loss to physical structure requiring full closure and alternative premises for ongoing operation
Planning & Leadership	Opportunity to maintain and continue to improve Council efficiency through clear strategic focus, planning and leadership.	Minor queries, easily resolved	Potential misunderstanding of priorities, minor delay / disruption to activities and initiatives	Some priorities delayed or not delivered due to insufficient clarity, planning or leadership	Financial and service objectives not met, with impacts for stakeholders and potential for unplanned financial consequences	Failure to deliver major service objectives; customer and stakeholder dissatisfaction; serious financial consequences.
Political	Ineffective political leadership, policy development and community leadership; member support.	Objectives still achieved with minimum extra cost or inconvenience	Partial achievement of objectives with compensating action taken or reallocation of resources.	Additional costs required and or time delays to achieve objectives – adverse impact on PIs and targets.	Unable to achieve corporate objectives or statutory obligations resulting in significant visible impact on service provision such as closure of facilities.	Unable to achieve corporate objectives and/or corporate obligations

Risk Category	Risk Description	Virtually no impact	Some limited disruption	Noticeable effect	Significant disruption & / or damaging	Critical
	Score	1	2	3	4	5
Procurement & Contract Management	Failure to ensure effective procurement and contract management arrangements.	Limited resource, excessive demand for support	Lack of market visibility, unaware of innovations that may impact suitability of tender. Unaware of national trends in supply chain	Lack of contract management post award	Failing to follow procurement procedures and legislation	Lack of planning by stakeholder services Legislative changes or national requirement Supplier financially or operationally fails
Recruitment & Retention	Failure to recruit and retain adequate number of suitable staff leading to key person dependency and loss of capacity building opportunities.	Insignificant impact on service operation as a result of staff turnover. Occasional use of temporary staff Occasional vacant posts for a short period	Minor disruption to internal operations due to staff leaving/training new members of staff. Frequent use of temporary staff Frequent vacant posts for a short period	Significant number of staff leaving the council resulting in minor disruption to service delivery. Inability to recruit experienced permanent employees. Reliance on temporary workers to fill vacant posts.	Significant number of staff leaving the council resulting in major disruption to service delivery. Inability to recruit experienced permanent employees. Reliance on significant levels of temporary staff in individual service areas.	Unable to maintain service delivery due to high volumes of staff leaving the council/inability to recruit in a timely manner. Unable to attract suitable staff (permanent/temporary)

Risk Category	Risk Description	Virtually no impact	Some limited disruption	Noticeable effect	Significant disruption & / or damaging	Critical
	Score	1	2	3	4	5
Reputation	Damage to Council's reputation through adverse media coverage.	No reputational damage. Coverage in media which is not typically frequented.	Limited coverage in social media and local media. Short term reduction in public confidence. Elements of public expectation not being met.	Brief coverage in the national media. Sustained coverage in the local media. Longer term reduction in public confidence.	Coverage in the national media.	Repeated and extensive coverage in the national media. Commentary from MP in Parliament. Total loss of public confidence.

Where risks cut across multiple risk categories, the highest scoring risk category should be recorded in the risk register.

Appendix D – Supporting Guidance

There are a number of useful guides available on the Risk Management intranet pages.

Key documents referenced in this Document are listed below:

Area	Overview	Link
Fraud Risks	This guide explains the legislative requirement for a Fraud Risk register and how to record details on 4Risk	Fraud Risks Guidance
Parent & Child Risks	Each operational risk should have at least one parent risk which is or is linked to at least one of the 7 strategic, thematic risks. This guide provides more information on the purpose or and how to record parent & child risks.	Parent & Child Risks
Risk References	Each risk has a unique risk reference which indicates where the risk sits within the organisation at a glance. This guide provides further explanation of how risk references are allocated and how to use them.	Risk References
Roles & Responsibilities	This guide provides more detail on the roles and responsibilities of officers and members.	Roles and Responsibilities
Quarterly Risk Reviews	The guide outlines the background and process for quarterly risk reviews.	Quarterly Risk Reviews
Actions	Further information on Management and Internal Audit actions.	Actions

Appendix E- Glossary

Key Terms

These are the key terms that a Risk Manager needs to understand to fulfil their daily risk management responsibilities.

Term	Description
Action	Something in addition to the existing controls which needs to be carried out to mitigate a risk. Once implemented actions may become controls.
Analysing Risk	The evaluation of risk with regard to the severity if the risk is realised, and the likelihood of the risk being realised.
Cause	What will cause the risk to occur.
Consequence	What the consequence will be should the risk occur.
Control	Existing checks / processes in place to mitigate a risk.
Operational (Service) Risk	Potential risks that managers and officers encounter during their business planning and day-to-day service delivery
Strategic Risk	Potential risks that may prevent the organisation achieving its aims and Medium-Term Objectives.
Impact (Severity)	The probable effect on the Organisation / Service if the risk occurs (scored from 1 – 5).
Likelihood	The probability or chance of the risk occurring (scored from 1 – 5).
Risk	Risk is the uncertainty of outcome, whether a positive opportunity or a negative threat, of action and events. It is the combination of likelihood and severity.
Risk Management	All the processes involved in identifying, analysing and profiling risks, assigning ownership, taking actions to mitigate or anticipate theme and monitoring and reviewing progress.
Risk Score	The exposure arising from a specific risk after controls have been put in place to manage it and assuming that the control is effective. The score is calculated by multiplying likelihood by severity with controls in place.

Specialist Terms

These are more detailed risk definitions and terms used by Risk Management Team and specialists.

Term	Description
Opportunity Risk	Most risk management standards and guidelines recognise the upside of risk. However, many people find the concept of opportunity risk management difficult to grasp, due to the negative associations of risk. Organisations should proactively manage opportunity risk. If only threat risks are managed, the best outcome expected is to meet the promised objectives but never to improve on them. The value of identifying opportunity risk and threat risk is that the Council can take a strategic approach to tackling the risk.
Threat Risk	
Risk Appetite	Level of risk we aim to operate within
Risk Tolerance	Level of risk we are willing to operate within
Risk Capacity	Maximum Level of risk we can operate with
Risk Universe	All of the risks that we document and are managed
Black swan event	An event that comes as a surprise, has a major effect, and is often inappropriately rationalized after the fact with the benefit of hindsight
Grey swan event	A potentially significant event that is considered unlikely to happen but still possible. Examples include climate change, population growth, and rising debt.
White swan event	An event with a high certainty and easily estimated impact.
Grey rhino	A highly probable event with a great deal of impact which is dismissed or overlooked because it is not taken seriously enough in the short term. A totally predictable grey rhino might be building new homes on a flood plain with one-in-a-hundred-year mitigation measures put in place.
Polycrisis	Where current/future global risks interact, resulting in compounding impacts which exceed the sum of the individual risks. Examples include the pandemic, Ukraine war, and resulting impacts such as supply chain, inflation, housing refugees.
Permacrisis	Permacrisis remains a new and evolving concept but can be defined as “an extended period of acute uncertainty and instability, including a portfolio of different but interrelated, potentially existential, crises (e.g., political, economic or social). These are unlikely to have definitive permanent solutions – rather they need eventually to be assimilated within mainstream public policy planning and management. 'Permacrisis', when examined through a public policy and placemaking perspective, represents an extended stretch of chaos and instability, which often require permanent modifications rather than distinct solutions.

