

Cambridge Futures 1990-2030

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Cambridge Architectural Research

Cambridge seems to have a lot going for it – a world-class university and a booming economy – but less than twenty years ago, in the mid-nineties development was constrained by a plan dating back to just after WWII that restricted growth.

This chapter deals with the politics of planning and the power of modelling and information to change minds sets and deliver change. It describes the period from 1997-2004 when the policy of restricting the growth of the city was ditched and the growth agenda embraced. It then brings the story up to date and looks to the future by describing how Cambridge is dealing with the challenges of delivering growth.

It is the story of how people in the University, local authorities and business came together to debate the issues in a forum called Cambridge Futures, how a case for change was made for growth, and how the planners and elected members implemented the changes.

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. A new book entitled *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. Robert Koepp nominated Cambridge as Europe's 'Silicon Fen', comparing it to Silicon Valley, California. He describes the evolution of the symbiotic relationship between University science and engineering and high tech innovation and analyses the logistics of location.

Segal Quince Wicksteed (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.



Figure 1: 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. (Regional Planning Guidance for East Anglia, 2000)

Prior to 1997, however, planning policy followed the Holford and Wright Planning Proposals (1950) that tried to limit the population of Cambridge to 100,000 people by defining a green belt and restricting densification within the City. (Holford and Wright, 1950) This chapter analyses how the people of Cambridge and the surrounding area overcame this barrier to change and how providing an evidence base helped build the consensus for the 'big idea' of allowing Cambridge to grow. (Platt, 2013)

The issue is well understood. Our planning system, which is designed to protect our natural environment, cultural heritage and quality of life, is unsuited to delivering change quickly. The Cambridge sub-region is a prime example of this dilemma of balancing growth and restraint. The University is a power-house of ideas that lead to innovation and enterprise but there are also strong arguments for conservation. In the late nineties these voices were fairly evenly balanced.

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

Cambridge planning history

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

In the mid-nineties the City Council was committed to producing neighbourhood plans. They also produced draft proposals in the 1997 Local Plan for an urban extension on the southern fringe at Clay Farm. But proposed changes to the green belt did not get through the planning approvals 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.

Prompted by South Cambridgeshire's refusal of a high-profile 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 that was at the heart of their global ambitions. (Ablett, S., Broers, A. et al., 1998)

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) that 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.

In the mid-nineties the University was having difficulty getting approval for its proposals for its West Cambridge site at the density it wanted. There was also increasing concern about house prices outstripping salaries and the issue of retaining young researchers and a realisation that without change, on the world stage, Cambridge and the UK would lose out to Asia.

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

Cambridge Futures 1 – Land use

Professor Marcial Echenique was quickly appointed operations director and he and his team imagined that a variety of land use and transport policies might deliver 7 different options. These are summarised in Figure 2.






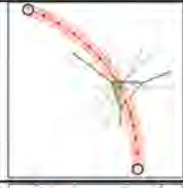

	Option	Likely Consequences	Key Issue
	<p>1 Minimum Growth</p> <p>Preserves the City of Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire with the minimum of change. New development will be directed to Huntingdonshire and East Cambs.</p>	<p>Substantial Increase In cost of living and production in the City means Cambridge 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.</p>	<p>Rising property prices would force all but the wealthiest new resident to look for accommodation outside the city.</p>
	<p>2 Densification</p> <p>Puts as much development as possible in the only where demand as highest. Higher buildings will replace low density</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>The City environment would deteriorate if there were less green space and more cars.</p>
	<p>3 Necklace</p> <p>A continuation of the policy of the last 50 years of restricting growth in the city and green belt while infilling existing villages and creating new ones.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Traffic and congestion would reach totally unacceptable levels.</p>
	<p>4 Green Swap</p> <p>Allows development in selected areas of the green belt which are of less scenic value in exchange for public amenities further out of town.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>The quality of the city environment would be maintained at the expense of the open space in the Green Belt</p>
	<p>5 Transport Links</p> <p>Encourages all new development to be in easy reach of a public transport corridor. This would mean investment in enhanced public transport and new stations.</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>People who locate in these corridors may continue to use their cars rather than public transport.</p>
	<p>6 Virtual Highway</p> <p>A high capacity electronic communications system that would allow people to work, shop and study from home.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>This possibility of tele-working and tele-shopping might have an insignificant impact on traffic and congestion.</p>
	<p>7 New Town</p> <p>Concentrates most new development in a single new town which would be large enough to offer an alternative to the city.</p>	<p>The cost of living and production would increase, except in the New Town, putting at risk the competitiveness of the region. Social imbalance would increase generally. There would be a substantial increase in traffic between the new town and the city and extra road capacity would be needed to avoid congestion.</p>	<p>The new town would generate more traffic into the city</p>

