

Notes on the questions asked in the consultation

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Question 1. What do you think about our vision for North East Cambridge?

- You could consider whether the vision described ('an inclusive, walkable, low-carbon new city district with a lively mix of homes, workplaces, services and social spaces, fully integrated with surrounding neighbourhoods' which will 'foster community wellbeing' and be 'socially cohesive') is likely to be met by the plan to build 8,000 new homes in a comparatively small area. These will necessarily be small flats in blocks several storeys high.
- Post-Covid, isn't it likely that people will need more living space so that they can work from home?
- Cambridge has recognised the climate crisis and declared a climate emergency. Why is it that this plan no longer aims to be carbon-neutral or truly car-free, but merely aims to 'discourage' car use?
- Is 'community well-being' likely to be met given that only 10 hectares of Public space are to be included, and the plan assumes people will use existing provision (ie Milton Country Park, the river) which is already at capacity.
- You may wish to comment on why Cambridge is planning so many new homes in the first place. Central government set a target of at least 40,000 new homes in Cambridgeshire by 2040, and yet the city and South Cambs appear to be considering building up to 66,000 homes. Why?
- Cambridge is also reported to be the most unequal city in the UK according to [a report](#) by think-tank Centre for Cities, and it might at first sight be considered good news that this development claims 40% of homes will be 'affordable'. However new housing stock has risen faster in Cambridge over the past 10 years than anywhere else, and yet the unaffordability has increased, rather than reduced. In any case there is much debate about whether homes such as those proposed are truly 'affordable' in any real sense, and whether they will simply be bought up by investors who will want to maximise rental income and simply add to the housing crisis, rather than addressing the real issues.
- The vision seems to have been watered down in the last 2 years e.g. the replacement of the green bridge with a pedestrian one, no ban on cars and poor prior development such as the station hotel.

Question 2. Are we creating the right walking and cycling connections to the surrounding areas?

- The towpath is already very well used and often overcrowded. Any increase in traffic may create dangerous levels of congestion.
- Cycle routes across Cambridge are already very busy and sometimes poorly lit and maintained, and despite some new provision such as the Chisholm Trail, not adequate for existing use.
- The loss of the green bridge across Milton Road will mean that the new district is already effectively cut in two.

Question 3. Are the new 'centres' in the right place and do they include the right mix of activity?

- The Science park consists mainly of office blocks and some facilities but no housing is planned so there is little mix on this part of the site.
- Planning permission has already been granted for the Brookgate development around the station, which will not integrate with the rest.

Question 4. Do we have the right balance between new jobs and new homes?

- 20,000 new jobs may well mean 40,000 more people, and yet the plan is to provide housing for 18,000 people. Where will the rest of the people live? This will accentuate rather ameliorate the Cambridge housing crisis.
- Will they commute to the site from elsewhere, placing more strain on Cambridge's already stretched roads?

Question 5. Are we are planning for the right community facilities?

- The proposal makes no commitment to build a secondary school, only to allocate space 'in case it is needed in future' so the development is not self-sufficient as advertised.
- Only GP level healthcare facilities are planned, despite 18,000 residents (the population of Ely).
- There are no sports pitches, no swimming pool and no leisure centre.
- The plan does not include provision for a large-scale cultural centre, only a library and community centre.

- There has been a resurgence in people wanting – and often needing – to grow their own food. The dwellings planned have no gardens and there are no allotments.

Question 6. Do you think that our approach to distributing building heights and densities is appropriate for the location?

- These buildings will be up to 13 storeys high, higher than anywhere else in Cambridge and denser than much of inner London. Many people feel this is inappropriate for an historic city.
- Buildings will dominate the skyline from Milton Road, Fen Ditton, the towpath etc. The documents cite buildings such as King’s College Chapel and Ely Cathedral as examples of tall buildings in the area, yet these are of enormous architectural and historical merit, rather than office buildings or blocks of flats.

Question 7. Are we planning for the right mix of public open spaces?

- The plan makes provision for just 10 hectares of public space (around the same size as Jesus Green). Do you think this is enough for 18,000 people to share - this equates to 5.5m² per person.
- For comparison, the new development at Trumpington Meadows has 3,500 homes and 90 hectares of public space.
- The Mayor of London’s ambition is for developments to ensure at least 10m² of ‘playable space’ per child.
- The plan assumes that as an alternative to space on the site, people will be able to use neighbouring open spaces such as the Stourbridge Common, the towpath, and Milton Country Park. All of these spaces are already well used, and the representative from MCP who sat on the Community Forum reported that MCP is already at capacity and cannot accommodate more visitors.

Question 8. Are we doing enough to improve biodiversity in and around North East Cambridge?

- Doubling Biodiversity is regional target, but this plan aims only to increase biodiversity by 10% - a woeful target.
- Eddington had its own ecologist and increasing biodiversity was built into plans from the start. The lake, open spaces, edible and drought-resistant planting, eco-drains and buildings with the highest sustainability specification available all combine to create a sustainable development that places biodiversity at the top of the agenda. Why have similar standards not been built in to plans for NE Cambridge?

Question 9. Are we doing enough to discourage car travel into this area?

- There is no transformational step-change in terms of public transport provision that would help to achieve a reduction in car travel. Without easy, cheap, regular, reliable forms of public transport people will simply remain wedded to their cars.
- Cycling provision is mostly squeezed into the existing 'network', and despite the promised 'car barns' on the edges of the development, there is no ban on cars.
- Is it realistic to assume, as this claims, that there will be 'no extra vehicle movements' on Milton Road?
- The measures to restrict cars are not definitive, such as saying that parking on the science park will be reduced "where possible".

Question 10. Are we maximising the role that development at North East Cambridge has to play in responding to the climate crisis?

- This was a golden opportunity to build a truly sustainable development meeting Passivhaus construction standards such as at the new Goldsmith Street development in Norwich. Even Eddington has higher standards so this is a retrograde step.
- However there is no commitment to renewable energy, the highest construction standards, conserving and reusing water, or any of the many things that might have resulted in a development that responded appropriately to the climate crisis. Instead, the plan merely 'proposes robust targets' and 'encourages low carbon lifestyles'.