Appendix F - Risk Management Standards, Legislation & Guidance

These are the key documents that we reference to ensure our Framework stays up to date:

- ALARM (Association of Local Authority Risk Management) Risk Management Toolkit 2021
- HM Treasury - The Orange Book Management of Risk – Principles and Concepts (last update June 2025)

REPORT TITLE: Quarterly Performance Report October to December 2025

To:
Cabinet

24 March 2026

Report by:
Jane Wilson, Chief Operating Officer
Tel: 01223 457860 Email: jane.wilson@cambridge.gov.uk

Wards affected:
All

Director Approval: Robert Pollock, CEO, confirms that the report author has sought the advice of all appropriate colleagues and given due regard to that advice; that the equalities impacts and other implications of the recommended decisions have been assessed and accurately presented in the report; and that they are content for the report to be put to the Committee.

1. Recommendations

1.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet

1. Note the contents of the attached Quarterly Performance Report for the period 1 October to 31 December 2025.

2. Purpose and reason for the report

2.1 This report is to provide Cabinet with an overview of the Council's performance over the period 1 October to 31 December 2025 (Q3).

3. Alternative options considered: As this item is to note, no alternative options were considered.

4. Background and key issues

4.1 Background

This report is one element in delivering on the Council's Performance Management Framework Principles and Approach agreed March 2025. The primary objective of the Framework is to enable the Council to be an effective, efficient and high-performing organisation, successfully meeting its agreed objectives at every level, and enabling effective scrutiny, both internally and publicly, of our performance against those objectives.

Purpose

The primary purpose of the report is to provide effective strategic oversight, enabling considered decision-making, effective scrutiny, and public visibility.

It achieves this through a consistent, quarterly, high-level factual snapshot of the overall health of the Council, presented in clear, lay terms. It will complement the more reflective and in-depth Annual Report.

It brings together performance measures, finance, and risk information into one place. These three sources of information taken together provide a rounded picture of the health of the Council.

Format

The report focuses at the whole Council level, split into two parts:

- The Council's general activities and responsibilities
- The Council as a residential Social Landlord

This separation reflects the financial separation between our General Fund, through which all income and expenditure relating the Council's general activities and responsibilities, and the Housing Revenue Account which is ring-fenced for all income and expenditure relating to the Council as a residential social landlord.

For each part, there is a high-level narrative overview, making the link between performance, finance and risk, and an appendix with supporting detail. This incorporates

information previously supplied separately in reports covering finance, our social landlord function and the quarterly update on the Housing Development Agency. Their integration into the single quarterly report ensures that it provides an effective overview of the Council as a whole.

Style

The intention is for the report to be straightforward and easy to understand using minimal jargon or specialist language, and where specialist terms are unavoidable, they are explained.

Schedule

The annual pattern of reporting for the quarterly report is Q1: September Cabinet, Q2: December Cabinet, Q3: March Cabinet, Q4: June Cabinet.

Review

There will be a review of this report format in Summer 2026, so that any revisions can be incorporated from Q1 of the 26/27 reporting cycle. This timescale reflects that this is a new approach as well as a new report for the Council, with early review and revision a key part of the process to ensure that it does deliver on its purpose.

The Performance Management Framework as a whole will be subject to periodic review by Internal Audit as part of the risk-based audit plan, with outcomes reported to the Civic Affairs and Audit Committee, providing additional assurance on its effectiveness and alignment with the Council's governance arrangements.

Link to Local Code of Corporate Governance

The Quarterly Performance Report to Cabinet is one of the routes by which the Council adheres to the Local Code of Corporate Governance. Most notably it practically demonstrates the management of risk and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management, and contributes to good practices in transparency, reporting and audit, to deliver effective accountability.

5. Corporate plan

5.1 *Explain how the decision links to the Councils Corporate Plan*

Corporate plan 2022-27: our priorities for Cambridge - Cambridge City Council

The primary link is to objective 4, Modernising the Council to lead a greener city that is fair for all.

6. Consultation, engagement and communication

6.1 Consultation on the design of the report was undertaken with Members and Officers prior to the first release.

7. Anticipated outcomes, benefits or impact

7.1 As set out above, the report will provide a quarterly snapshot of the health of the Council, to support effective decision making and scrutiny.

8. Implications

8.1 **Relevant risks**

This report is to note, there are no associated risks with doing so.

Financial Implications

8.2 This report is to note, there are no associated financial implications

Legal Implications

8.3 This report is to note, there are no associated legal implications

Equalities and socio-economic Implications

8.4 There are no equalities or socio-economic implications in noting this report.

Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental implications

8.5 There are no net zero carbon, climate change or environmental implications in noting this report.

Procurement Implications

8.6 There are no procurement implications in noting this report.

Community Safety Implications

8.7 There are no community safety implications in noting this report.

9. Background documents

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

9.1 *n/a*

10. Appendices

10.1 Appendix One: Cambridge City Council Quarterly Performance Report September to December 2025

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Jane Wilson, Chief Operating Officer tel: 01223 458760 email: jane.wilson@cambridge.gov.uk

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Cambridge City Council: Quarterly Performance Report October to December 2025

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Introduction

This report provides a quarterly snapshot of how well the Council is performing, the risks we are facing, and whether we are delivering within our agreed budget.

It covers the period from 1 October to 31 December 2025 (called quarter 3 as it is the third three-month period in the financial year) and provides a high-level overview, highlighting areas where there are major achievements or outstanding delivery, and areas that have significant risks, issues or challenges.

The report is split into two parts, the first covering our general responsibilities, the second our role as a residential social landlord. For each part there is an appendix with more detailed information.

For simplicity, central corporate services, which support both our general responsibilities and our social landlord function, are covered in part one of the report. Where there are specific issues affecting the landlord role they are highlighted in the landlord report.

Part One: Our General Responsibilities

The Council carries out a very broad range of activities as part of its general responsibilities. These range from activities relating to our environment, for example domestic waste collection, maintenance of parks and open spaces, air quality monitoring, the 'scores on the doors' food safety inspections; our communities, including community safety, leisure, culture and community facilities, and community engagement; and place making, including planning, inclusive growth, and responding to climate change.

