Backing for a big idea - Consensus building for strategic planning in Cambridge

Stephen Platt

Reference:

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Cambridge is used to mean the area serviced by the City of Cambridge and including villages within a radius of 5-10 miles where people working or shopping in Cambridge live. The Cambridge sub-region encompasses a wider surrounding area that includes the market towns as far as Littleport and Chatteris in the north, Newmarket to the east, and Royston, Saffron Walden and Haverhill in the south.
Executive Summary

This is a case study of planning in the Cambridge area and illustrates how a previous policy of restricting the growth of the city was ditched and the growth agenda embraced. It brings the story up to date by describing how Cambridge is dealing with the challenges of the National Planning Policy Framework.

It is the story of how people in the University, local authorities and business came together to debate the issues, how a case for change was made and local people engaged with, and how the planners and councillors implemented the changes.

Economic activity in the area has expanded over the last 50 years and there is intense and increasing pressure for growth. There have also been major improvements in infrastructure over the last twenty years, and by 2000 Cambridge was a significant pole in the Greater London/SE conurbation.

Until 1997 planning policy tried to limit the population of Cambridge to 100,000 people by defining a green belt to restrict development of the City. In the mid-nineties the University was having difficulty getting approval for its proposals for its West Cambridge site at the density it wanted. This was the prompt to change the approach.

Cambridge Futures

In 1997, concerned about the constraints on growth, Louis McCagg from the Development Office in the University and academics in the Department of Architecture brought together people from local government, planning, development and business in a forum called Cambridge Futures.

Cambridge Futures produced the evidence that was influential in changing attitudes to growth. A comprehensive set of options were modeled. The consequences of each were assessed in terms of economic efficiency, social equity and environmental impact.

In 1999 Cambridge Architectural Research was tasked with surveying public opinion on the options. The least preferred planning option was the status quo and very few people agreed with the proposition that Cambridge was full. The preferred options were densification, selective extension into the green belt and a new settlement on a transport link.

In parallel the local authorities developed a radical growth strategy for the Cambridge Sub-region through the review of Regional Planning Guidance for East Anglia (RPG6) (2000). This, together with the options explored by Cambridge Futures, informed the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Structure Plan adopted in 2003 that provided a comprehensive vision for the growth of the Cambridge sub-region.

Findings

Leadership is critical in the process. Planners and councillors in the City and County were crucial in leading and delivering the change agenda. Along with others on the Executive of Cambridge Futures, lead players provided a mix of personalities, background and expertise.

Timing was also crucial. Cambridge Futures started just before the Structure Plan process and influenced the system. Later and it would have been too late. The Cambridge growth strategy adopted through this process represented a step change in the thinking about the future shape of Cambridge and its surrounding sub-region.

Cambridge Futures drove the ambition and helped shape the debate that guided the first three stages of the process by articulating the consequences of different approaches to the growth challenge, and by illustrating the options in a way that engaged the public.

Clear and transparent evidence was crucial in informing decision-making and in convincing people about growth. Cambridge Futures modeled 7 options, including no change. The outcomes of each were summarised in terms of things people could relate to such as job, traffic, house prices and impact on open space.

Public participation was important. Cambridge Futures asked people in the sub-region their opinion about...
the options and whether they agreed with a set of statements. This meant that Structure Plan proposals about the green belt, densification and new settlement did not meet with the kind of opposition other places have experienced when proposing big changes.

Cambridge Futures also helped improve cooperation between the local authorities; up to the mid 1990s the various local authorities in the sub-region did not cooperate well together.

**Conclusion**

So can these insights from Cambridge be applied elsewhere? Or is the timing and circumstance in the late nineties so specific that Cambridge is a unique case? Whether the Cambridge experience is replicable depends on whether people are willing to work together, to find the leaders, develop the ambition, produce the technical unbiased evidence and win over hearts and minds to the big idea. The key ingredients are:

- an agreed strategic vision amongst the key players and the importance of having a coherent structure of strategic planning across a sub-region
- a cross-sector think tank such as Cambridge Futures which works alongside the statutory authorities
- local leadership, both from political leaders and from Planning Directors
- an evidence base for testing and evaluating different strategic options for growth
- a dedicated delivery team such as Cambridgeshire Horizons that can support local authorities in implementing their growth strategy.
1 Introduction

Cambridge seems to have a lot going for it – a world-class university and a booming economy. But less than twenty years ago development was constrained by a plan dating back to just after WWII that restricted growth and a perception amongst councillors that the public would not accept change.

This case study shows how this was changed and how the people of Cambridge and the surrounding area changed their attitude.

It is written for local authority planning officers, councillors and anyone else concerned about their town and who want to make it better. Its aim is to provide practical advice about avoiding opposition to and building support for major change.

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Regional context  East of England had a population of 5.8 million in 2011. Cambridge City has a population of 121,000 and the County 612,000. Cambridge is 70 km northeast of central London and can be reached by train in 50 minutes. Stansted airport is somewhat closer to Cambridge than to London.
1.1 Context

One of the Government’s priorities is to support growth, and to make sure that the planning system plays its part in this. There is pent-up demand for housing and decades of a shortfall in supply have resulted in high house prices in those parts of the country where the economy is strong. But change is not always quick or easy as we balance growth with environmental and social concerns. And people tend to oppose major change unless they have been involved in developing the proposals and see reasons to support it. The Government has sought to address this issue with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).²

The Cambridge sub-region is a prime example of the dilemma of balancing growth and restraint. The Cambridgeshire County Council Research Group mid-2009 population estimate for Cambridge City was 119,100. The population had increased by 8% since 2001 and was forecast to increase by a further 28% by 2031. The estimate of the number of households in 2009 was 46,000 and is forecast to increase by a further 33% by 2031.³ There were strong arguments for both growth and restraint in Cambridge in the 1990s, and many of these pressures or views are prevalent around the country today. This was not just around housing pressures, but also from the University and businesses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pressures for growth</th>
<th>Pressures for restraint</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The University of Cambridge is a world renowned centre for research and technology</td>
<td>The University is a place of learning and scholarship, not a feeder for high-tech industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larger firms need to be attracted into the area to sustain this research development</td>
<td>Cambridge’s world renowned cultural heritage needs to be conserved</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forecasts show the number of jobs in the region will grow</td>
<td>Increased traffic congestion will result from growth</td>
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<tr>
<td>The number of households is expected to rise sharply and new homes need to be built</td>
<td>The green belt and flood plains are essential for the conservation of the natural environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recent graduates, young families and people moving to the area cannot afford housing</td>
<td>Proposed development in the countryside and villages is encountering vociferous opposition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Land is needed to accommodate this new development</td>
<td>Demand for water is increasing in one of the driest areas of the country</td>
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<td>This wealth creation is of international significance and importance to UK plc</td>
<td>A desire for long term sustainable development is calling into question assumptions about growth</td>
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Cambridge Phenomenon

Cambridge is the centre of the greatest concentration of high technology firms in Europe. Economic activity in the area has expanded over the last 50 years and there is intense and increasing pressure for growth. 4 The Cambridge Phenomenon (2012) by Kate Kirk and Charles Cotton identifies 1,000 technology and biotechnology companies in the Cambridge cluster, plus 400 support organisations, that together employ over 40,000 staff. 5

Segal Quince Wicksteed, in 2010, said “planning of future development is a hot topic in the Cambridge area where the challenge is to provide for rapid development in sustainable ways that maintain quality of life”.

There have also been major improvements in infrastructure provision, including Stansted Airport, the north-south M11 and east-west A14 highway links, the rail link to London with electrification and the freight line from Felixstowe to Nuneaton. By 2000 Cambridge was a significant pole in the Greater London/SE conurbation.

The process of delivering a large and complex sub-regional plan takes many years and falls into a number of distinct stages. In the case of Cambridgeshire the process began in the mid-nineties and is still less than half complete. The stages may be characterised as follows:

1. Recognition – recognising the problem and exploring the issues
2. Evidence – gathering the evidence to assess a range of options
3. Consultation – winning hearts and minds of general public and key stakeholders
4. Cooperation – bringing authorities together to agree a plan
5. Strategy – plan making by a joint working group
6. Implementation – negotiating planning applications, maintaining quality and delivering public infrastructure

Cambridge planning history

Prior to 1996, planning policies sought to restrict the population and constrain development to within the green belt. 6 Although some studies and plans subsequently recommended some limited growth, it wasn’t until the mid-1990s that things began to change.

