

Greater Cambridge Local Plan First Proposals: Committee stage webinar

7 September 2021

The following questions could not be answered during the time allowed for the webinar and answers are therefore provided here.

1. Does net zero housing include the carbon generated in construction and embodied in the building?

A: The UK has a legally binding requirement to achieve net zero carbon by 2050. This means that the UK would not produce more carbon, in total, than it absorbs, and this applies across all sectors including the built environment. It therefore does include the embodied carbon which is generated through the construction process and through the production of materials used in construction.

The First Proposals cannot influence all aspects of carbon reduction related to the built environment. Our [Net Zero Carbon Buildings](#) proposed policy direction suggests that buildings should be operationally net zero, in other words have extremely low energy demand, and should supply that demand through fully renewable sources. It also proposes that large buildings should calculate whole life carbon emissions through a nationally recognised Whole Life Carbon Assessment and demonstrate actions to reduce life-cycle carbon emissions. Work is ongoing nationally to develop targets for embodied carbon in the built environment. This policy proposal is ambitious, but we feel it is defensible in light of the evidence we have commissioned.

2. North East Cambridge Area Action Plan (NECAAP) and Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant Relocation (CWWTPR) cannot be treated independently. NECAAP is pushing the WWTP (Waste Water Treatment Plant) out to green belt. How can you justify this. They may be separate processes, but they are clearly inextricably linked given that NECAAP is the driver for CWWTP being moved. As AW (Anglia Water) have already indicated, there is no operational need for the WWTP to move. From a central planning point of view you must have a more holistic view on the subject. All the projects and proposals in the plan are related. How can you not look at these as an integral holistic plan?

A: We fully understand that it can be difficult to disentangle the various legislative and planning processes involved with the WWTP move. It is important to differentiate between the functions of the two Councils, firstly as Local Planning Authorities in preparing the Local Plan and Area Action Plan, through the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service, and secondly the role of Cambridge City Council as a landowner and developer, and a partner in the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) bid with Anglian Water. These Council functions are exercised separately.

The move of the WWTP will enable the Councils as Local Planning Authorities to realise their long-held ambitions to redevelop the current WWTP site, but the decision to move was made by Anglian Water in partnership with Cambridge City Council in their capacity as a landowner. Due to the successful HIF bid, the Local Plan and the AAP are being prepared on the basis that the WWTP will be relocated, but this is not a requirement of the Local Plan or AAP. The relocation of the WWTP would however unlock a brownfield urban site that our evidence shows is a very sustainable location for development. Including the site in the two Plans at this stage will ensure that future development in this area is brought forward in a comprehensive and coherent manner. The Local Development Scheme setting out the plan making process for both the Local Plan and AAP is clear that the Plans will only progress to the later formal stages when the Development Consent Order (DCO) for the relocation of the WWTP is determined.

The Anglian Water DCO process is an entirely separate statutory planning process from the Local Plan, and it will be determined under different legislation. It is not a

project or proposal within the scope of the Local Plan, so it would be inappropriate to include it as part of the Local Plan proposals and consultation. The WWTP relocation will, however, be considered in the Sustainability Appraisal for the draft Local Plan, as a plan or project being brought forward by another body, as part of assessing the cumulative impacts of the Local Plan.

Anglian Water have signalled that their intention is to build a modern, low carbon water recycling centre for Greater Cambridge. The Councils have made it clear that they wish to see the proposed relocation maximise environmental benefits as it progresses towards the DCO process.

3. If you remove some of the green belt do you have to replace that loss?

A: Reflecting national planning policy, where land is removed from the green belt policy proposals seek improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land. For example the proposal to release green belt land at the Cambridge Biomedical Campus proposes to require significant Green Belt enhancement in adjoining areas of White Hill and Nine Wells, to provide green infrastructure and biodiversity improvements.

4. One continuing complaint is lack of compliance with agreed sustainable/biodiversity/climate change conditions. How will this be monitored and regulated

A: We are looking afresh at monitoring and how we can use data more smartly in order to achieve better compliance. The new Plan will include new monitoring indicators and a monitoring plan. We would be glad for suggestions of what data should be collected and monitored, please do include this in your comments when we open public consultation.

5. Will the County be able to supply the schools, nurseries, services which will be required for such a concentration of new populations? Or is the expectation that the jobs are for single, young, transitory professionals?

A: Planned developments will need to be accompanied by new or improved infrastructure to meet the needs generated. The plan will be accompanied by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan setting out what is needed when, and this will include education provision. Developers will be required to contribute towards delivery of this infrastructure. In the case of larger developments, they provide opportunities for new infrastructure, services and facilities within the development as has happened with places like the Cambridge southern fringe and Northstowe.

6. Did I hear correctly that the reason given for not putting housing on green belt (CWWTPR - Honey Hill) was that there wouldn't be enough space on the green belt? Doesn't CWWTP take up the same amount of space on green belt as what is being freed up on brown field? In fact, the proposed site for CWWTPR (Honey Hill) can be seen to take up equally as much space. Is it true that it is harder to build housing on green belt than it is to build industry on green belt? <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/13-protecting-green-belt-land>

A: Anglian Water's proposal for the new WWTP would build on less land than the current site at North East Cambridge, even though it would have greater capacity. Anglian Water's proposal is for a new 22 hectare facility, around half the size of the existing WWTP site.

The National Planning Policy Framework states that planning policies should give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, support appropriate opportunities to remediate contaminated land and promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings. The relocation of the WWTP enables the regeneration of the North East Cambridge area, including adjoining land that had been constrained by presence of the WWTP. This area has excellent walking, cycling and public transport links, including a new railway station, and is within the existing urban area of Cambridge. It can therefore be developed to a higher density than a greenfield site

and with less car parking for residents than sites in less accessible locations and can be supported by a range of infrastructure provision which will benefit new and existing adjacent communities.

7. With regards to the NECAAP and CWWTPR processes being separate.

Where is the funding for CWWTPR coming from HIF (Housing Infrastructure Fund), how can that money be used for CWWTPR if it is money that is meant for housing?

A: The Housing Infrastructure Fund is a government fund to 'unlock' housing delivery. It provides grant funding for new infrastructure that will unlock new homes in the areas of greatest housing demand. The HIF funding that Anglian Water and Cambridge City Council have secured is not for building the homes themselves, but for the costs of infrastructure and other site enabling works that would otherwise mean housing development was not suitable or viable.

8. In terms of sustainable public transport, how will the extra buses needed be accommodated within the city centre?

A: We are working with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, and the Greater Cambridge Partnership, to bring forward a range of measures to support access to and moving around the city by cycling, walking, and public transport. It is acknowledged that road space will need to be freed up to support these modes of travel. For more information, please visit <https://www.greatercambridge.org.uk/city-access>.