Overview

Between October and December 2025 (**Quarter 3**) the Council:

- Delivered its full range of services (metrics for key services, including waste, planning, customer support, environmental health are included in appendix 1)
- Opened the Operations Hub, a new operational base bringing together operational teams and functions
- Launched the public consultation on its 2026-27 budget
- Launched the public consultation on the new Local Plan, which ran from 1 December to 30 January 2026
- Launched the public engagement on the outline draft of the new Climate Change Strategy for 2026-2031, which ran from 1 October to 9 November 2026
- Worked with Councils across the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough footprint to finalise and submit proposals for Local Government Reorganisation
- Prepared for the launch of the weekly food waste collection via our shared waste service

Agreed:

- The submission of Option B to the Secretary of State as the Council's preferred option for Local Government Reorganisation. The detail of option B can be found at *Option B: the best way to reorganise Cambridgeshire's seven councils - Cambridge City Council*.
- The draft Local Plan for public consultation
- A public consultation on the review of the Bio-diversity Strategy to run alongside the Urban Forest Strategy consultation
- To act as a supporting authority for CPCA to submit the final Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy to the Secretary of State

- A draft Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2026-2029 for recommendation to Full Council in February 2026

Key achievements in the period include:

- The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service was named national Planning Authority of the year in the Royal Town Planning Institute National Planning Awards
- Continued improvements in the financial performance and events programme at the Corn Exchange and Guildhalls.

Significant risks and issues that emerged during the quarter include:

- Continued uncertainty generated by the outcome of the Fair Funding Review of the local government financial settlement. The interim settlement figure was issued on 19 December, at the end of quarter three, with the final figure provided on 9 February 2026, mid-way through the final quarter of the financial year.

However, mainly due to changes to our investment and interest payments, our projected financial position for the year has improved since the quarter two report. Our forecast position is currently showing that we will spend £0.5 million more than planned by the end of the financial year (31 March 2026).

The Council's budget includes a contribution of £3.7 million to the General Fund balance. If our forecast is right the General Fund balance would still increase at the end of the year, but by £3.2 million. A more detailed breakdown of our financial position at the end of the quarter is set out in Appendix One.

Work has been taking place in year to identify and manage overspend or under achievement. In addition, the 2026/27 budget approved at full Council on 26 February contained budget items and policy initiatives to address changes in demand for services.

Part Two: Residential Social Landlord

As well as our general responsibilities, Cambridge City Council is also a residential social landlord. The council owns and manages around 7,500 residential properties and is actively developing new social housing.

The performance and finances of our landlord function are managed and reported separately to our general responsibilities. Our finances as a landlord are separated out from our general finances and managed through what is called a Housing Revenue Account.

Overview

From October to December 2025 the council approved:

- a new Rent and Service Charge Policy, to ensure a clear and transparent approach to how we set our rent and service charges for our Council Homes. Rent and Service Charge Policy - Cambridge City Council

- the next steps to move towards a consultation on the final draft of the North Cambridge Framework for Change and on early design options for Arbury Court and Kingsway, parts of Brackley Close, and Verulam Way. Council approved, subject to Homes England funding, the addition of these schemes to the Housing Capital Programme.

- The sale of land at Tedder Way, with the proceeds to be re-invested into the Housing Revenue Account to support future housing initiatives

As reported in the previous quarter, the outcome of the Inspection by The Regulator for Social Housing was published in October, and the Council received a consumer grading of C2 (grading run from C1 to C4, with C1 being the highest available grade).

A C2 grading means that the Council, in its role as a landlord, is delivering a service to its tenants that is compliant with the national standards set out by the regulator.

The report also highlighted areas for improvement. These were stock condition surveys, which are property inspections to check their overall condition, identify repairs needed, and plan future maintenance or improvements; fire risk assessment remedial actions; and data management systems which are outdated.

The regulator noted that there are already action plans in place for all of these areas, including programmes to accelerate stock condition surveys, complete the fire risk

remedial actions, and update our data management systems. The Regulator also removed the previous Regulatory Judgement for breach of the Rent Standard.

There has been continuing progress in terms of building compliance, with all four published measures now showing green, with two achieving their stretch targets.

Progress with the correction of the rent errors previously identified continues to be on track and reached the point where the process of making any payments back to tenants could start. Both current and former tenant arrears have increased, with KPIs rated red; while a seasonal rise in current arrears is typical at the end of Q3, there is also an overall upward trend. The increase in former tenant arrears is partly due to delays in writing off unrecoverable debts until rent correction refunds are completed. A budget bid was submitted (and approved at full Council, February 2026) for new software to automate lower-level arrears tasks and free up capacity to focus on more complex cases

The average time to re-letting is not where it needs to be, we have been reviewing our processes to look at how we reduce the time it takes. As a result, changes have been made to the shortlisting process, including pre-assessments of people in Band A, and we have also changed the way viewings are booked. These changes will be monitored to assess their impact. At the same time a new void process has been designed and will be implemented shortly to improve both the condition of voids returned and the relet times.

Specifically in relation to our house building activity, 54 homes were handed over at the Meadows in November. Schemes on site at Fanshawe Road, East Barnwell, ATS Murketts, and Newbury Farm continued to be on budget and on schedule at the end of the quarter. Planning applications were submitted for 165 new homes at Hanover and Princess Courts and 134 homes at Ekin Road.

Appendix 1: General Responsibilities: Performance, Finance, and Risk indicators

General Responsibilities: Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators: General Responsibilities			
Link to Corporate Plan Objectives		**Ratings Key**	
Leading Cambridge's response to the climate and biodiversity emergencies and creating a net zero council by 2030	1	At or above stretch target	
Tackling poverty and inequality and helping people in the greatest need	2	At or above baseline target	
Building a new generation of council and affordable housing and reducing homelessness	3	Below baseline target/ Needs action	
Modernising the council to lead a greener city that is fair for all	4	No target for this measure	