In the mid-1990s the City Council was committed to producing neighbourhood plans. They also proposed in the 1997 Local Plan an urban extension on the southern fringe at Clay Farm. But the proposed changes to the green belt did not get through the planning process because they were seen as being ill considered and too piecemeal. A capacity study by the City identified places where Cambridge might grow, including the northern fringe.

During this time the University was having difficulty getting approval for proposals for its West Cambridge site. “It was a question of how and where it should expand not whether. Various options were considered. Local residents objected to building on the Rifle Range, a proposal in the Newnham and West Cambridge Plan so the present West Cambridge site came forward as an alternative and was allocated in the 1996 Local Plan”. (Peter Studdert)

Prompted by South Cambridgeshire’s refusal of a planning application for the Wellcome Institute, for a science park adjacent to the University for work on the human genome project, and a concern that other applications by scientific organisations were being rejected, people in Cambridge’s high-tech community felt that this approach threatened Cambridge’s position as a world-centre of excellence. The real watershed was a visit by a delegation of the Malaysian Government that outlined their plans for a super high-tech corridor in Cambridge which was at the heart of their global ambitions.

Discussions identified two apparently conflicting goals: that Cambridge must exploit its position to become a global player in high-tech and that Cambridge and environs must preserve its architectural and environmental heritage.
In 1998 the City Council produced an urban capacity study. This made a number of assumptions, including no loss of green belt and was concerned primarily with housing capacity. It calculated that nearly 5,000 or 11% of the population could not afford open market housing. The study analysed constraints on growth including water, education, health, road capacity and public transport and identified land shortage as the principle restraint to increasing housing supply. The total urban capacity of Cambridge up to 2016 it estimated as 3,393 dwellings, only 41% of which were from new sites identified in the survey.

It concluded that “although there may be scope for some additional capacity through policy changes to the local plan it is considered to be minimal in comparison to the existing supply. This analysis is consistent with the main findings of the Cambridgeshire Capacity Study 1997 which found there to be a limited future housing development capacity in Cambridge”.

Consequences of pre-1996 planning policies as identified by Cambridge Futures

- The increase in the number of jobs and households within a restricted land supply had led to rising property prices.
- People employed in the City and its fringe had been forced to live beyond the Green Belt where cheaper housing more than offsets the cost of travel into Cambridge.
- Population growth in surrounding villages and market towns had been amongst the highest in the country.
- As a result there was a daily influx of nearly 40,000 workers from outside the City, increasingly outnumbering resident workers.
- Congestion in the access roads had risen, increasing emissions and pollution.

Cambridge Futures

In 1997, concerned about the constraints on growth in Cambridge, Louis McCagg, in the University’s development office, and academics in the University Department of Architecture got together people from local government, planning, development and business in a forum called Cambridge Futures. It brought the main players together to test options including urban extension, densification and dispersion. This level of debate had not taken place for many years.

Cambridge Futures produced the evidence and modelled options that were influential in changing attitudes to growth. The consequences of each option were assessed in terms of economic efficiency, social equity and environmental impact. Virtual reality movie clips were made to help the public visualise what each option might look like.

In 1999 Cambridge Architectural Research surveyed public opinion on the options. The least preferred planning option was the status quo and very few people agreed with the proposition that Cambridge was full. This was highly influential in changing councillors minds about the level of nimbyism they would have to face.

Cambridge Futures provided the evidence and support that senior planners needed. As Brian Smith said, “ditching the existing policy of restricting growth suddenly seemed the obvious thing to do”.

About the same time, in 1998, the Cambridge Network was founded by a group comprising the then Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, with businessmen and entrepreneurs. Peter Dawe, an entrepreneur and member of the Network and Cambridge Futures, said it was set up to fill the vacuum of strategic thinking about the support infrastructure for Cambridge based business. It’s main successes included promotion of business into the university, creating marketplaces for executives and capital and lobbying to Central government on infrastructure issues.

Peter Dawe, argued that the supply of land for housing must be increased, that the environment needed enhancing and transport needed improving. His main proposals were for a Cambridge Great Park and a Cambridge New Town of around 20,000 dwellings north west of the city.
The growth agenda

In parallel with the work of Cambridge Futures the local authorities developed a growth strategy for the Cambridge sub-region through the review of 2000 Regional Planning Guidance for East Anglia (RPG6). This set an ambitious target for housing growth together with a sequential approach to its location: (i) within the built up area of Cambridge; (ii) on the periphery of the built up area, subject to a review of the Green Belt; (iii) in a new settlement close to Cambridge; (iv) within the surrounding market towns; and (v) as extensions to the market towns.

In 2000 the Government issued technical guidance on doing multi-modal transport studies, a necessary condition for getting highway infrastructure funding. The upgrade to the A14 had only been finished in 1995 and was already at capacity, but Cambridge was at the bottom of Stage 2 in the proposed studies. The County put together a team with the City and business people and lobbied the then Labour Government. The result was the Cambridge to Huntingdon Multi Modal Study (CHUMMS) and provided the policy basis for the Cambridge to St Ives guided busway and the planned improvements to the A14 corridor.

Within the strategic framework set by RPG6, the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Structure Plan adopted in 2003 provided a comprehensive vision for the growth of the Cambridge sub-region. This made provision in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough for 70,200 additional homes between 1999-2016, 12,500 of which would be in Cambridge City and 20,000 in South Cambs.

The plan maintained the green belt to define the limits of urban growth and preserve the character of Cambridge and its setting but also detailed the location and phasing of land to be released from the green belt on the southern, eastern, northern and north western fringes. (See Appendix 5)

The Structure Plan was accompanied by a Local transport Plan. The main changes to strategy included: focusing investment along key corridors and providing key transport improvements including extending the Park & Ride programme and new cycle routes. Ten schemes were proposed including Cambridge to Huntingdon rapid transit, a new railway station at Chesterton, a developer funded M11 to Addenbrookes link road, and various bypasses.

The regional strategy was carried forward into the reviews of Local Plans and, post-2004, into the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England and related Local Development Frameworks. These set an ambitious target for growth of 2,800 dwellings per year to be built from 1999 to 2016, a 40% increase in the rate achieved during the 1990s.

In 2004 Cambridge was included in the Government’s Sustainable Communities Plan as part of the London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough Growth Area. From 2004 to 2011 the Government provided funding to support growth, including funding for Cambridgeshire Horizons which was established in 2004 as the Local Delivery Vehicle to coordinate the implementation of the growth strategy. Horizons was a company limited by guarantee and did not have statutory planning powers.

Implementation and delivery

Both Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Council produced Local Plans, The City’s 2006 plan envisaged building 12,200 houses, 40% of which would be affordable; maintaining a thriving and accessible historic core; regeneration of the station area, enhancement of the landscape and creation of new urban extensions connected by public transport. The South Cambs 2004 plan envisaged 11,300 new dwellings, including at least 900 in the Northern Fringe, and maintained green belt policy to protect the setting of the city and prevent urban sprawl. Both Councils are currently reviewing these plans in 2013.
In 2008 the East of England Plan was published as a revision to the RSS. This upped the numbers of jobs and houses to 96,300 dwellings for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough (19,000 in Cambridge and 23,500 in South Cambs) of which 80% still needed to be built. The RSS has now been revoked.

In the Local Plan Review 2013 the City has been consulting on Issues and Options to try to meet present challenges:

1. Delivering the existing strategy
2. Future of Cambridge East and the NE fringe
3. Meeting targets to 2031 of 14,000 homes and 20,000 jobs
4. Green belt pressures; transport issues of tackling congestion, providing new infrastructure and promoting non-car modes
5. Affordable housing provision
6. Achieving design quality, maintaining quality of life and developing sustainably
7. Demonstrating a duty to co-operate and cooperating with South Cambs and the County Council.

