

**PERFORMANCE, ASSETS AND STRATEGY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

15 July 2026
5.30 - 8.10 pm

Present: Councillors Young (Chair), Gardiner-Smith (Vice-Chair), Bennett (from Item 5), Dalzell, Davey, Flaubert and Griffin,

Officers:

Stephen Kelly – Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development
Jonathan Dixon – Planning Policy Manager
Max Laverack – Team Leader
Lizzie Wood – Team Leader
Lauren Wilkinson – Team Leader
Terry De Sousa – Team Leader
Stuart Morris -Team Leader

Other councillors in attendance:

Councillor Katie Thornburrow, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Planning and Transport
Councillor Martin Smart, Cabinet Member for Nature, Open Spaces and City Services
Councillor Katie Porrer

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

26/16/P&A Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Jacqui Whitmore with Councillor Eleanor Toye Scott substituting.

26/17/P&A Declarations of Interest

The following non-pecuniary interests were made for Item 5 (Proposed Submission Greater Cambridge Local Plan – Regulation 19):

Councillor Davey – Director Cambridge United Football Club
Councillor Young – Member of Cambridgeshire County Council

26/18/P&A Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2026 were approved as a correct record and would be signed by the Chair.

26/19/P&A Public Questions

The following statement from 'Mill Road 4 People' on the Greater Cambridge Local Plan was noted by the Committee:

"Mill Road 4 People welcome the plans for Mill Road laid out in the Local Plan being considered by members today. In particular, we're very pleased to note the emphasis on place making over motor vehicle movements and we look forward to the delivery of the streetscape and public realm improvements that are currently being developed. We hope the improvement to pavements will include widening where they are currently very narrow. We also welcome the focus on sustainable travel and note that during the committee stages of the Devolution Bill, the minister stated that the only reason to designate a C road as part of a key route network would be to facilitate bus services, something that would clearly not be the case for Mill Road. This local plan therefore appears to be incompatible with any idea of making Mill Road part of a Key Route Network. We fully support the plan and hope it will be agreed today."

The Chair of the Committee responded to the following question from Dr. Colin A. B. Davidson on asset management and mapping workflows, agreeing that a written answer would be provided:

"Given that the Ombudsman explicitly encourages early local resolution, and given the long-term financial and legal liabilities of recurring data-driven property incursions, and given the fact that sending memos to group heads has been tried and doesn't work, why has the executive consistently resisted implementing a mandatory, zero-cost ownership and job validity verification safeguard to protect both Cambridge residents and the council's own corporate risk profile?"

26/20/P&A Proposed Submission Greater Cambridge Local Plan (Regulation 19)

A presentation was given by officers on the proposed submission covering the plan-making process, content of the submission and next steps.

Following the presentation, Members were invited to ask questions and as a part of these discussions the following key points were covered:

Overall Development Strategy:

- In response to questions on the new NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework), officers noted that the Greater Cambridge Local Plan would be examined under the December 2024 NPPF. The new NPPF was yet to be published, and officers did not consider it appropriate to amend the Plan based on uncertain national policy proposals.
- Regarding use of the 'Liverpool method', officers noted that the overall housing need figure was based on the government's 'standard method' calculation. The Plan proposed calculating the annual delivery requirement using the Liverpool method, which spreads any unmet needs generated in early years of the Plan across the whole Plan period.
- On viability, officers set out that the Viability Assessment followed an established typology-based approach that calculates sales values against build, policy and infrastructure costs to establish whether the Plan is viable. The Assessment concluded that at a plan level development is viable, noting that at the application stage individual site circumstances may vary.
- In response to questions regarding the Plan's lack of explanation regarding the role of the Greater Cambridge Development Corporation, officers commented that the Corporation is not referred to in the Plan because it has been announced but does not yet exist.
- Officers reported that a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) was not a formal contractual commitment, but a factual record of the respective positions of the councils developing the plan and other key parties, including neighbouring authorities and statutory bodies.

Individual sites – new settlements, allocations and identified locations:

- In relation to transport at Cambridge East, officers noted the sustainability of the site in terms of its location and that an internalisation approach would support people to live and work within the site, thereby reducing the need to travel outside the site to access services and facilities.

The policy had been strengthened to clarify the transport measures proposed, and to include a section responding to the opportunity provided by the Cambridge East rail station.

In relation to comments supporting provision for a concert hall at Cambridge East, officers highlighted the findings of the Cultural Infrastructure Strategy, one of the evidence documents supporting the Plan.

- In relation to questions regarding the role of North East Cambridge, officers commented that the development strategy at Draft Plan was not reliant on the housing and employment space previously proposed for this site. Changing the site from an allocation to an Area of Major Change (AoMC) reflected the uncertainty regarding delivery of future development. The AoMC set a vision for the area and provided flexibility to respond to changing circumstances (i.e. relocation of the Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant).
- In relation to concern that the transport measures required at Cambridge Biomedical Campus (CBC) were not clear, including in particular the lack of clarity regarding the Cambridge South East Transport Scheme and other transport measures, officers commented that evidence supporting the Plan identified the need for this scheme to support the site, together with a package of other public and active travel measures. Officers agreed that the policy could be strengthened to make these points clear.

Climate Change:

- In response to comments about whole carbon life cycle assessments (WLC), officers reported that the thresholds had been revised to clarify that it applies to larger development.

- On BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method), officers responded that BREEAM V4 was considered most appropriate for non-residential development and the wording would be flexible enough to update these standards as needed moving forward.
- In response to questions about water, officers reported that the water evidence study confirmed that there were challenges to water supply before 2032 (when the Grafham pipeline is due to be delivered). This understanding had informed phasing in the housing trajectory and strategic sites policies.