Title & Description	Baseline target	Stretch target	2025/26 Q3	2025/26 Q2	2025/26 Q1	2024/25 Q4	2024/25 Q3	2024/25 Q2	2024/25 Q1	2023/24 Q4	Plan Item
Bins collected on schedule	99.25%	99.70%	99.92%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	99.8%	99.8%	1
This measures the effectiveness of our domestic waste collection service											
Household waste sent for reduce, recycling, composting	48%	50.00%	47%	50.92%	52.40%	50%	49%	53%	54%	44%	1
This tracks the percentage of the City's domestic waste that is not going to landfill											
Street Cleansing inspections of acceptable standard	90%	95%	92.4%	90.6%	96.0%		95.6%	95.5%	99.0%		4
Percentage of Spot inspections across Litter, Detritus, Graffiti & Fly Posting that meet agreed standard											
% food businesses broadly compliant (rated 3 +)	93%	97%	97.6%	97.6%	98.2%	98.0%	97.8%	97.8%	97.7%		-
This tracks food safety compliance in the city, as monitored by our environmental health team											
Average time to determine validated householder planning applications	12	10	7.92	7.07	7.93	8.03	7.22	7.61	7.69	9.79	4
This is the number of weeks Greater Cambridge Planning Service takes to determine applications											
First Point of Contact resolution	86%	89%	88.5%	90%	90%	90%	89%	91%	90%	91%	4
This is the percentage of contacts our customer support team is able to resolve without having to refer onwards											
Complaints resolved within target	70%	85%	84%	72%	75%	83%	84%	81%	76%	77%	4
We aim to resolve complaints within 10 working days											
Community centre programme balance	10pp away	5pp away	51:30:19	46:28:26	45:30:24						2
We aim for faciltiy time to be apportioned to Community (40%), Cultural (30%), and Commercial (30%) activities											
Private rented properties (inc. HMOs) in the city are made safe & suitable for occupancy	200 - annual	250 - annual	110	55	55	89	87	122	130		4
This is in line with Housing act 2004, associated regulations and the Councils Private Rented Sector Housing Standard											
Days to process benefit claims – Housing Benefits	9	7	2	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	2
This is a combined average of new and existing claims; new claims require longer to process, and cannot be done in the same speed											
Days to process benefit claims – Council Tax Reduction		3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2
These are the number of days taken to process claims for housing benefit and Council tax reduction- we are in the top decile nationally											

Title & Description	Baseline target	Stretch target	2025/26 Q3	2025/26 Q2	2025/26 Q1	2024/25 Q4	2024/25 Q3	2024/25 Q2	2024/25 Q1	2023/24 Q4	Plan Item
Change of applicants in housing need	0	-2%	-8.44%	-4.30%	-9.29%	-5.45%	3.27%	4.79%	4.79%		2
This is ensuring the need for social housing is decreasing, or we are meeting their needs											
Number of families with children in B&B over 6 weeks	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	3
The goal is to have no families with children in B&B accommodation for more than 6 weeks											
Homelessness prevention cases with a successful outcome	45%	60%	55.7%	69.4%	54.3%	54.7%	59.7%	56.3%	54.2%		3
Of the homelessness prevention cases we undertake, the % that are successful as defined by law											
Repeat homelessness, or threat of homelessness, when previously resolved in last 2 years	8%	6%	6.2%	5.63%	6.15%	4.79%	7.80%	5.70%	5.65%		3
Looking for effectiveness of past resolutions & reduction in repeat homelessness (past resolutions through housing advice or statutory duty)											
Rough sleepers on a single night	Year on Year Improvement		28	35	37	23	26	27	26	28	3
Quarterly average of a monthly count of rough sleepers, Rating comes from improvement compared to previous years results											
Private homes retrofitted to Increase EPC rating	n/a		3	3	3	2	0	1	0		1
We are funded to lead this work across the County, city numbers are currently low because this phase is for homes without gas											
No of volunteer Hours	n/a		154	83	123	27					4
Volunteers worked hours logged											
No of corporate groups worked with in volunteering	n/a		18	32	29	5					4

These measures reflect the core services the Council delivers as part of our general responsibilities and show that services are being delivered within our baseline thresholds. They indicate that our core services are being delivered effectively, in the main meeting not only our baseline targets but their stretch targets as well. The recycling rate has dropped marginally below its target. There are a number of factors that could be contributing to this, including seasonal fluctuation and changes to packaging which have reduced the overall weight of recyclable materials. We are expecting the roll out of the weekly food waste collection to have a positive impact on future performance and see this figure move back into green. The balance of community centre bookings reflects a drop in business meetings and training sessions and an increase in community bookings in December. This is a new metric and the process of collecting the data in this way will enable better profiling and planning.

General Responsibilities: Finance

Finances for our general responsibilities are managed through our General Fund. Our detailed financial reports use our internal groups. These reflect the way we are organised internally, and all our financial reports use this structure, so you can compare our quarterly figures with our published accounts.

All of our reports show figures in a particular way:

- Expenditure is shown as a number, i.e. 1,234.
- Income is shown in brackets, i.e. (1,234)

So, where a budget has spent more than planned it is shown as a simple number because this is an increased amount of expenditure, and where a budget has spent less than planned that is shown in brackets.

Revenue Budgets

The current forecast position is that the Council will have spent £0.5 million more than planned by the end of the year (31 March 2026). At the end of the second quarter, we had forecast that we would spend £1.7 million more than we had budgeted, so the overall position has improved. The current budget includes a planned contribution of £3.7 million to the General Fund balance. The forecast overspend now means that the General Fund balance would still increase, but only by £3.2 million. This is set out in the table below:

General Fund Forecast – Q3 2025/26	Current Budget £'000	Q3 Forecast £'000	(Under budget)/over budget £'000
Net expenditure by group			
City Services	1,058	1,364	306
Communities	10,672	10,341	(331)
Corporate Hub	12,700	12,130	(570)
Economy & Place	(7,927)	(7,310)	617
Planning & Building Control	1,558	1,508	(50)
Non-service expenditure	7,435	7,982	547
Total net expenditure	**25,496**	**26,015**	**519**
Funding			
Business rates and council tax	(24,114)	(24,114)	0
Government grants	(4,375)	(4,375)	0
Use of earmarked reserves	(710)	(710)	0
Total funding	**(29,199)**	**(29,199)**	**0**
Contribution to GF reserve	**3,702**	**3,184**	**(518)**

The forecast position has improved since Q2. The most notable changes since Q2 are:

- Due to lower than budgeted spending on the capital programme, there will be no need to borrow externally this year. This has reduced capital financing costs (interest and Minimum Revenue Provision to repay loans) by £1.1 million.

- Forecast income in relation to the fleet and crematorium continues to be lower than budgeted. The position has worsened since Q2 as the crematorium has had to spend more on vehicle repairs on its aging fleet. This is shown under City Services

A more detailed breakdown to service level is shown below, followed by a table with explanations of the more significant variances.