Figure 2: Cambridge Futures 1: Options, likely consequences and key issues

To derive the likely consequences of each option – in terms cost of living, traffic congestion, environmental impact etc – each option was modelled using the MENTOR land use model and the SATURN highway model. (Echinque, 1999)

It was possible using these models and some subjective judgement to assess economic efficiency, social equity, and environmental quality. Economic efficiency was measured by calculating the cost of living and production costs for each area and for the region as a whole. Social equity was measured by the composition of socio-economic groups. And environmental quality was

established by traffic congestion and vehicle emissions and the amount of open space in the form of private gardens and agricultural land.

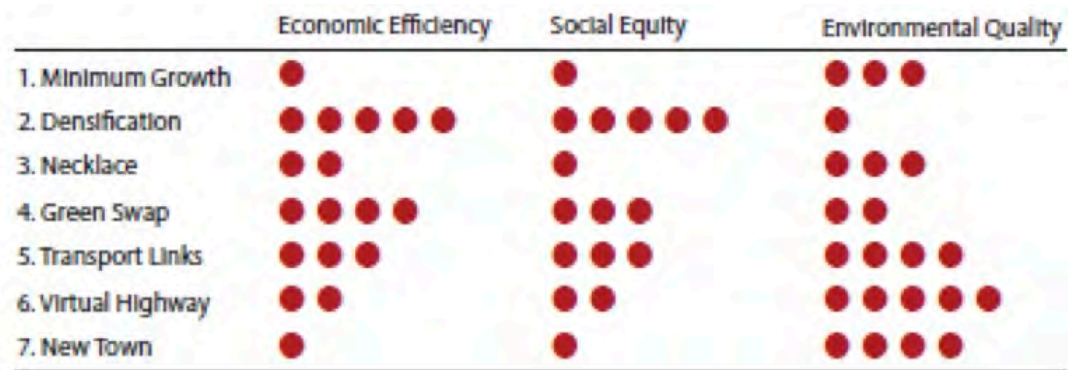
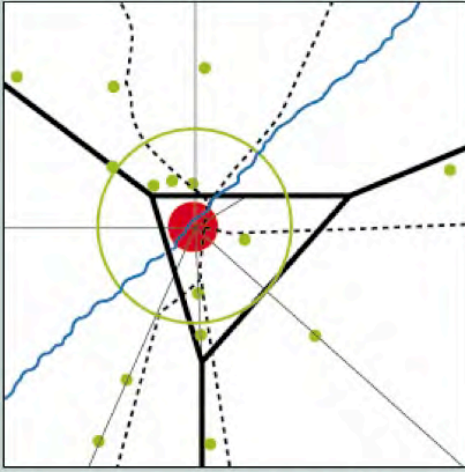


Figure 3: Qualitative comparison of the seven options

In 1999 Cambridge Architectural Research was tasked with surveying the public’s reaction to these options and they were responsible for devising and administering a survey that formed part of an exhibition at various venues in the region. (Platt, 1999) People were able to comment on the proposals by filling in a tear-off 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. 59% used the interactive computer survey. The options were described in terms people could relate to and, by clicking on the map, they could see an animation or video of how the option would pan out. Respondents were asked to indicate on a simple 5-point scale how much they liked or disliked each option.

