

## Public Q&As Greater Cambridge Local Plan First Conversation and Call for Sites - data release

### Responses to questions not answered in the webinars:

#### **Has a date been set for the members advisory group?**

The date of the next members advisory group has not been set; we will update our website when this is available.

#### **Is there an opportunity to deliver more homes than the requirement to help affordability?**

The affordability of homes is an important issue for the Greater Cambridge Local Plan. The 'standard method' minimum number of homes, for which government requires us to plan, includes an uplift reflecting the affordability of homes. We are also considering whether we should plan for a larger number of homes, considering the specific circumstances of Greater Cambridge.

We also require a percentage of new homes to be affordable. These are homes which include social rents and a combination of different affordable housing types, including intermediate housing, Rent to Buy, and Shared Ownership. Our current plans require 40% of homes built to be affordable on larger schemes, subject to viability. The new Local Plan will need to consider what targets are appropriate, and what sort of affordable homes we should be delivering to meet local needs.

#### **What is the current Government standard method minimum figure if the next Plan figure is not known yet?**

Our current calculations using the Government's '[standard method](#)' indicate a need for 1,800 homes per year, or 40,900 homes for the suggested plan period of 20172040.

The Government's standard method is a government formula that helps councils to work out the minimum number of homes that are needed in each local area.

Details of the standard method can be found on the [Government's planning guidance: 'Housing and economic development needs assessment' webpage](#).

The government are consulting on changes to the standard method; we do not know the outcome of their consultation at this stage.

#### **Is the Council able to target engagement on younger demographics and those which are not homeowners?**

Yes, we are very keen to engage younger people and those who are not homeowners in the plan-making process, and we are looking at how we can improve our engagement of younger people and non-homeowners moving forward. We are likely to use both digital and non-digital methods, considering any restrictions we may have in the current COVID-19 environment.

**Transport: can either of shared planning use powers to safeguard transport routes, especially walk/cycle routes?**

We are not the local transport authority. However, the Local Plan does have a significant role to play in making sure new developments support walking and cycling. This will be about how we locate development, but also what linkages are required to be made by these new developments. These policies will be made available as part of future consultations on the emerging Local Plan for the community to feedback on before the Local Plan is adopted.

**How will you deal with seeming dominance of business interests and conflicts of interest when working with consultants during the plan-making process?**

Consultants working with the Councils are selected following a fair, open and transparent procurement process and are selected as experts in their field only after meeting rigorous selection criteria. They are also required to confirm they have no conflict of interest which would impact on their advice.

All evidence produced by consultants for the Councils is published as part of the plan-making process. All documentation is examined, with decisions made by Councillors, not consultants, and the final draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan is ultimately subject to independent public examination.

**How many people have attended this session?**

There were 102 participants in the Q&A1 session on 21 September 2020 and 58 participants in the Q&A 2 session on 22 September 2020.  
Thank you to everyone for engaging with us.

**How do you enhance Green Belt by building on it?**

As we set out in the First Conversation, the Green Belt plays an important role in maintaining the special qualities of Cambridge and the surrounding area. It also restricts growth on the edge of Cambridge, a location that has sustainability advantages in terms of access to jobs and services and reducing trips by the private car that could help mitigate our climate impacts. In that context, national planning policy requires that Local Plans consider the impact on sustainable development of channelling growth outside the Green Belt. We are preparing evidence to ensure we have a full understanding of these issues.

We are also exploring whether there are opportunities to enhance the Green Belt. Our Green Infrastructure Study will be identifying broad priority areas and specific projects to enhance and expand the network of green spaces within Greater

Cambridge, which could inform allocations and infrastructure requirements for the Local Plan.

**Isn't it important to coordinate plans between the Local Plan and the Transport Plan? How can you evaluate a site without knowing about transport?**

We work closely with other bodies responsible for transport in the area. This includes [Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority](#), who are responsible for producing the Local Transport Plan. The Councils also form part of the [Greater Cambridge Partnership](#), who are delivering a range of transport improvements in the area.

**Please do not just rely on the Environment Agency for flood risk information - ask residents for photos of when fields were flooded.**

We have commissioned a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), which will look at all sources of flood risk in the area, including the effects of climate change. This will include consideration of historic flood events.

We are working with a range of partners on our water evidence, including the Environment Agency, Natural England, the County Council (as Lead Local Flood Authority), South Staffordshire (Cambridge) Water, Anglian Water, internal drainage boards, Water Resources East, and a range of other stakeholders.

In relation to members of the public wishing to report a flood, further information can be found on the [Gov.uk website: report a flood](#) or possible cause of flooding.

- Cambridge County Council has information on its website on how to [report a flood](#).
- Cambridge City Council has information on its website on [flooding](#).
- South Cambridgeshire District Council has information on its website on [flooding](#).

**What effect will the experience of COVID-19 have on the definition of "Densification"?**

We are holding a 'watching brief' on how COVID-19 will affect the plan-making process, including any impact this may have on densification. The importance of provision for walking and cycling routes to local amenities, as well as accessible green space has been highlighted during the pandemic and these are important issues we will be considering through plan making.

**The River Granta was particularly badly hit last year by abstraction and drought. Can we ensure that our chalk streams are better protected?**

Climate change was one of the big themes we asked about in the First Conversation consultation and it was the theme ranked highest in importance by respondents. The Local Plan will look at climate change, including the impact on the water environment. A detailed Integrated Water Management Study has been commissioned, which will include consideration of water supply and demand, and the impact of development on local waterways, including chalk streams. The study will also be subject to an independent review.