Group / Service Grouping	Current Budget 2025/26 £'000	Current Forecast 2025/26 £'000	(Under)/ Over Budget 2025/26 £'000
City Services			
Bereavement Services	(734)	(409)	325
Car Parking	(6,430)	(7,308)	(878)
Community Safety	366	366	0
Garage Services	64	223	159
Management	379	475	96
Markets and Street Trading	(528)	(541)	(13)
Operational Hub	526	635	109
Sport and Recreation	593	701	108
Streets and Open Spaces	4,371	4,798	427
Waste & Recycling	2,451	2,424	(27)
Total City Services	**1,058**	**1,364**	**306**
Communities			
Active Lifestyles	2	3	1
Community Centres	1,004	963	(41)
Community Development	1,957	1,930	(27)
Community Safety	777	791	14
Culture and Community	1,082	908	(174)
Environmental Health	1,412	1,420	8
General Fund Housing	2,141	1,986	(155)
Grant Support	1,443	1,429	(14)
Homelessness	534	577	43
Housing Strategy	117	117	0
Management	203	217	14
Total Communities	**10,672**	**10,341**	**(331)**
Corporate Hub			
3C Legal	872	888	16
Central Contingency and Recharges to the HRA	(5,878)	(5,570)	308
Chief Executive's Office and Communications	1,022	1,054	32
Customer Support	2,168	2,136	(32)
Democratic Services	1,534	1,649	115
Financial Services, Insurance, Payroll and Pension Costs	5,730	5,993	263
Guildhall/Mandela House/Facilities Management	1,323	1,291	(32)
ICT & Digital	3,825	3,744	(81)
Management	227	208	(19)
Net Interest Payable/Receivable	(1,490)	(3,339)	(1,849)
People & Change	1,514	1,541	27
Procurement	291	355	64
Revenues and Benefits	1,305	1,959	654
Shared Audit	257	221	(36)
Total Corporate Hub	**12,700**	**12,130**	**(570)**
Economy and Place			
Development Team	47	47	0
Economy, Energy and Climate Change	1,011	998	(13)
General Fund Housing	289	289	0
Grant Support	88	93	5
Housing Strategy	121	121	0
Management	214	216	2
Property Services	(9,967)	(9,344)	623
Sustainable City	270	270	0
Total Economy and Place	**(7,927)**	**(7,310)**	**617**
Planning and Building Control			
3C Building Control	165	165	0
Greater Cambridge Planning	1,393	1,343	(50)
Total Planning and Building Control	**1,558**	**1,508**	**(50)**
Total for all Groups	**18,061**	**18,033**	**(28)**

Group / Service Grouping	Current Budget 2025/26 £'000	Current Forecast 2025/26 £'000	(Under)/ Over Budget 2025/26 £'000
Non-service expenditure			
Capital expenditure financed from revenue	2,145	2,161	16
Collection fund deficit	0	0	0
Contributions to earmarked funds	5,290	5,821	531
Total non-service expenditure	**7,435**	**7,982**	**547**
Net spending requirement	**25,496**	**26,015**	**519**

Group	Cost Centre/Service	Reason for Variance	Forecast Over budget/ (under budget) £'000
City Services	Car Parking	Customer demand has exceeded expectations at the Grand Arcade, Park Street and Queen Anne Terrace Car Parks. This has more than offset reduced usage of the Grafton Centre Car Parks resulting from the closure of shops and cinema. New offices and laboratories are not yet open at the Grafton Centre site and the impact of these premises on car park usage therefore remains to be seen.	(878)
	Management	The £62k overspend in salaries is due to the regrading of 2 posts & the addition of the post of Programme Manager following colleague feedback on the restructure. It also reflects essential investment in leadership and management training to establish the new City Services leadership team, as no dedicated training budget is allocated.	96
	Sport and Recreation	This variance is mainly accounted for by salaries. This is because the budget expectation was that changes would start on 1st April as part of the restructure. Changes did not start until 1st July.	108
	Operational Hub	Budgets for the Operational Hub had to be estimated while the project was still in development. Experience since its opening has identified shortfalls in the areas of energy costs and security. There were also one-off costs for equipment and empty business rates payable while the buildings were being developed. The ongoing factors have been taken into account when setting the 2026/27 budget.	109
	Garage Services (External Work)	earned income has been lower than expected. The fleet manager is bringing in new contracts and additional work, which will improve the position over time	163
	Bereavement Services and Crematorium	The previously reported impact of increased competition from new providers and alternative cremation services has led, to lower than budgeted income, the 26/27 budget includes an adjustment in income assumptions to reflect this change. There have also been overspends in staffing and vehicles costs, that are not expected to continue into 2026/27. The overall overspend has been partly mitigated from recouping some of our legal costs associated with our successful A14 legal claim.	325
	Streets and Open Spaces (Project Delivery, Grounds Maintenance & Street Cleaning)	This variance is mainly accounted for by salaries. This is because the budget expectation was that changes would start on 1st April as part of the restructure. Changes did not start until 1st July. We also have staff members on long term sick leave, an overspend on agency staff covering both the sick leave and a vacant post. Previously forecast grant income of £16k is no longer expected. The cost of external cleaning contracts has risen, partly due to a higher than expected increase in the National Living Wage. A more sustainable best-value model needs to be explored as in house provision could cut agency premiums, avoid contractor risk pricing, allow for tighter control over service standards and scope for contracting to meet pressures from events and seasonal demand.	493
Communities	General Fund Housing (Town Hall Lettings)	The favourable position is due to an increase in the amount of properties being managed and the work done by the team to reduce voids (we are now consistently charging more rent than we are paying out to landlords), recharges to landlords for repairs work undertaken, and ensuring processes are in place to ensure maximum recovery of recharges.	(129)

Group	Cost Centre/Service	Reason for Variance	Forecast Over budget/ (under budget) £'000
Communities (contd)	Culture and Community (Corn Exchange and Guildhall)	The forecast shows a £140k favourable variance, leading to a projected surplus of £379k. This is mainly due to higher income from an increased number of shows, stronger ticket sales, and better-than-expected bar revenue driven by audience profile. The position is dependent on utilities costs remaining stable and no significant additional spend being required on repairs and maintenance ahead of the Civic Quarter works.	(140)
Corporate Hub	Net Interest Payable/Receivable	No further external borrowing is now expected for the General Fund this year and this has significantly reduced the interest payable and the Minimum Revenue Provision that needs to be made. Increased interest from loans to the Cambridge Investment Partnership is forecast as a result of the drawdown of loans agreed by Full Council in October 2025. The General Fund also benefits from interest from the HRA on internal borrowing, which has increased this year to avoid more expensive external borrowing for the HRA.	(1,849)
	Procurement	£64k overspend due to additional fixed term resource for contract and procurement analysis.	64
	Democratic Services (Members' Allowances)	The overspend is due to the changes in Members' basic and special responsibility allowances. This is the net forecast for the cost centre as some of the other budget lines have underspent.	67
	ICT & Digital	Includes £44k underspend for 3C ICT following efficient procurement, and £37k underspend on Digital Team salary costs due to vacant posts in year.	(81)
	Financial Services, Insurance, Payroll and Pension Costs	There is an overall £337k overspend on insurance because of an unprecedented number of property and fire claims this year. Financial services has benefited from £71k in unbudgeted grants towards the higher costs of external audit, which are set externally.	263
	Central Contingency and Recharges to the HRA	This central budget held the pay award contingency. The nationally agreed pay award was 3.5% which was higher than the budget assumption of 2.5%. All service budgets have received the full benefit of the pay award (and consequent increases in National Insurance and Pension contributions) and therefore the full impact of the shortfall is shown on this central budget line. This is partly offset by the effect of moving the in-year element of inflation on building control external income to this cost centre, in line with previous years.	308
	Revenues and Benefits (Local Taxation Services)	The service is forecasting a net overspend of £80k due to a combination of factors. Main pressures include £60k for agency staff covering long-term sickness and maternity leave, £29k from underachieved Council Tax recovery income, £6.5k from the under recovery of legal costs, and £1.5k for business-as-usual spend. These are partly offset by a £13k MOD contribution for 81 Long Road and £4k net vacancy savings.	80
	Revenues and Benefits (Housing Benefit Subsidy and Expenditure)	The projected subsidy loss to 31 March 2026 is £910k, partly offset by £270k in overpayment recovery, giving a net loss of £640k. A £45k Discretionary Housing Payments underspend further reduces the overspend to £595k. The main pressure on this budget is Rent Allowances (£723k) due to high rents from charitable landlords with restricted subsidy recovery due to the national regulations. Measures to address this pressure are included in the 2026/27 budget proposals. Universal Credit migration has also increased unrecoverable subsidy by £60k. Losses are reviewed every four weeks with no further major changes expected.	594