Option 2 Densification



click on the map to see an animation of this option

○


○

○

○

○

dislike
like



Densification
Puts as much development as possible in the city where demand is highest. Higher buildings will replace low density.

Likely consequences
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.

Key Issue
The City environment would deteriorate if there were less green space and more cars.


BACK TO OPTIONS


Figure 4: Example of one of the options

There were also a set of eight controversial statements, for example the headline in the local press at that time – “*Cambridge is full*”.

The findings of the survey were published in a clear report on two sides of an A3 sheet. This simple document proved to be influential. Professor Peter Carolin said at the time: *The public consultation exercise was a most amazing piece of research, it proved to politicians that Joe Public is not as stupid as the tabloid press would have us believe.*

And Peter Studdert, then Director of Environment and Planning at Cambridge City Council said, *The survey convinced people that if options were explained clearly then the general public were much less intransigent about change than might have been supposed ... Although there are still matters of dispute, there is general agreement about the need for new land for housing and about development in the green belt.*

Public reaction to Cambridge Futures 1 land use options

One of the main findings was that there was little support for the ‘status quo’. Options that won the least support were closest to the present planning policies of ‘minimum growth’ for the City of Cambridge and ‘necklace development’ of villages outside the green belt. And people accepted that Cambridge couldn’t be kept the same and that if nothing was done it would only get worse.

There was also clear backing for public transport and reducing traffic congestion, which led to Cambridge Futures 2, for which CAR also did the public consultation. The findings are summarised as follows.

Transport Links: Two issues seemed to dominate people’s choices: traffic congestion and quality of life. The preferred option liked by 78% of all respondents would reduce car use the most, minimizing increased traffic congestion and pollution, and better protect quality of life in the city and surrounding area.

Green swap: Marginally more people favour allowing development in selected areas of the green belt of less scenic value than dislike it. Interestingly these differences seem independent of where people live. Despite the risk of increased traffic congestion in the city, 42% of people favour this option because it produces the lowest increase in the cost of living.

Densification: Like green swap, densification of the city stabilises the cost of living and promotes regional prosperity, and like green swap, opinion is fairly divided on its merits. Rising house prices are of great concern and people can appreciate the merit of allowing development where demand is highest but are also concerned about the impact on the quality of life in the city.

Virtual highway: Liked by marginally more people than disliked but with a high proportion of people undecided in the middle, indicating that people may not fully understand this option. Since it might reduce traffic congestion it gets moderate support.

New town: Liked by only 28% of people. Significantly more people living NW of the city, ie: those most affected by the proposed new town developments,

dislike this option. The substantial increase in traffic between the new town and the city puts most people off this option. But for some it offers lower house prices in the new town.

Minimum growth: Only 16% of people favour this option since it would only preserve the city at the expense of congestion on access roads and regional stagnation. Surprisingly, and most encouragingly in terms of this whole exercise, most people appreciate that minimum growth will not keep things the same.

Necklace: The current planning policy is the least favoured option, disliked by two-thirds of people. People agree that things cannot continue as they are and that we need new policies to reduce traffic congestion whilst maintaining regional prosperity.

Not surprisingly, there was also clear evidence of nimbyism, and people wanting the growth somewhere other than where they were living. Most importantly, there was clear support for growth.

The popular view was that people wanted 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 selective expansion into the green belt, together with growth outside Cambridge based on public transport links, would be most likely to meet the aspirations of people in the region.

And this is more or less what the Structure Plan delivered four years later and what we are experiencing now.