Biodiversity and Green Spaces:

- In response to comments about clarification on the Urban Greening Factor (UGF), officers confirmed that UGF is a measure of surface cover types using a calculator. Each surface cover type has a weighting dependent on distinctiveness and value for greening and this is multiplied by the sqm to create the overall decimal.
- In response to comments about the removal of the 30% tree canopy cover, officers reported that this amendment was made as the percentage requirement was considered duplicative alongside Urban Greening Factor (UGF) and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements, which both calculate and reward tree retention and increase.

Wellbeing and Social Inclusion:

- On community facilities, it was reported that since the Draft Plan consultation a Community Infrastructure Study (CIS) had been commissioned which provided extensive recommendations around how to provide for, deliver and steward and manage community facilities

It was reported that planning officers were working closely with the council's communities team, including on a further phase of work to identify future delivery and stewardship approaches for community facilities, reflecting possible future impact of local government reorganisation (LGR). This work would be completed over Summer 2026.

Great Places:

- In response to comments on the future management regime, it was reported that the supporting text at Draft Plan had been amended on this, and that this was as far as the Plan could go at this point.
- In response to comments about inclusive design, it was summarised that the Draft Plan had been amended, it should be read in conjunction with the NPPF and National Model Design Code, and the Plan sought to avoid being prescriptive on style.
- In response to comments regarding 'meanwhile' use, officers commented that the policy has been amended drawing on the London Plan example. Having an explicit policy raised the profile of the issue, noting that the affordable workspace policy supports provision of artists' studios and gave encouragement for such developments.

Homes:

- On HMOs, officers reported that they had completed a considerable study to see how this was approached in Cambridge, noting that this was an issue that went beyond planning. Officers did not consider it appropriate to set an arbitrary quantitative standard, but qualitative standards for amenity provision had been included in the wording of the policy.
- On homes and infrastructure delivery timing, it was noted that the last consultation received a lot of feedback on this issue. The infrastructure delivery policy had been revised to include more specific wording stating that infrastructure would be expected to be delivered in time with the delivery of development.
- On space standards, it was reported that the overall residential space standards for a property had not been revised and this had not diverted from national standards.
- On build to rent, officers reported that alterations to supporting text relating to the affordable housing requirements for these developments provided clarity and justification for the requirement for 40% affordable housing within Build to Rent developments.

- In terms of self and custom build, it was confirmed they had been exempted from BNG, but this was being changed by government policy from August 2026 onwards.
- On student accommodation, officers reported that the policy wording had been revised to confirm on campus student accommodation from ARU (Anglia Ruskin University) or University of Cambridge does not require an affordable housing contribution. It was considered that the policy reference to restricting provision of accommodation for academic staff to a maximum of 25% of units was appropriate given the current pressures of university accommodation needs and the wider housing market.

Infrastructure:

- On the CPCA (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority) Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy, officers reported that the CPCA Board meeting earlier that day had agreed the draft interim Transport Strategy, the CPCA team had provided confidence that the final Strategy would come forward in time to support submission of the Local Plan, and council officers continued to work with CPCA officers to support refinement of the Strategy.
- In terms of water supply and waste water, it was reported that work continues with the Water Scarcity Group to address key issues. Officers outlined that subject to appropriate infrastructure planning and funding being provided, water supply and wastewater treatment capacity was not considered a barrier to delivering the level of development proposed in the Local Plan.

During the discussion, officers agreed to provide further information to the Committee on the following:

Sites Allocations:

- On Cambridge East, members requested further details regarding specific measures to be confirmed at the planning application stage.
- On the CBC policy, members requested that officers add further detail into the text on transport requirements.

Biodiversity and Green Spaces:

- To provide a written response on River Corridors and the 10m buffer policy.

Homes:

- With regard to H/SS and the removal of specific reference to 30sqm of amenity space, to provide a written response.

During the discussion, the Committee agreed that the following recommendations should be made to the Joint Cabinet meeting on 21 July 2026:

Site allocations:

Cambridge East

- to support in principle the alternative transport provisions and internalisation approach (i.e. daily needs of residents such as schools and retail are met within the local community) but request further clarity at the appropriate time on the exact measures to be provided.

North East Cambridge (Hartree)

- to support the flexibility in the current approach and the provisions to enable this potentially to come forward as a development site.

CBC (Cambridge Biomedical Campus)

- to ask that public transport provisions to be more explicitly specified in the S/CBC policy.

Climate Change

- to support the overall approach and commend the measures on cooling and the mitigation of heat islands
- to ask officers to investigate the inclusion of splashpads.

Biodiversity

- to support BNG at 20% and commend the UGF/tree canopy provisions.

Wellbeing and Social Inclusion

- to support the new policy in place on gambling as requested by the Committee in November 2025.
- to support the principle of 'meanwhile' use (use of vacant or underutilised premises, sites or spaces on a temporary basis) and the delivery of community centres.

Great Place

- to commend the neurodiversity measures referred to in the policy.

Infrastructure & Transport

- to emphasis that infrastructure must come first (be delivered in time with the delivery of development)
- to commend the transport provisions and highlight that transport is key to the success of the plan.
- to recommend that officers continue to work with the CPCA and seek assurance from the Council Leader that she will press the CPCA to deliver the Transport Strategy on time.

Water

- to register scrutiny's view that the water provisions - both fresh and waste water - are fundamental to the success of the plan and request officers continue to seek resolution of key ongoing water issues.

The Leader of the Council paid tribute to all officers involved in the preparation of the proposed submission and the Committee formally recorded its thanks to them.

26/21/P&A Work Programme

The Work Programme was formally noted.

The meeting ended at 8.10 pm

CHAIR