Group	Cost Centre/Service	Reason for Variance	Forecast Over budget/ (under budget) £'000
Economy and Place	Property Services (Park Street Aparthotel)	The Park Street lease was completed on 22 October 2025. Rent commenced on 14 January 2026. The forecast has been adjusted to incorporate the rent-free period.	(461)
	Property Services (Property Services Team)	This is due to vacant posts but recruitment is currently underway.	(85)
	Property Services (Commercial Properties)	A new letting at Cyrus Way has been completed at a higher rent. The property was previously vacant.	(74)
	Property Services (The Lion Yard)	Despite best efforts, the tenant failed to provide ground rent calculations for 3 years. Upon reconciliation of outstanding years, it transpired that there was a reimbursement of c.£700,000 required, covering the last 3 years up to 24/25. The on-account income forecast for 25/26 has therefore been reduced by £350k to reflect the impact of the detailed ground rent information. This overspend has been reduced by £50k due to overachievement of income on the South End.	1,026
Planning & Building Control	Greater Cambridge Planning	The Shared Planning Service is forecasting £50k net underspend, and by the end of the year this may improve further. This is based on commitments from the Development industry on forecasts for applications. It is proposed that any underspend from 2025/26 be transferred to the City's planning reserve to manage fluctuations and potential uncertainty arising from the potential impact of the new Development Corporation. The fund will be drawn down for contingency items only.	(50)
Non-Service Expenditure	Contributions to Earmarked Funds	This is the interest received on loans to the Cambridge Investment Partnership in excess of our average interest on treasury management investments. This excess is transferred to the Development Reserve to help finance future capital expenditure.	531
		Other Minor Variances across the Council	39
		Total	**519**

General Responsibilities: Capital

The current forecast position on the council's general fund capital programme is as follows:

Capital Forecast – Q3 2025/26	Current Budget	Q3 Forecast	Forecast Slippage	(Under budget)/over budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
General Fund				
Park Street	32,797	16,000	0	(16,797)
Other	74,615	39,474	32,882	(2,259)
GF Total	**107,412**	**55,474**	**32,882**	**(19,056)**

As reported last quarter, we are expecting to spend £16.8 million less than budgeted on the Park Street redevelopment, which fully opened this year, as a result of strong contract management. This project is funded from external borrowing, so the underspend reduces the need to borrow rather than releasing any new resource. The overspend for the new Operational Hub is now totalling £1.1 million, caused by delays from external contractors. It is important to note that the original capital bid was made over five years ago, and since then inflationary pressures—particularly in construction, materials, and labour, have significantly increased the cost base for delivery. There is an underspend of £2.7 million against budget for Warm Homes, where the original budget was higher than the final grant amount received. This is a fully grant funded project which has now been completed successfully.

Other General Fund capital projects continue to be forecast to deliver to budget. The timing of approved loans to the Cambridge Investment Partnership (CIP) means that £20 million of the loans budget will need to be carried forward into 2026/27. Other major projects where budgets are expected to be requested to be carried forward are the Civic Quarter (£3.3 million), East Barnwell (£1.5 million), the WREN Solar project at Waterbeach (£1.3 million), swimming pool decarbonisation (£1.1 million), repairs to Jesus Green riverbank (£0.8 million), and capital maintenance on operational and commercial properties (£1 million).

General Responsibilities: Risk

We keep a list of risks that could prevent the Council meeting its goals and its responsibilities, we score those risks to understand how serious they are, and we put in place controls and actions to reduce the level of those risks.All our individual risks feed into our seven strategic risk areas. These strategic risk areas apply across all of our activities, covering both our general responsibilities and our social landlord function. Every risk area is rated either green, yellow, amber or red, as follows:

- Green shows that risk levels in that area are low and well managed.
- Yellow indicates that there is a higher level of risk, but it is still well managed and under control
- Amber flags that the risk level is higher than we want and we are taking action to bring the risk level down. Where the risk level is caused by external factors outside our control and cannot be lowered, it needs to be very closely monitored.
- Red is the most serious level, and where we have a red risk there should be a clear, agreed and closely monitored action plan to reduce the risk.

Strategic Risks

The latest assessment of each strategic risk area is as follows:

	Strategic Risk Area	**Risk level**
1	The Council is able to deliver on our vision and objectives	Yellow
2	The Council is financially robust	Yellow
3	The Council has an effective and resilient workforce	Green
4	The Council's physical and digital infrastructure is fit for purpose	Yellow
5	The Council has viable and robust plans for the future	Yellow
6	The Council is able to meet its legal responsibilities	Yellow
7	The Council is well governed	Green

What this shows is that the Council has good overall control and effective risk management.

In order to make sure that there is full visibility, any operational risk which is rated either amber or red is also reported, split out by whether they are an operational risk for our general responsibilities (reported here) or for our role as a residential social landlord (reported in appendix 2).

Under our General Responsibilities there are 5 amber operational risks and no red risks. The Council's amber risks are as follows:

Operational Risks

Description	**Current Controls**	**Actions to reduce risk level**
Cyber-attack. This is a significant external risk, as seen through examples of attacks on businesses, local authorities, NHS etc	Active system management, mandatory cybersecurity training for staff, easy reporting of suspected phishing emails.	Budget has been agreed for additional external support to ensure 24/7 system oversight. This risk is likely to remain amber.
Reaching the Council's carbon reduction target	Climate Change Strategy, Climate Change Fund	Review and update of Strategic Asset Management Plan, providing costs and action plan to deliver MEES[1] and net zero. This work is due to report in 2026-27.
Compliance with property safety and repair standards for our corporate and commercial properties	Regular testing and servicing	Compliance review underway and on track to complete by April 2026, at which point this risk should reduce
Recruitment and retention of staff within the commercial property team	Training plans, internal recruitment	Advertise vacancies more widely; using consultancy to cover gaps.
Accurate accounting for S106 funds as process is updated	S106 funds are logged and tracked in Excel but we are in the process of moving to a improved system	New process and systems are being developed, working across Economy and Place, City Services and Shared Planning.