NPPF and its application in Cambridge

Cambridgeshire authorities have been successful in developing a process of gaining public backing and community support for change, in setting up organisations to deal with coordinating the big issues and in developing and delivering a strategic plan for growth.

With the NPPF the Government is saying it believes in planning that gives a priority to sustainable development, where the emphasis is on sustaining economic well being. This is the approach taken in Cambridge, where growth and the economy have led the debate and the purpose of planning is to shape Cambridge and the surrounding region to meet this economic need while taking into account the constraints of heritage and environment.

In Cambridge there has been a sensible approach to development and Cambridge has balanced growth with a high quality of life. In the opinion of the senior planners who steered the process, Cambridge is an example of how to do planning sensibly. (Brian Human)

1.2 Method

Twelve key players in the Cambridge story were interviewed for this study (see Appendix 5). They include planning officers and portfolio-holding councillors who were in post 10-15 years ago when the new growth strategy was being decided, and people from Cambridge Futures.

They were asked the following questions.

- What were the key factors in kick-starting growth?
- What was the role of academia and business?
- How successful was Cambridge Futures?
- What do you make of current progress and where next?
- What lessons for elsewhere?

The evidence from these interviews and from relevant published documents is structured under five main headings: leadership, ambition, evidence, public participation, and cooperation and coordination. This is followed by a discussion of the relevance of these lessons for other places.
2 Findings

The interview material is organised under five headings.

Leadership  Ambition  Evidence  Participation

Cooperation and coordination

2.1 Leadership

Local authority leadership

Leadership is critical in the process. The then Planning Directors in the City and County, Peter Studdert and Brian Smith, and the respective Leading Members, Nichola Harrison and Shona Johnstone – were crucial in leading and delivering the change agenda.

We were lucky with the officers and portfolio councillors in the City and County. Not only were they highly competent, they were also willing to allow amateurs in on the party. (Jonathan Barker, Marshall Aerospace)

Cambridge Futures leadership

The mix of personalities, background and expertise was also important on the Executive of Cambridge Futures.

Timing is critical. We started Cambridge Futures just before the Structure Plan process. We could make changes and influence the system at that point. After it would have been too late. (John Durrant)

Nichola Harrison, then lead member for the City, believes that change in the period 2000-2003 was City Council led and the County played a key role in allowing it to happen. It was a wonderful responsibility – it is not often you get chance to contribute to shaping a great place. The LibDems had just come into power and we wanted to show that things could be different. We got it – the failure to conduct an adequate review of the green belt strategy in the nineties and the impact this was having. We had a clear vision of a city going downhill and were determined to deliver. (Nichola Harrison)

Shirley Saunders was Chairman of Planning Committee 1983-86 and 1991-1994, Vice-Chairman of South Cambs District Council from 1995-96 and Leader from 1996-1998. She knew the business community and quickly realised that planning was important to growth.

The City and S Cambs realised that a lot of exciting things were going on in Cambridge and we had a chance to affect this. The issue was getting enough houses, schools, water and sewage. (Shirley Saunders)

Shona Johnstone, Lead Member for the County, took the view that we could either fight Government every step of the way, or accept the need to grow, and say you have to invest in us. This essentially meant getting the transport infrastructure in place.
I am proud of my role in helping set up Cambridgeshire Horizons and the County’s work with the City. It is easy to oppose, but that would have been a recipe for disaster – the growth agenda is too important to be political. Personal relationships are really important and in some ways it is easier to get on with people in the City who are from an opposition party. (Shona Johnstone)

Brian Smith, Director of Environment and Transport at Cambridgeshire County Council, described how Peter Studdert was keen that the County produce a new Structure Plan and was raising questions about how to develop and grow.

Some people in the County, at both officer and member level, were not totally comfortable with this agenda, but it was helpful because it required me to be more assertive. Sometimes Peter wanted to go in a different direction but he was asking all the right questions. There was also a degree of luck with the politicians we had, especially the lead members in County and City. Other members became more amenable to change as they began to understand the issues. (Brian Smith)

Brian Smith and Peter Studdert were very good. It seemed like they were riding a tiger, but we were solving a problem for them. They were stuck with a bunch of members that were convinced that the electorate did not want expansion. The solution was to come up with a set of options – the forms that the expansion could take – for testing. (Peter Carolin)

### 2.2 Ambition

**Cambridge Futures perspective**

Cambridge Futures drove the ambition and helped shape the debate that guided the first four stages of the process: Recognition of the problem and exploring the issues, Evidence of the consequences of different options, Consultation in winning hearts and minds of the general public and key stakeholders and Cooperation in getting the local authorities to cooperate and reach consensus.

Traditionally the City has always been in favour of expansion, but the County had the last say, so Brian Smith was in a more difficult position. The trouble with planning is that there is no independent view. Decisions are always dominated by political considerations and officers are highly restricted in the range of options they can consider. Cambridge Futures was largely free of any sectional interest. Everyone collaborated and that was a major aspect of its success. (Marcial Echnique)

Peter Carolin described how the study was published. The outcome of the Cambridge Futures project was widely publicised. The 48-page A3 size report (Cambridge Futures, 1999) was circulated to a carefully selected list of opinion-formers and decision-makers; both regional TV networks carried it in their news programmes; local and regional radio covered it; the Cambridge Evening News gave it extensive coverage for over a week, presenting each of the seven options in turn; and it was later featured on the BBC TV’s national Money Programme. Our hope that, by demonstrating and evaluating alternative options, we would enable an informed debate on the future form of the city-region, was fulfilled.  

I think on balance we did the right thing in accepting growth. You cannot always replicate success by becoming bigger, but we had to change, we could not stand still. The University has to be able to compete against the likes of Harvard. And out of it we got some social housing for my people that allowed them and their children to find a place to live in the City. Cambridge Futures was a wonderful group of people and I feel it was a great privilege to be able to debate. Each played a part in making the process work. (John Durrant)

**Local authority perspective**

Cambridge Futures was a nuisance at times and sometimes seemed a waste of time but with hindsight the role of Cambridge Futures was incredibly important. It took some of the flak and it flushed out the issue of SCambs opposition to growth. Some of the modelling was incredibly helpful in providing the evidence for our structure plan proposals. We had not been believed. The Chief City Planner and I were acutely aware that
Cambridge Futures was doing some of the dirty work. We were concerned not to get carried away, because we still had to do the formal consultation work, but we saw it was happening and got on the inside and were part of it. It was incredibly useful in that it raised the profile of all that we were trying to do. (Brian Smith)

In the late nineties there was a growing awareness that growth was inevitable and an acceptance that the idea of the Cambridge sub-region as a successful economy without spatial growth would be impossible. Whether this change of mind would have happened without Cambridge Futures is impossible to know. Certainly there was a coming together of ideas amongst senior planning officers and one or two members that we could not stick to the old model. And the idea that jobs and housing could be pushed outside the city became untenable. (Shona Johnstone)

We had few problems with the growth that was happening in high tech. The science parks at Hinxton, Babraham and Granta Park were in our patch. A few of us knew what was going on – keen young people doing exciting things – and we were anxious to encourage them. The Trinity Science Park is also in South Cambs but because it is on the edge of the city a joint working party was set up with the City Council and South Cambs to discuss and monitor its growth. We were tremendously excited when the first NAPP Pharmaceuticals building went up. (Shirley Saunders)

Cambridge Futures was interesting and great fun. People came from academia, business and local councils. It was not Council led and it was a wonderful opportunity to hear different opinions and to discuss new ideas. Marcial was marvellous providing the research and I congratulate the enlightened people who made it happen. (Shirley Saunders)

### 2.3 Evidence

The development of a clear and transparent evidence base has been crucial in informing decision-making and in convincing people of the acceptability of proposals.