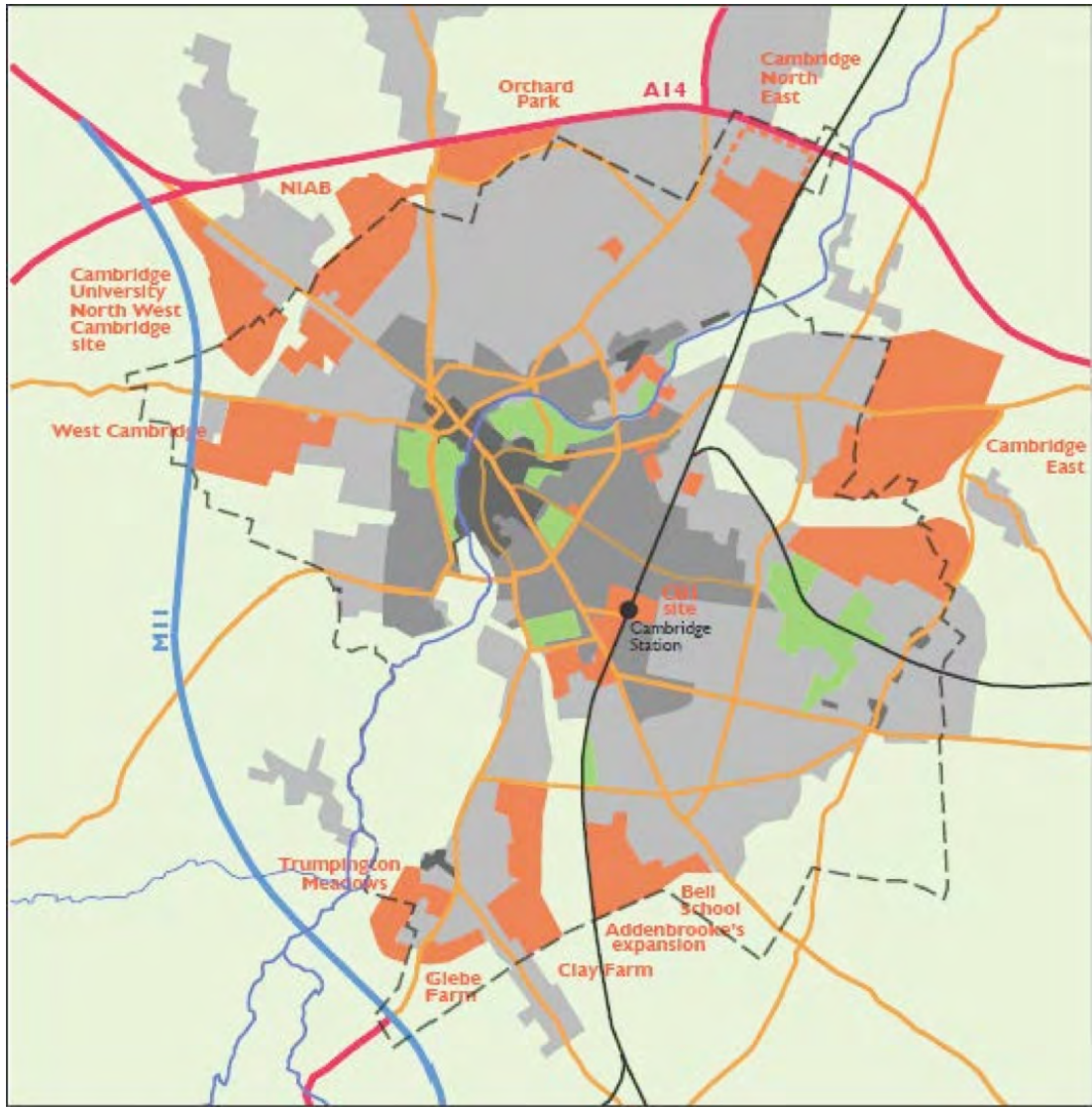


Figure 5: Cambridge Structure Plan 2004 – new development in and around the City

The key elements of the Structure Plan, see Figure 5, were new dwellings in the City and periphery, in a new settlement and in market towns; expansion of business floorspace; a guided bus from Huntingdon to Trumpington and a new railway station at Chesterton. But the growth in jobs and dwellings is presenting major challenges, because housing costs continue to rise as demand outstrips supply. 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.