[1] Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard

		These will be trialled beginning in Q4 which are expected to reduce this risk.

In line with new Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act we have developed our risk management system to categorise and report fraud related risks. We are working with colleagues to review existing risks and identify new risks. This new legislation requires all organisations to identify whether any of their activities could be subject to fraud and set out what they are doing to manage the risk of fraud. Individual fraud risks will be reported in the same way as our other risks, so any amber or red fraud risk will be reported here.

Appendix 2: Residential Social Landlord: Performance, Finance and Risk Indicators

Residential Social Landlord: Performance Measures

These measures are the key pieces of information we track to understand how well we are performing as a landlord. As set out in the main report there are a number of measures that are below our baseline target, and there are specific improvement plans in place to bring them up to baseline and beyond.

(for Key, see appendix 1 Performance measures)

Title & Description	Baseline target	Stretch target	2025/26 Q3	2025/26 Q2	2025/26 Q1	2024/25 Q4	2024/25 Q3	2024/25 Q2	2024/25 Q1	2023/24 Q4	Plan Item
% statutory safety inspections completed on time in our homes *Percentage of all safety-critical and statutory checks that are carried out as required.*	95%	99%	96.8%	100%							2
FRAs, completed or within time, (snapshot of existing risk) *Ensures fire safety-critical and statutory checks are delivered as required, followed up by the appropriate actions*	95%	99%	100%	94%							2
Emergency responsive repairs completed within the landlord's target timescale *Reflects speed and reliability of repairs, supporting tenant satisfaction.*	90%	95%	96%	87%	93%	95%	88%	98%	97%	98%	2
Awaab's Law: % responded to request within 2 working days *Ensures all safety-critical quality of the Council's housing stock in a timely manner*	85%	95%	88%								2
Average re-let time in days (standard re-lets) *Ensures both loss of income and the time a household is waiting for a home is minimised*	38.5	35	47.5	46.9	43.4	37.3	37.7	39.7	42.7	60.9	2
Void loss - % of rent lost through dwellings being vacant (LCRA) *Monitors the impact of empty homes on the council's income stream.*	3%	1%	2.93%	4.21%	4.16%	3.22%	3.10%	2.96%	3.27%	2.84%	4
Current tenant arrears as a % of the annual rent debit *Monitors outstanding debts owed to the council*	3.85%	3.50%	4.19%	3.82%	3.64%	3.27%	3.59%	3.52%	3.48%	3.45%	4
Former tenant arrears as a % of the annual rent debit *Monitors outstanding debts owed to the council*	2%	2.2%	3.7%	3.3%	3.0%	3.0%	2.8%	2.7%	2.5%	1.9%	4
No. Council housing starts *Quarterly update of cumulative total on number of builds started this year*	n/a		29	29	29	105	0	0	0	84	3
No. new affordable homes completed within councils own programme *Quarterly update of cumulative total on number of builds completed this year*	n/a		126	70	70	98	70	24	0	248	3
Percentage affordable homes to Camstandard *This is about improving the environmental impact of our homes*	n/a		84%	79%	79%	78.65%	77.71%	77.71%	76.57%	73.11%	3
Homes retrofitted to EPC C rating *This is about improving the environmental impact of our homes*	Variable based on funding		11	7	4	59	72	54	18		1

Residential Social Landlord: Finance

We manage the finances of our social landlord responsibilities separately to the finances for our general responsibilities. This is done through a separate account called the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

Revenue

At the end of December, our projections show that we will have spent £3.1 million more than planned by the end of the year. To ensure that the HRA balance can remain above its target level, the planned revenue contribution to capital expenditure (shown under capital financing) has been reduced by £2.7 million. This approach is consistent with previous years, but it will increase the amount of borrowing required to finance the capital programme in the longer term.

The budget agreed at the beginning of the year had included a £1 million contribution to the HRA balance by the end of the year. What our current projection shows is that the HRA balance will now only increase by the minimum amount required (£0.6 million) to reach next year's target reserve level.

HRA Forecast – Q3 2025/26	**Current Budget £'000**	**Q3 Forecast £'000**	**(Under budget)/over budget £'000**
Income	(57,998)	(58,454)	(456)
Operating expenditure	36,897	41,979	5,082
Net operating surplus	**(21,101)**	**(16,475)**	**4,626**
Net interest cost	8,949	7,417	(1,532)
Capital financing	11,140	8,415	(2,725)
Contribution to earmarked reserves	0	42	42
(Surplus)/deficit	**(1,012)**	**(601)**	**411**

The main reasons for the forecast overspend are:

- the need for interim fire safety measures including waking watch at a number of sites (£1.1 million). As a result of work already undertaken, the number of sites with waking watches in place has reduced from eleven to two. It is taking longer than anticipated to address the final two sites as decanting is required.
- increased spend on housing repairs including damp, condensation and mould (£1.6 million)
- cost of rectifications (£0.8 million forecast overspend) as a result of fire and other damage to properties

- additional costs of dealing with voids due to the poor condition of significant numbers of void properties (£0.8 million)
- historic costs for the management of Mill Road estate (£0.3 million)
- these overspends are partly offset by reduced interest costs as the HRA will not need to borrow externally this year (£1.7 million better than budget)

Although budgets will be increased in 2026/27 to reflect genuine cost pressures, Leadership Team is also taking action to ensure that a tight grip is exerted on costs.

The following table presents all the major variances on the Housing Revenue Account.