The major novel thing Cambridge Futures did apart from bringing different interest groups together was to produce the evidence to assess a comprehensive set of options:

1. Minimum Growth
2. Densification
3. Necklace
4. Green Swap
5. Transport Links
6. Virtual Highway
7. New Town

The model we developed that forecast how people would get to work and where they would live was very innovative and was used by the Cambridge to Huntingdon Multi Modal Studies (CHUMMS). (Marcial Echnique)

Planners, especially those in the County, were wary of testing options that were in any way contrary to the prevailing view amongst councillors who were, in general, opposed to any incursion into the green belt. Officers are in a difficult position in that their jobs are dependent on councillors. (Marcial Echenique)

To justify public investment the assessment procedure needs to be comprehensive, open and transparent. From the results of the simulation models, it was possible to compare the options under three headings:

**Efficiency**: Economic efficiency was measured by calculating the cost of living and production costs for each area and for the region as a whole.

**Equity**: Social equity was measured by the composition of socio-economic groups within areas of the region. A more balanced socio-economic mix means affordable housing and equitable opportunities for work and services.

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Environmental quality was established by traffic congestion, vehicle emissions and pollution levels and the amount of open space in the form of private gardens and agricultural land.

A consideration of all three aspects – efficiency, equity and environment – should lead to a proper assessment of the sustainability of each option. All three aspects are relevant and if one of them falls short, the long-term sustainability of the region will be impaired.

A report was produced describing each option in detail and listing the likely consequences. A summary version was produced for the public opinion survey devised by CAR. (See Appendices 2 and 3)

This public consultation concluded that the popular view was that people want a balance of development in Cambridge and in the region. The survey suggested that a planning strategy which aimed for some growth in Cambridge through densification and expansion, together with growth outside Cambridge based on public transport links, would be most likely to meet the aspirations of the people who live and work in the region.

Evidence for structure plan proposals

This balanced approach to growth was confirmed in the Cambridge sub-region strategy in RPG6 in 2000, and further studies carried out during 2001/2 informed the spatial strategy adopted in the 2003 Structure Plan, namely a selective extension into the green belt to leave green corridors, densification within the city, especially along the railway line and around the station and a new settlement at Northstowe.

John Williamson described the aims of the Structure Plan. It was a County-wide approach to development that envisaged an expansion of Cambridge and Peterborough, consistent with role and character; the creation of a small town at Longstanton/Oakington; expansion where appropriate in adjoining main market towns; strong emphasis on quality of development, affordability, accessibility, environmental sustainability; a coherent growth strategy, jobs and housing, with infrastructure. This strategy reflected in the East of England Plan (2011-2021) that set targets of 98,300 new houses, and 95,000 jobs.

Within the strategic framework set by RPG6, the local authorities commissioned a series of studies in 2001-2 that tested these options for the growth of Cambridge.

Cambridge Sub-Region Study by Colin Buchanan and Partners in 2001 association with Bone Wells Associates and Wardell Armstrong identified sites on the green belt inner boundary with physical development capacity. It rejected most of them due to their strategic value in terms of the setting of Cambridge and concluded that the eastern sector of the city represented the best opportunity for locating an urban expansion that respects the landscape setting of the city and brings the greatest potential benefit to the broader city structure.

The DEGW study in 2001 developed a masterplan for the north-east segment of Cambridge from Cherry Hinton to Chesterton. It began by stating that it is clear that urban growth and change are inevitable. DEGW argue that the bulk of the population growth generated by the City should be located within the City and its immediate adjacent surroundings. Plus a new settlement of 15-20,000 homes. The report discussed the sequential sub-regional strategy for locating development, the value and use of the green belt, analysed
local landscape character and rehearsed the benefits and disbenefits of an expansion of the City.

The Eastern Cambridge Study by Lleweln-Davies in 2002 proceeded on the assumption that the relocation of the airport is almost certainly in the best long-term interests of all and that it would become available at some stage during the Structure Plan period. In particular it explored where should the new green belt boundary be positioned by testing options of how to manage the green space within the study area in terms of landscape importance, water bodies, fenland, proposed green space and retained farmland. It developed the idea of green fingers and showed that the biodiversity and amenity value of the open space would be improved by the development rather than diminished. Modelling also showed that, given a guided busway link and traffic demand management across the sub-region, the proposed development would not create greater traffic congestion than at present.

Local authorities also tested Options for where to locate the New Town. Six sites for the new settlement were evaluated according to size (a minimum of 6,000 dwellings), proximity to Cambridge, access to public transport, whether it served the interests of the whole of Cambridgeshire and deliverability. We needed to move away from a few dozen homes in a village and get the density and economic scale. We weighted criteria. Deliverability was the key criteria. Northstowe scored highest on deliverability, and you see how long it has taken to deliver. (Shona Johnstone)

As the discussion moved forward, planners faced the question of what to do with the green belt. There was lots of emotion because it had not been changed for a long time. Planners were changing the boundary of the city, and needed to understand the transport and planning implications for achieving a good quality of life. Integrating public transport and cycling with park and ride, for example, was part of a whole package. In fact changes to the green belt are to the inner boundary and the green belt is largely intact. (Brian Smith)

South Cambs saw that the Cambridge Futures formula of densifying and expanding the city would help protect village character rather than threaten it.

Because of the Holford-Wright Plan that restricted the growth of the city many of the surrounding villages had taken a lot of housing growth, particularly Sawston and Histon/Impington and people were worried
But urban extension was only part of the picture, there was also densification and a new settlement. Densification was always an obvious choice. I do not remember it being controversial – more people living in an area can have more facilities. The planning committee was already signed up to densification and there was little debate. Broadly speaking cities get better the more intensely they are occupied. That is why I never actually really signed up to the idea of the new settlement. (Nichola Harrison)

What we were doing became accepted, it became self-evident that the strategy was working and how it played into broader policy. Things came together and it was of its time. (Brian Smith) (See Appendix 4: Structure Plan proposals)

Evidence on transport issues

Cambridge Futures conducted a second study on transport in Cambridge entitled What transport for Cambridge?. Again CAR did the public consultation. The popular view was that the main support was for proposals that reduce the need to use a car. The majority think that ‘If there was high quality public transport people would use it’. They do not think ‘Major road building will reduce traffic congestion’ but there is some support for the orbital highway. Opinion is polarised on congestion charging but the majority think it would be effective in reducing congestion.

The Cambridge to Huntingdon Multi Modal Studies (CHUMMS) 2001-2005 recommended upgrading the A14, upgrading the Felixstowe-Nuneaton rail link and a new guided bus-way along the redundant St Ives rail line. Two of these recommendations have been delivered but the A14 improvements have been delayed by lack of funding. One of the issues is that while the County Council have been pushing for the scheme, the City have opposed it. (Peter Landshoff)

The study also examined congestion charging, which is still a contentious and unresolved issue in Cambridge. The County ruled out congestion charging because they did not believe it would reduce traffic. (Shona Johnstone) Nevertheless, she also said that road pricing would encourage people to make different choices, and thus increase the capacity of the network. Public consultation by the County in 2007 showed that 45% of people consulted would support it if the funds were spent on improving transport. With the right infrastructure, the majority said they could live with it.

2.4 Public participation

Senior planners in Cambridge believe that consultation is important and Cambridge has a good reputation for taking it seriously, working with local neighbourhood groups. Improvement Area Plans were significant to transforming attitudes to city centre living and working, halted the demolition and kick-started the process of regeneration of inner city neighbourhoods.

Cambridge Futures

CAR was responsible for devising and administering a survey to test public reaction to the Cambridge Futures Report. The survey formed part of an exhibition at various venues in the region. Using panels, a video and a brochure sheet, the exhibition described seven options for development.

People were able to comment on the proposals by filling in a tear-off slip on the brochure or by using a computer-based interactive questionnaire. A total of 650 people answered the survey. 52% lived in the city and 48% in the region; 77% were adults aged 20-65; 69% were employed; only 22% had lived in the area less than 3 years.

Although people self-selected themselves to answer the survey, the indications are that they reflect the average resident rather than any sectional interest or pressure group. We conclude that this is a sufficiently good sample to have confidence that it accurately reflects general public opinion of the region in and around the city.