Cambridge Futures 2 – Transport

Cambridge Futures 2 focused on transport and, in 2003, CAR was again charged with seeking the views of the public. We asked people what they thought of five transport options, and whether they agreed or disagreed with ten statements about the future of the region. The survey formed part of an exhibition and people also commented in the local newspaper. In all 326 people completed the survey. The results were again reported in an A3 leaflet. (Platt, 2004)

About half lived in the city and half in the county. All parts of the region are well represented. Attitudes are similar regardless of where people live. However, people living in the city disagree more than those living in the region that *'Major road building will reduce car use'*. There was little difference in preference or opinion between age groups. But 21-40 year olds are more positive about the statement *'If there was high quality public transport people would use it'* while 65+ year olds are more positive about *'People needing to live nearer to work and school'*.

Five transport options were devised and tested. The outcomes of each option were modelled and compared to a base case of Structure Plan commitments for 2016 which involve A14 widening, an M11 link to Addenbrookes, a guided bus from Huntingdon to Cambridge, Chesterton railway station, an extension to the bus service and finally improvements to footpaths and cycleways. (Echenique and Hargreaves, 2003)

Although there is some increase in cost of living and production, because the transport options reported in Figure 6 included the Structure Plan development and transport schemes these were much smaller than in the Cambridge Futures 1 study. The likely consequences of the Base Case of Cambridge Futures 2 are not so much a cost of living increase but rather a substantial increase in traffic congestion because the transport schemes in the Structure Plan would be insufficient to cope with the anticipated growth.


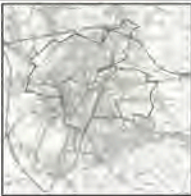

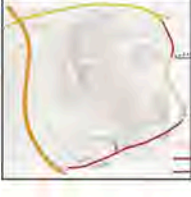

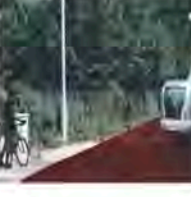
	Option	Likely Consequences	Key Issue
	<p>1 Base case</p> <p>A14 highway upgrade. Link road from M11 to Addenbrookes. Guided bus Huntingdon to Trumpington park and ride. New railway station at Chesterton. Extension of bus services. Improvements to pedestrian and cycleways</p>	<p>Considerable increase in congestion on the access roads would continue to erode the quality of life in the city.</p>	<p>Rising property prices force new resident to look for accommodation outside the city with a consequent increase in congestion.</p>
	<p>2 Cycling/walking</p> <p>Extension of cycleways to new developments on the edge of the City. Introduction of the Green Ring (linking cycle routes around Cambridge). Extending the network into the Sub-region.</p>	<p>Journey times are largely unchanged by the improvements but they improve convenience and safety, making cycling and walking more attractive and may therefore counteract the decline of cycling, as average distances become larger. The estimated cost of implementing the proposed cycle network is £1.3 million.</p>	<p>Improvements make cycling more attractive.</p>
	<p>3 Public transport</p> <p>Expansion of the guided bus network to serve new housing developments. Tunnels for public transport vehicles (with underground interchanges at Drummer Street bus station, the railway station, and Parker's Piece.</p>	<p>Car traffic reduces slightly. Public transport use increases. Walking and cycling reduce. Environmental improvement in the City centre but no overall change in carbon emissions. Cost of living and production costs reduce making the Sub-region more competitive. Investment cost is high due to tunnels but there is a modest transport economic benefits</p>	<p>Reduction in car traffic but high investment costs.</p>
	<p>4 Orbital highway</p> <p>New highway connecting the M11 with the A14 to complete the orbital around Cambridge. Tunnel to preserve from Gog Magog Hills. Two new bridges over the railway to the south (London Line) and to the east (Newmarket line)</p>	<p>Car traffic reduces within Cambridge, but there will be more traffic around Cambridge. Public transport use does not change. Walking and Cycling reduces. Environmental negative impact on the south-east fringes of the City is mitigated by tunnels. Carbon emissions increase. Cost of living and production costs reduce making the Sub-region more competitive. Investment cost is moderate with a substantial economic benefit</p>	<p>Traffic transferred to ring road with some economic benefits but increase in emissions.</p>
	<p>5 Congestion charging</p> <p>Creation of a charging zone in Cambridge, similar to the London scheme. Peak period charging; reduced charge for residents within cordon; no charge for cars entering edge locations, such as park and ride site, Addenbrookes, etc</p>	<p>Car traffic reduces substantially with fewer trips and less delays. Public transport use increases. Walking and cycling increases Environmentally positive with less air pollution and carbon emissions. Cost of living and production costs increase making the Sub-region less competitive. Investment cost small and revenues produce a large overall economic benefit, but drivers are penalised.</p>	<p>Car traffic reduces but increase in cost of living.</p>
	<p>6 Combined</p> <p>Cycling and walking networks Public transport extension including tunnel Orbital highway development including tunnel Congestion charging in peak periods</p>	<p>Car traffic reduces substantially with fewer trips into Cambridge and less delays. Public transport use increases. Walking and cycling little change. Environmental improvement in the City centre, less air pollution in the City, but no change in fuel consumption and carbon emissions. Cost of living and production costs reduce substantially. Investments cost – is large but there is overall transport economic benefit. Congestion charge revenue can contribute to the costs of the transport improvements</p>	<p>Reduction in car journeys and better public transport have significant impact on traffic and congestion.</p>