Category	Line Item	Service/Cost Centre	Reason for Variance	Over budget/ (under budget)
Income	Rental income (dwellings)		Gross rents are forecast to be higher than budgeted. This is partly due to new council dwellings being let out to tenants earlier than assumed in the budget. The number of dwellings that are being re-let on the basis of rent flexibility is higher than anticipated with an overall positive impact on rental income.	(353)
	Rental income (other)		Rental income from garages and commercial properties are both slightly ahead of budget due to high occupancy levels.	(75)
	Interest Receivable		The forecast level of interest receivable from the HRA's share of cash investments is lower than budgeted as the rate of interest on investments is lower than assumed when the budget was set.	177
Expenditure	Supervision & management - General	Housing Support and City Homes Staffing Costs	There have been additional staffing and legal costs required to deliver the rent regulation project. Some agency staff have had to be used to provide cover. Furthermore, the housing finance team was not fully staffed until October, so there was a need to use agency staffing, resulting in a forecast overspend. Permanent staff have now been recruited so no further agency expenditure is anticipated.	416
	Supervision & management -	Stanton House	This housing scheme has now been handed over to the Housing Development Agency and therefore the unspent budget will not be needed this year.	(65)
		Mill Road Third Party Management	Mill Road estate faced delays in year-end accounts from the estate management company, causing multiple overspends to fall due at once and increasing budget pressures. One-off utility costs, complex estate services, and new compliance requirements have also driven costs up. Accounts are now up to date, but late service charge information still makes budgeting difficult. A review of all third party management arrangements is underway.	88
	Repairs & maintenance	Risk and Compliance	Currently there is a lower volume of electrical safety surveys being conducted due to more being completed in previous years.	(148)
		Citywide Schemes	The overspend on door entry and lift maintenance is being offset by underspend in lamp column repairs. The remaining underspend is wholly on smoke/heat detector replacements due to a large portion of the programme being delivered ahead of schedule in the previous financial year.	(59)
		Heat and Hot Water Servicing	This overspend is caused by a rise in repairs over the winter period.	85
		Compliance Team	Currently there are agency staff back filling roles within the team which is causing overspend. Active recruitment to fill the permanent roles is in progress.	125
		Third Party Management Company Servicing and Repairs	Mill Road estate faced delays in year-end accounts from the estate management company, causing multiple overspends to fall due at once and increasing budget pressures. One-off utility costs, complex estate services, and new compliance requirements have also driven costs up. Accounts are now up to date, but late service charge information still makes budgeting difficult. A review of all third party management arrangements is underway.	165
		Voids	High number of void properties are being returned into the service in very poor condition. There are also a high number of properties that need major clearance work before void works can commence which incurs additional costs.	796
		Insurance Related Repairs	There has been a high volume of insurance works during the year causing the overspend. This is partly as a result of fires at HRA properties, where some rectification costs cannot be claimed from insurers and the Council must also pay the excess on its claims.	798

Category	Line Item	Service/Cost Centre	Reason for Variance	Over budget/ (under budget) £'000
Expenditure (contd)	Repairs & maintenance (contd)	Asset Management	Asset Management is expected to overspend significantly, predominantly due to the need to provide building security where fire safety works are awaited. Most of these are now addressed with just two sites remaining.	1,121
		Repairs Day to Day	There has been a high volume of damp and mould works during the year, most of this has been undertaken by an external supplier due to the specialist nature of the works.	1,619
	Other Movements	Direct Revenue Financing of Capital	The revenue contribution to the financing of the capital programme has been reduced in order to ensure that the HRA reserves can be maintained at their target level. However, this approach will increase the amount of borrowing required to finance the capital programme in the longer term.	(2,725)
		Loan Interest	The loan interest budget assumed that external borrowing would be required from 1st October 2025. Due to slippage on the capital programme, borrowing is now not anticipated until 2026/27, therefore the forecast amount of interest payable has reduced.	(1,709)
			Other Minor Variances across the Housing Revenue Account	155
			Total	**411**

Capital Programme

The current forecast position on the HRA capital programme is as follows:

Capital Forecast – Q3 2025/26	Current Budget	Q3 Forecast	Forecast Slippage	(Under budget)/over budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Housing Revenue Account				
Existing stock	39,671	27,904	12,131	364
New build and acquisitions	59,836	49,457	18,021	7,642
Other	3,284	76	70	(3,138)
HRA Total	**102,791**	**77,437**	**30,222**	**4,868**

The in-year overspend against budget reflects 2 new build projects that are progressing their decant processes more quickly than expected. On current forecasts, £6.1 million will need to be brought forward at year end to cover both these projects which will remain within their overall budget. This will result in an overall underspend on the HRA capital programme, which has meant that no external borrowing has been needed this year.

Residential Social Landlord: Risk

The approach to risk is the same as for our general responsibilities, with the overall risk level as set out in the part one appendix.

There is one amber risk and no red risks that relate specifically to our role as a residential social landlord.

Description	Current Controls	Actions to reduce risk level
Failure of communal heating systems in newly developed housing blocks	Communal heating systems are monitored for any issues	Specialist consultants are advising the Council, with a list of key actions in place for our contractor

Appendix 3: Treasury Management

The Council has a statutory responsibility to report its treasury management activity. In simple terms this sets out how we are managing our money, including our investments and our borrowing.

During the year to date, all treasury management activity has been carried out in line with the Treasury Management Strategy Statement as approved by Full Council in February 2025.

As at 31 December 2025, total council borrowing stood at £297.2 million, which is an increase on the previous quarter, but lower than planned. This consists of £213.6 million of HRA self-financing loans which the council was required by government to take out in return for the transfer of its housing stock in 2012, and £83.6 million of external debt finance to support the Park Street development. Due to capital underspends and slippage, originally planned borrowing for the HRA and General Fund will not now be needed in the remainder of the year.

Interest income on investments is currently forecast at £5.8 million for the year, compared to a budget of £5.4 million. The Bank of England bank rate has been cut from 4.5% in April to 3.75% now and this has reduced returns. This is more than offset by a combination of increased interest from new loans to the Cambridge Investment Partnership as agreed in October 2025, the impact of significant capital slippage which means that the council has higher balances to invest while it waits for capital projects to proceed and increased interest from the HRA for internal borrowing which has been used to avoid taking on more expensive external debt.

The council's latest prudential indicators are set out in detail below.

Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators

Prudential Indicator Estimates (£m)	BSR 2025/26	Q3 2025/26 (Forecast)
Capital expenditure		
- GF	107.412*	55.474
- HRA	102.791*	77.436
Total	**210.203***	**132.910**
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) as at 31 March		
- GF	155.830	154.843
- HRA	328.202	273.674
Total	**484.032**	**428.517**
Deposits (average annualised balance)	**90.000**	**90.000**
External gross debt as at 31 March	**340.793**	**297.217**
Ratio of net financing costs to revenue stream		
- GF %	1.87%	-4.20%
- HRA %	15.30%	13.88%
Net income from commercial and service investments		
- GF (£ million)	16.176	17.483
- HRA (£ million)	0.472	0.624
Ratio of net income from commercial and service investments to net revenue stream		
- GF %	42.21%	57.08%
- HRA %	0.79%	1.13%

* Capital expenditure budgets have been updated to reflect rephasing and other changes to the capital programme approved since the BSR

Treasury Indicator Estimates (£m)	BSR 2025/26	Q3 2025/26 (Forecast)
Authorised limit		
- Borrowing	600.000	600.000
- Other long-term liabilities	2.000	2.000
Operational boundary		
- Borrowing	494.032	408.601
- Other long-term liabilities	1.500	1.500
Upper limit for total principal sums deposited for over 364 days and up to 5 years	50.000	50.000
Analysis of exposure to fixed and variable interest rates		
- Net interest on fixed rate borrowing/deposits	11.311	11.311
- Net interest on variable rate borrowing/deposits	(1.675)	(1.675)
Maturity structure of new fixed rate borrowing – 5 years and above		
- Upper limit	100%	100%
- Lower limit	100%	100%