Cambridge Futures was a unique partnership that resulted in a clear measure of public opinion. This was
critical. Councillors up until then had believed that most people were against development in the green belt and believed that there would be huge public opposition. This was stoked by the press. Cambridge Futures revealed, if nothing else, that the general public were much more reasonable than had been supposed. Even the Cambridge Preservation Society took an active positive role. The key was that Cambridge Futures encompassed all vested interests, including the public. It meant that when it came to the Structure Plan, even proposals about the green belt did not bring out the lynch mob. It changed people’s minds and had a big influence. (John Durrant)

People realised the impact of the status quo and that to resist expansion was cutting their own throats. There was little opposition to Cambridge Futures. The implications were clear; councillors were able to see that the public accepted the main propositions. (Marcial Echenique)

The public opinion survey gave credibility. People want homes, jobs and a buoyant economy. People do not want to live in an area that is failing. Once the consequences of restraining growth were made clear people saw the point. We never cracked the infrastructure deficit, but things would be a lot worse with a failing economy. Cambridge Futures was successful. You only have to look at how closely the Cambridge Structure Plan followed Cambridge Futures recommendations. And County Council officers like Brian Smith will tell you how extremely valuable it was in providing them with cover to explore ideas for which they lacked a political mandate, since it enabled officers to explore ideas and push an agenda in advance of political support. (Jonathan Barker)

I admired the role of Cambridge Futures and how a forum of interests was mobilised. We had our own formal consultation later as part of developing the Structure Plan but Cambridge Futures was very influential in S Cambs and Conservative parts of the County. But it was part of a process and we needed to make it clear that it was an independent initiative without any powers. We had some members, especially from outlying areas, who did not understand what was happening in Cambridge and Cambridge Futures was good at getting the message back to rural parts of the County. (Brian Smith)

There was no objection to the ideas developed by Cambridge Futures and no objection to the Structure Plan. This is unusual with such controversial proposals. That was in large part due to the academic respectability of the study and to the public participation. The 3d images we developed were helpful in allowing the public to visualise the options. Visual communication is important. (Marcial Echenique)

There has been no massive opposition campaign to Northstowe. Councillors, who were elected to stop Northstowe, are now amongst its strongest advocates, because they understand it was the right thing. I represented Longstanton and there was a general acceptance because people could see the benefits in terms of better services and access to new sporting facilities. I believe that Cambridge Futures and the work of the follow up consultation by local authorities were very clear about criteria so people could understand the rationale. (Shona Johnstone)

It took effort and rational argument to persuade people. Once we began consultation on the Structure Plan, Peter Studdert spoke at public meetings in the various neighbourhoods directly affected by the expansion. (Nichola Harrison)

One way of overcoming what is entirely understandable nimbyism is to find a way of giving a voice to future residents who will benefit from change. Cambridge Futures found a way of involving the people of a wider area in strategic decisions that voiced the needs of future generations and counter-balance the opposition of the relatively small number of people who see their interests threatened by development. This kind of independent initiative can act as a catalyst, creating a ground swell of public opinion that can overcome obstacles and bring about change.

2.5 Cooperation and coordination

Prior to 1996 the various local authorities – Cambridge City, South Cambs, East Cambs and Huntingdon District Council, Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council – did not cooperate or coordinate their planning and were broadly in agreement with the then restrictive planning policies which dispersed growth beyond the Green Belt.
In 1989, when I became Director of Corporate Planning in the County, the City, South Cambs and the County did not work well together. In 1996 I moved to be Director of Environment and Transport, and we began work on the new structure plan and the big debate began about the Greater Cambridge area that Cambridge Futures helped steer. (Brian Smith)

Cambridge Futures was a genuine partnership between the local authorities, academics and business. As Cambridge Futures demonstrated, the University has many of the resources needed to resolve planning problems. Local authority officers do not have thinking time to devote to problems. There should not be a confrontation between the local authority and the university; there should be a sensible discussion well before things get finalised. (Peter Carolin)

In the second half of the nineties we made enormous progress in the development of Park & Ride and the City Core Scheme of bollards and vehicle restriction and Peter Studdert realised that the City working with the County could achieve more. (Brian Smith)

We realised all along that it had to do with the County Council. The County were by no means signed up to the idea of development in the green belt. It needed a big persuasion job. Shona Johnstone was very good at this. We had a lot of meetings with Brian Smith and Mark Vigor, the senior planning officer at the County. (Nichola Harrison)

We had to allocate land for housing. We accepted that this meant that there had to be building on the green belt. Once the A14 was built on the north side of the city, the land within it was under pressure for development. However, there was always opposition. People fear, not unreasonably, that once one bit goes, others will follow. (Shirley Saunders)

Cambridge was probably a model structure plan, especially in the way it went forward with full support of all the Councils including Huntingdonshire and Peterborough. All the hard work had been done and could be taken forward into the local plans and local development framework. So Cambridge experienced few of the problems that other parts of the country had. (Brian Smith)

The Strategic Planning Group, comprising Cambridge City, Cambridge County Council and South Cambs was very much about joint working. We got rid of huge expertise when the RDAs were abolished. The loss of strategic function is a problem. We need to plan coherently. To cope with the vacuum at a strategic regional scale, local authorities are having to work with non-representative bodies, but these are no substitute. (Shona Johnstone)

Both officers and councillors in the City and County had difficulties getting some of the members for South Cambs on board with the proposals. Their members represent a hundred villages around the County and were against any growth in the late 90s. This opposition, especially to the University’s plans in West Cambridge, led to Cambridge Futures. (Brian Smith)

Nevertheless Jonathan Barker sounds a note of caution in this blanket condemnation of South Cambs. Although they were not formally represented at Cambridge Futures meetings, the then Leader of the Council, Shirley Saunders, came to meetings, understood the issues and was supportive. Although they might have been less than enthusiastic in public, the fact that there was no violent opposition to the proposals is testament to the idea that South Cambs councillors and officers accepted that the local authorities had to work together. They were much less obstructive than they might have been, after all a large proportion of the new homes are in their patch. (Jonathan Barker)

We always got on well with the County Council. We did not get on so well with the City Council. They did not want cars from South Cambs clogging up the city. It helped to have a Council that was non-political and no-one fighting for votes. We used to think about what was happening and what needed doing. The City could never understand that. We became more politicised after the LibDems won Cambridge. We represent many villages that all have very similar little problems. The City is quite different with widely differing people and problems. (Shirley Saunders)
2.6 Implementation

Cambridgeshire Horizons

The Government’s Sustainable Communities Plan in 2004 enabled the Local Authorities to set up and fund Cambridgeshire Horizons as the Local Delivery Company to support the implementation of the growth strategy. Cambridgeshire Horizons arrived after the strategic decisions were made and was always at pains to point out that it was not there to make policy, only to implement it. Nevertheless, it commissioned a series of important support studies, including strategies for: arts and culture, major sports facilities, balanced and mixed communities and a green infrastructure, together with a series of feasibility studies including a community stadium and relocating the airport.

Cambridgeshire Horizons was successful in securing additional Government funding to support growth, and also developed a Quality of Life programme that built a consensus between the public, private and voluntary sectors on the need to secure high standards of design and management in the new communities that were being planned. This culminated in the adoption of a Quality Charter for Growth which continues to guide the new communities programmes.

Cambridgeshire Quality Panel

This aspiration to achieve high quality in new development is also apparent in the Cambridgeshire Quality Panel which was set up by Cambridgeshire Horizons in 2010 with twelve panel members to review major growth sites. The County has now taken over the funding. The panel uses the four ‘C’s: community, connectivity, climate and character, proposed in the Cambridgeshire Quality Charter (2008) that was devised by Urbed for the City Council as a framework for their review and feedback. Only by ensuring that new development is of high quality can growth be reconciled with conservation and public support maintained.

Cambridge 2030 Vision

Following in the footsteps of Cambridge Futures, Cambridge 2030 Vision was established in 2010 by a local charity, Cambridge Past Present and Future, to provide a framework for debate using a workshop format with invited speakers and to publish their findings as concise summaries rather than reports. It has not gained the momentum and influence that Cambridge Futures achieved, perhaps because it has not got the same level of local authority and business involvement. The group is about to launch Cambridge Ahead which will employ a full-time director for three years with private sector funding to promote the area. Peter Carolin commented, we have ambitious plans to attract big firms into Cambridge, and to increase the numbers of trained technicians. If nothing else comes out of Cambridge 2030 Vision, this will be an achievement.