Figure 6: Cambridge Futures 2 Options and Key Issues

Public reaction to Cambridge Futures 2 transport options

Cycling/walking: This was the clearly the preferred option – liked by 74% of people and disliked by only 10%. Given this degree of support better provision needs to be made to encourage more people to cycle as the City expands.

Public transport: Liked by 60% of people and disliked by 23%, there was strong support for public transport, making it the preferred solution for reducing car use for longer journeys

Orbital highway: Marginally more people like rather than dislike orbital highway – liked by 45% of people and disliked by 37%. So there is some support for a ring road to reduce cross-town traffic but there is also opposition from those who think new roads will quickly fill-up.

Congestion charging: This was almost equally liked and disliked – liked by 43% of people and disliked by 47% and strongly disliked by 35%. Opinion about congestion charging is polarised, yet two-thirds of people believe that it will reduce car use.

Combined option: Marginally more people liked the Combined option than dislike it – liked by 48% of people and disliked by 33%. Combining the options may reduce opposition, but some people who object to orbital highway and congestion charging also dislike them when combined.

Discussion

The findings clearly indicate that people wanted action to reduce traffic and improve transport in the region and were optimistic about the chances of delivering these twin objectives. There was a high degree of consensus of opinion even when the survey results are broken down by age, employment or home location. There is no evidence of opposing camps and the variations that do exist are differences of emphasis.

People also want the benefits of growth without having to sacrifice quality of life. 57% agree and only 24% disagree that '*The region must be allowed to grow*'. But 71% agree and only 9% disagree that '*Quality of life is more important than economic development*'.

The dominant message is that transport alternatives to the car must be encouraged. The cycling/walking and public transport options received most support. This accords with the Cambridge Futures 1 study when 86% voted that '*More money should be invested in railways and other public transport than in roads*' was the most popular.

There is moderate support for a ring road that would reduce cross-town traffic but there is also opposition to new road building. And finally, people are ambivalent about congestion charging, accepting that it could be effective in decreasing car use but unwilling to pay.

Whilst most people (71%) agree '*Quality of life is more important than economic development*' over half (57%) also believe that '*The region must be allowed to grow*'. Clearly people value quality of life yet many also want the benefits of growth. Traffic congestion is seen having a big impact on quality of life.