Joint Strategic Planning Unit (JSPU)

With the abolition of the Regional Development Authorities (RDAs) and the loss of Cambridgeshire Horizons the various authorities got together to decide what to do. They did not want to go backwards and wanted to retain a strategic planning vision. There was a debate in mid-2010 about the appropriate vehicle. Two issues drove the decision: geography and democratic accountability. The Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) was considered too piecemeal and extensive and there was also a strong recognition, that as a public private partnership it could not make planning decisions that affected jobs. The County decided not to maintain its strategic planning function in the absence of a strategic plan and came up with the idea of the Joint Strategic Planning Unit (JSPU) as a separate small unit to act as an honest broker.

Its Director, John Williamson, said, although the region has lost its strategic planning function there is a continuing need to work collaboratively. A separate resource from any individual authority is considered valuable in this regard. So, for example, we are helping to co-ordinate the evidence on additional homes needed across the housing market area to inform local plan reviews. The unit’s main deliverable is a non-statutory spatial framework that will demonstrate the duty to co-operate. A Joint Member Group, with
representatives from all the authorities oversees this work and, to some extent, provides a neutral political space to discuss the issues.

The unit’s main deliverable is a spatial framework and diagram covering issues of transport, water, energy, housing and natural environment that reflects strategic priorities in NPPF.

*In an ideal world all local plans would come on stream at the same time. Now we have a jigsaw of plans and the question is how the parts add up.* John Williamson

**National Planning Policy framework (NPPF)**

The NPPF is about localism and the importance of taking communities with you. You need to understand why you are doing what you are doing and have a clear rationale for action. (Shona Johnstone)
3 Applying the lessons elsewhere

Can these insights from Cambridge be applied elsewhere? Or are the timing and the circumstances so specific that Cambridge is a unique case?

We are fortunate in having an underlying economic strength in the Cambridge region. People want to move into the area and firms want to locate here. Cambridge is a vibrant area with a high quality of life and there is clearly a bonus planning in a university town with a strong social fabric. There is a lot going for Cambridge and it is easier here. (Brian Smith)

Nevertheless, everywhere is special to the people that live there and other places have people with ideas and energy and top universities that can get involved and do something similar to Cambridge Futures. It may be different in other parts of the country and success does depend on circumstances, but ambition can still achieve the seeming impossible.

Marcial Echenique argues the Cambridge Futures approach is replicable. Because such a wide range of interest groups are affected by planning change, interests are sometimes in conflict. The answer is to be as technical as possible. Everything should be done in a less confrontational way so that people can follow the reasoning. Modelling is ideal. You have to involve local people; it does not work if an outside consultant comes in and applies the approach. (Marcial Echenique)

In doing a similar exercise in Aylesbury, Maidenhead and Medway in 2003 for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Stephen Platt, the author of this case study, was faced with a problem in being able to model options. He used a Delphi approach with 74 experts to devise the options and assess their likely consequences in terms of five issues: housing supply, jobs, traffic, loss of open, space and service provision.\(^{32}\) The evidence produced was accepted with a similar lack of conflict as that experienced by Cambridge Futures and has been acted on by these local authorities.

There is a debate about how far the recent model of a Joint Strategic Planning Unit might be replicable in other counties. The geography of Cambridgeshire lends itself to a wider spatial approach but it is critical that any area has political leadership and a will to co-operate. Given these I believe it can be replicated elsewhere. (John Williamson)

Cambridge is blessed with clever people, a buoyant economy and proximity to London. Although people may not agree about details, it has a sense of itself and of its specialness. The biggest issue is the economy. It must be so difficult for a northern town with a boarded up town centre and grinding poverty. It is impossible to buck deep economic trends. The important thing is to do the things you can. If we only secured something for Cambridge that is still of national importance. (Nichola Harrison)

Whether the Cambridge experience is replicable depends if people are prepared to work together, to debate and evaluate, to investigate and analyse. Cambridge Futures may have been a bit subjective but it was a lot more objective and evidence based than what had gone before. We were lucky with the timing. (John Durrant)

You need an entrepreneurial champion to bring people to work together in a forum outside the formal structure. Then you need to involve local government and key opinion formers in a forum. If there is enthusiasm, you can raise money from business to develop your ideas. You need links with academia to validate what you are doing and to produce the evidence base. It could be done elsewhere. The planning issues we face are not that unique. (Jonathan Barker)
4 Conclusion

As a retired city planner said, we want a city where people want to live, play, work, invest and visit. That is what strategic sustainable development is all about. We need to ensure that historic towns like Cambridge are still great places in a hundred years time. We are building places of the future. (Brian Human)

A key ingredient in the success in Cambridgeshire was the high level of cooperation between the various local authorities, especially between Cambridge City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council. One of the key questions is whether this degree of cooperation can be maintained and a duty to cooperate be demonstrated between the various district councils planning the future of the Cambridge Region.

Key lessons

1. The importance of having an agreed strategic vision amongst the key players, both within the various local authorities, but also within the business community, academia and the wider community.

2. The importance of having a coherent structure of strategic planning across an economic sub-region to make decisions about the location of growth, the enhancement of the landscape and the provision of physical, social and cultural infrastructure.

3. The value of a cross-sector think tank such as Cambridge Futures which works alongside the statutory authorities and can ‘think the unthinkable’ at an early stage of a plan review process, as well as engage local communities in a more open and accessible way than the more formal statutory processes.

4. The importance of local leadership, both from political leaders and from Planning Directors, together with maintaining continuity of leadership over time.

5. The importance of a comprehensive evidence base for testing and evaluating different strategic options for growth.

6. The value of a dedicated Delivery Team such as Cambridgeshire Horizons that can support local authorities in implementing their growth strategy and help them to define and secure high quality standards in the new communities being planned.

State of play

To date only part of the vision for Cambridge has achieved. Densification of the City and some of the urban extensions are happening, but the two of the biggest pieces in the jigsaw – huge missing segment of the Northern Fringe East and the new settlement of Northstowe – will not be delivered by 2016.

On transport, we have better rail links to London and Felixstowe, the guided busway, and new stations, but the A14 upgrading and a traffic demand management system are still pending.

There is clearly a great deal still to be done.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to thank the following people for their generous help. Their titles and affiliations were those during the time period covered by the case study.

**Planners**
Peter Studdert, Director of Environment and Planning, City Council / Director of Joint Planning, Cambridgeshire CC
Brian Smith, Director of Environment and Transport, Cambridgeshire CC
Brian Human, Head of Policy and Projects, Cambridge City Council
John Williamson, Director for Deputy Chief Executive Cambridgeshire Horizons, Director Joint Strategic Planning Unit

**Councillors**
Nichola Harrison, Councillor, Chair of the Environment Committee and Cabinet member Cambridge City Council
Shona Johnstone, Councillor, Lead Member Environment and Transport Cambridgeshire CC
John Durrant, Ex Mayor and Deputy Chair Cambridge Futures, Cambridge City Council
Shirley Saunders, Councillor, Chair of Planning Committee and Leader, South Cambridgeshire District Council

**Independents**
Peter Carolin, Professor of Architecture, University of Cambridge, Chair Cambridge Futures
Marcial Echenique, Professor of Land Use and Transport Studies, University of Cambridge, Project Director Cambridge Futures
Jonathan Barker, Company Secretary, Marshall Aerospace
Peter Landshoff, Chair Cambridge Past Present & Future
Peter Dawe, Entrepreneur and founder of Unipalm, Pipex, author of *In our back yard - Ideas on how to improve small town planning*
Appendix 1 Cambridge Planning History

Pre-war
1936-39 The Cambridge and District Town Planning Scheme

Period of restricting growth in the city and directing growth to surrounding settlements
1950 Cambridge Planning Proposals, Cambridgeshire CC, William Holford & Myles Wright
1952 Cambridgeshire County Development Plan, Cambridgeshire County Council. Approved 1954
1955 Town Map 2, Cambridgeshire CC, Area embracing 18 villages in vicinity of Cambridge. Approved 1957
1956 A Guide to the Cambridge Plan, Cambridgeshire County Council, Derek Senior
1957 Green Belt defined, given status of planning policy, but not in Local Plan until 1962
1961 Town Map First Review, Cambridgeshire County Council, Submitted to Minister
1962 Inquiry into the Cambridge Town Map. Minster’s decision 1964
1963 Inquiry into proposal for new village at Bar Hill. Approved 1964
1963 Dreaming Spires and Teeming Towers, Thomas Sharp, Town Planning Review, January
1964 South East Study, Central Government, Reference to growth pressures in Cambridge
1965 Cambridgeshire Development Plan Review, Cambridgeshire CC, Submitted to Minister
1965 Cambridge Town Map, Cambridgeshire County Council, Adopted
1966 Town Map No 3 for Sawston, Cambridgeshire County Council, Approved

Period of high tech expansion of the University
1966 The Future Shape of Cambridge, Cambridge City Council, Gordon Logie
1968 East Anglia – A Study, East Anglia Economic Planning Council, based on city region concept
1969 Mott Report, Cambridge University, Proposal for limited research related expansion
1969 County Development Plan, Cambridgeshire County Council, Excludes Cambridge
1970 Cambridge Science Park
1971 Cambridge Study Area Review, Cambridgeshire County Council, Adopted by County Council
1974 A Study of the Cambridge Sub Region: Professor John Parry Lewis DoE
1974 Swinnerton-Dyer Report, University of Cambridge, Long-term development of the University
1979 Cambridgeshire Structure Plan, Cambridgeshire County Council

Period of neighbourhood planning and continuation of green belt policy
1984 Newnham and West Cambridge District Plan, Cambridge City Council
1985 The Cambridge Phenomenon, Segal Quince Wicksteed
1986 Romsey Local Plan, Cambridge City Council
1988 St Matthews Local Plan, Cambridge City Council
1989 Cambridgeshire Structure Plan, Cambridgeshire County Council
1991 Regional Planning Guidance for East Anglia
1992 Cambridge Green Belt Local Plan, City, County, SCDC
1996 Cambridge Local Plan, Cambridge City Council
1997 Access to Cambridge, transport study commissioned by City Council
1998 Capacity Study, County Council review of where to put new housing and workplaces
1998 Cambridge Green Belt Towards 2016, Cambridge City Council
**Period of housing growth agenda**

1997 Cambridge Futures founded
1999 Cambridge Futures 1, Land use study and consultation
2000 Regional Planning Guidance for East Anglia to 2016 (RPG6), Government Office for the Eastern Region
2000 Guidance on the Methodology for Multi-Modal Studies, DETR
2001-5 Cambridge to Huntingdon Multi Modal Studies (CHUMMS)
2003 Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Structure Plan, Cambridgeshire CC & Peterborough City
2004 Cambridgeshire Horizons established
2004 Cambridge Futures 2, Transport study and consultation
2006 Cambridge Local Plan, Cambridge City Council
2007 Lessons from Cambourne, a assessment of the new settlement, CAR
2008 Cambridge East Area Action Plan, Cambridge City Council & South Cambs DC
2008 Cambridge Architecture 57 Expanding City, Life on the edge: the growth of Cambridge
2008 East of England Plan. Revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy
2009 North West Cambridge Area Action Plan, Cambridge City Council & South Cambs DC
2009 Addenbrooke’s Hospital Cambridge Master Plan, Allies & Morrison
2011 Cambridgeshire Quality Panel set up to review major development proposals
2012 NPPF, National Planning Policy Framework promotes localism and transfers planning powers
2013 Regional Spatial Strategy for East of England scrapped
Appendix 2  RPG6


(Based on the Regional Strategy for East Anglia (1995-2016) prepared by the Standing Conference of East Anglian Local Authorities (SCEALA) submitted to the Secretary of State in 1997.)

Its purpose is to set the regional framework for development plans in the period to 2016. It set a target for an average increase in housing in Cambridgeshire of 4,000 dwellings per annum. It also advised concentrating retail development and leisure facilities in town centres.

In the Cambridge sub-region it said local authorities should: allow the sub-region to grow; protect the historic character and setting of Cambridge; provide more sustainable balance between jobs and housing, promote more concentrated pattern of development, allow scope for rather than constrain continuing development beyond 2016. It also accepted that a review of the green belt was justified.

To achieve growth whilst protecting heritage it suggested a sequential approach to the identification of sites starting with Cambridge’s built up area and followed by urban extensions subject to a Green Belt review, a new settlement and development in market towns, larger villages and existing settlements. No single option would be sufficient to accommodate all development in a sustainable way and all of the elements in the sequence will have a role in meeting development needs. This sequential approach should be applied to housing and related development as well as to employment generating development.

It also provided guidance for the development of a regional transport strategy that addressed transport and identified priorities for transport investment across all modes to support the development strategy. It identified that a number of multi-modal studies were to be taken forward in the region and identified an upgrade to the Felixstowe to Peterborough to provide extra freight capacity as a rail investment priority and put the Cambridge-Huntingdon corridor around the A14 in the first tranche of multi-modal studies.
## Appendix 3  Cambridge Futures Options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Likely Consequences</th>
<th>Key Issue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Minimum Growth</td>
<td>Substantial Increase In cost of living and production in the City means Cambridge would cease to develop as a world-class centre of high tech development Considerable increase In congestion on the access roads would continue to erode the quality of life in the city.</td>
<td>Rising property prices would force all but the wealthiest new resident to look for accommodation outside the city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Densification</td>
<td>The cost of living would be stabilised, promoting regional prosperity. The social balance of the City would be improved, but its character would change as there would be less green space around homes. Car use would need to be further restricted while the provision for cycling and public transport would need dramatic improvement.</td>
<td>The City environment would deteriorate if there were less green space and more cars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Necklace</td>
<td>Substantial increase In cost of living and production in the City and South Cambs. would put at risk regional prosperity. Social segregation would increase. Congestion on access roads would increase substantially and the character of the countryside between villages would deteriorate.</td>
<td>Traffic and congestion would reach totally unacceptable levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Green Swap</td>
<td>This option would produce the lowest increase in the cost of living and production, encouraging regional prosperity and a balanced social mix. But traffic congestion in the City would increase.</td>
<td>The quality of the city environment would be maintained at the expense or the open space In the Green Belt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Transport Links</td>
<td>A 100% increase in rail use would reduce car use compared with most other options. Because there would be less traffic congestion and pollution, the quality of life in the city and surrounding area would be better protected than under the other options, but the cost of living and production would increase somewhat.</td>
<td>People who locate in these corridors may continue to use their cars rather than public transport.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Virtual Highway</td>
<td>Restricting development to the corridor would increase the cost of living and production, pulling at risk regional prosperity. There may be a reduction in car use but the technology is too new to know if there would be any impact on traffic congestion.</td>
<td>This possibility of tele-working and teleshopping might have an insignificant impact on traffic and congestion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reproduced from the public opinion survey website created by Cambridge Architectural Research June 1999
Appendix 4 Cambridge Futures public opinion survey

As part of the Cambridge Futures exercise, the views of the public were sought and analysed. They were asked what they thought of the seven Cambridge Futures planning options, and whether they agreed or disagreed with eight statements about the planning of the region. Some strong messages emerged – they are described below and overleaf.

Findings

Little support for the status quo
The planning options which won least support were those closest to present planning policies, that is, ‘Minimum growth’ for the city of Cambridge, and ‘Necklace’ development around Cambridge. The social consequences of minimising growth in Cambridge were unpopular, with strong support for the statement “It would be a bad thing if only wealthy people could afford to live in Cambridge”.

Shared values
There is a high degree of consensus about the planning of the region. The survey results were broken down by age of the participants, their place of residence, how long they had lived in the region and how long they planned to stay, and there was no evidence of opposing camps. The variations that did exist were differences of emphasis within a shared pattern of opinion.

Backing for public transport
The dominant message is that public transport must take a leading role in the future of the region. The planning option ‘Transport links’ won far more support than any of the other options, and the statement “More money should be invested in railways and other public transport than in roads” was the most popular of the statements by a clear margin.

Top priority for minimising congestion
The biggest problem in the region is seen to be traffic congestion. The planning options which reduce congestion were preferred over those that have less impact on congestion. There was moderate support for two statements describing alternative ways to tackle congestion, “The A14 should be widened to 3 lanes in each direction”, and “Commuters should pay to drive their cars into Cambridge”.

Quality of life
People prefer growth away from where they live, indicating that quality of life is highly valued. Thus city residents give more support to some development of the green belt, whereas people outside the city are keener on densification in Cambridge. The new town option was significantly less popular in the north-west of the region, where the new town would be located.

Support for competitiveness and economic growth
People are keen that prosperity and economic growth should be encouraged. It was not as high a priority as tackling congestion, but planning options which harm competitiveness were not supported. There was strong backing for the statement that “The region’s high tech businesses must be allowed to grow”.

The popular view
People want a balance of development in Cambridge and in the region. The survey suggested that a planning strategy which aimed for some growth in Cambridge through densification and expansion, together with growth outside Cambridge based on public transport links, would be most likely to meet the aspirations of the people who live and work in the region.

The Cambridge Futures initiative, and the work of CAR in public consultation, was important in providing neutral territory for the local authorities to come together to discuss the challenge of how to grow Cambridge in an environmentally acceptable way. It had a major impact on development in the Cambridge area. It has also influenced thinking about how to engage stakeholders in planning the future. It overcame local politicians’ perceptions that the public were opposed to growth and demonstrated that it was possible to engage a wide range of stakeholders in
thinking strategically about the future.
Survey Report
Revised October 1999
Cambridge Architectural Research Ltd
Cambridge Media Lab Ltd

DINGS

Cambridge Futures exercise, the views of the
weapon and analysed. They were asked what
the seven Cambridge Futures planning options
were agreed or disagreed with eight statements
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for the status quo
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support to some development of the green belt, whereas people
outside the city are keen on densification in Cambridge.
The new town option was significantly less popular in the north-west of
the region, where the new town would be located.

Support for competitiveness and economic growth
People are keen that prosperity and economic growth should be
encouraged. It was not as high a priority as tackling congestion, but
planning options which harm competitiveness were not
supported. There was strong backing for the statement that “The
region's high tech businesses must be allowed to grow”.

The popular view
People want a balance of development in Cambridge and in the
region. The survey suggested that a planning strategy which
aimed for some growth in Cambridge through densification and
expansion, together with growth outside Cambridge based on
public transport links, would be the most likely to meet the
aspirations of the people who live and work in the region.

Cambridge Futures
Cambridge Futures is a group of local business leaders,
politicians, government officials, professionals and
academics who have been looking at options for growth in
and around Cambridge. The intention has been to
demonstrate the possibilities open to society and in so
doing to generate informed debate. Established in 1996, it
came to an end in its first phase of activity and is
now reporting on the views of people living in the region.

Cambridge Architectural Research
CAR is an independent consultancy which provides
general advice for the construction industry and design
professions and undertakes a broad range of research for
policy-makers and researchers. CAR has
established an international reputation for consultancy in
Energy and Environment, Building Design and Use, New
Media Applications and Risk Management.

Cambridge Architectural Research
CAR is a
specialist
consultancy,
working
closely
with
cambridges
and

Cambridge
CAMBRIDGE
THE VILLAGE

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About half of the respondents live in the city and
half in the county. Cambridge City and South
Cambridge are well represented but the rest of
the region less so. But there is a sufficient
graphic spread to be confident in the
representativeness of the sample as reflecting public
opinion in the region.

Residents of parts of the city are over-represented by the
sample, whilst the south side of the city is under-
represented. This may not reflect the population of
the Grafton Centre, where most of the respondents
completed the survey.

The majority of respondents are working adults. Adults aged
65 and over have jobs.

About half the residents live in the
city and half in South Cambridge.

About half the residents live in the
city and half in South Cambridge.

About half the residents live in the
city and half in South Cambridge.

About half the residents live in the
city and half in South Cambridge.

About half the residents live in the
city and half in South Cambridge.
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The Options

Option 1: Minimum Growth
- Liked by only 16% of people.
- Significantly more people suffering from traffic congestion, the city would be able to preserve the city at the expense of congestion on access roads and regional infrastructure.
- Inference: Most people agree that this would be a bad thing if only wealthy people could afford to live in Cambridge.

Option 2: Densification
- Liked by only 28% of people. Significantly more people suffering from traffic congestion, the city would be able to preserve the city at the expense of congestion on access roads and regional infrastructure.
- Inference: Most people agree that this would be a bad thing if only wealthy people could afford to live in Cambridge.

Option 3: New Town
- Liked by only 38% of people. Significantly more people suffering from traffic congestion, the city would be able to preserve the city at the expense of congestion on access roads and regional infrastructure.
- Inference: Most people agree that this would be a bad thing if only wealthy people could afford to live in Cambridge.

Option 4: Green Swap
- Marginally more people favour this option, since it might reduce traffic congestion it gets moderate support.
- Inference: People may not fully understand this option, since it might reduce traffic congestion it gets moderate support.

Option 5: Virtual Highway
- Liked by marginally more people than those of the middle.
- Inference: Two issues dominate people's choices: traffic congestion and quality of life.

Most Liked

Public Transport
- 88% of people agree that: "More money should be invested in public transport than in roads."
- Inference: Traffic congestion is people's biggest concern. Most people agree in favour of more investment in public transport.

Social Balance
- 80% of people agree that: "It would be a bad thing if only wealthy people could afford to live in Cambridge."
- Inference: The large majority of people are concerned about rising house prices and the implications for social equity and the balance of the community.

High Tech Growth
- 88% of people agree that: "The region's high tech businesses must be allowed to grow."
- Inference: The region's high tech businesses must be allowed to grow.

Road Tolls into City
- 58% of people agree that: "The A14 should be widened to 3 lanes in each direction."
- Inference: Traffic congestion is the key issue and some people think that road building will reduce the problem.

Widen A14
- 47% of people agree that: "Some of the Green Belt should be released for development."
- Inference: A quarter of the people are in favour of Option 4: Green Swap.

Cambridge Full
- 44% of people agree that: "Cambridge is full."
- Inference: Over half the people are either undecided or think that Cambridge could take more people by densification or expansion.

Green Belt Released
- 48% of people agree that: "Cambridge and its surroundings should be kept just as they are."
- Inference: Most people accept that it is not possible to keep things as they are.

Cambridge Kept Same
- 48% of people agree that: "Cambridge and its surroundings should be kept just as they are."
- Inference: Most people accept that it is not possible to keep things as they are.
Appendix 5 Structure Plan proposals

Key elements of Structure Plan
1. Expansion of dwellings in the City and on its periphery, in a new settlement and market towns
2. Expansion of business floorspace
3. A14 highway expansion from the A1 to Fen Ditton interchange
4. North-facing slip roads at M11 Junction 13
5. Link road from M11 to Addenbrooke’s Hospital
6. Introduction of a guided bus from Huntingdon through Cambridge to Trumpington park and ride
7. A new railway station at Chesterton
8. Extension of bus services to new areas
9. Continued improvements to pedestrian and cycleways

Sustainability Implications
The Structure Plan supports the growth of the knowledge-based economy of the Sub-region by providing more housing where the numbers of jobs are growing, improving the social balance, and protecting the high quality environment of the city. However, the growth in jobs and dwellings is presenting major challenges, because housing costs continue to rise as demand outstrips supply, resulting in about half the expected increase if no further development was allowed within or around the built-up area of the city. There has also been a failure to deliver the necessary transport infrastructure. This puts at risk the economic prosperity of the Sub-region and its social development.
Public consultation on ‘issues and options’

This map shows the boundaries of Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Council. It shows that the green belt surrounding Cambridge is largely intact. It also indicates that there are still many decisions to be made.
Appendix 7 References

(Endnotes)


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Adapted from a personal communication by Brian Human (2011)