Many people think something can be done to alleviate traffic congestion, outnumbering those who think whatever we do Cambridge will end up being congested. But the options are not only seen as transport interventions. Reducing journeys is also seen as an option. Two-thirds of people think that it

would be desirable if they lived nearer to work and school so that they could walk or cycle more easily.

Public transport

People are very positive about the public transport option. 78% of people think that 'If there was high quality public transport people would use it', while only 31% of people think that 'People will never give up their cars to use public transport'.

Given this attitude to public transport, it is surprising that the public option which encourages good public transport links didn't receive more support. The option will only reduce car traffic slightly and the public probably realise that without a more comprehensive public transport network, which is unrealistic in Cambridge, many people will not give up using their cars.

Building new roads is not seen as the solution to congestion. Only 26% think 'Major road building will reduce traffic congestion' while 75% think 'New roads will quickly fill up'. It is surprising, therefore, that the orbital highway is as liked as it is. Perhaps ring roads are seen as an exception.

Most people think that congestion charging will be effective in reducing traffic. 64% think 'Congestion charging will reduce car use' whilst only 38% think 'Congestion charging will only have a short-term effect'. Given this positive attitude to an untried measure, the relative lack of support for the congestion charging option must mean that people don't want to pay

The popular view and 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 don't think '*Major road building will reduce traffic congestion*'. Opinion is polarised on congestion charging but the majority think it would be effective in reducing congestion.

Key lessons

Leadership was critical. The 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.

Timing was also important. Cambridge Futures started just before the Structure Plan process and influenced the system. Later would have been too late.

The strategy adopted through this process represented a step change in the thinking about the future shape of Cambridge. Cambridge Futures drove the ambition and helped shape the debate by articulating the consequences of different approaches to growth, and by illustrating these in a way that stimulated wide public engagement. It also took some of the flak, clarified the degree of opposition to growth, and was useful in raising the profile of what officers and members were trying to achieve.

John Durrant said, *I think on balance we did the right thing in accepting growth ... we had to change, we could not stand still.*

Clear and transparent evidence was vital in informing decision-making and in convincing people about growth. Along side the work of Cambridge Futures, the City and County were also conducting and commissioning their own studies.

The balanced approach to growth suggested by Cambridge Future was confirmed in the Cambridge sub-region strategy, RPG6 in 2000, and in further studies by DEGW and Colin Buchanan in 2001/2 that 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.

The main message learned from Cambridge Futures public consultation exercise is that the Structure Plan proposals about the green belt, densification and new settlement did not meet with the kind of opposition other places experienced when proposing big changes. This was due to informed public participation at a strategic level.

The final thing to stress is the importance of cooperation in a place that lacks a unitary authority. 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. Partly thanks to Cambridge Futures providing a forum for officers and members to meet on neutral territory things changed and it became possible to build a new consensus around taking a positive approach to accommodating future growth.

Can these insights from Cambridge be applied elsewhere? Or are the timing and the circumstances so specific that Cambridge is a unique case? Marcial Echenique argues the Cambridge Futures approach is replicable. *Everything should be done in a less confrontational way so that people can follow the reasoning. For this modelling is ideal.* In a project for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation the author was able to successfully replicate at least the public consultation aspect of Cambridge Futures in Aylesbury, Maidenhead and Medway. All of these places are now growing fast.

In conclusion, the things that were important in delivering the “big idea” in Cambridge were:

- 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.
- 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.
- continuity of local leadership, both from political leaders and from planning directors.
- A dedicated delivery team to support the local authorities.

A think tank like Cambridge Futures that can work alongside the statutory authorities and ‘think the unthinkable’ at an early stage, engage local

communities in a more accessible way than the more formal statutory processes. This proved to be most effective in delivering change in Cambridge. The clear evidence base for testing and evaluating different strategic options for growth was influential in altering people's mindsets.

There are major changes in the pipeline. Figure 7 shows the major urban extensions.

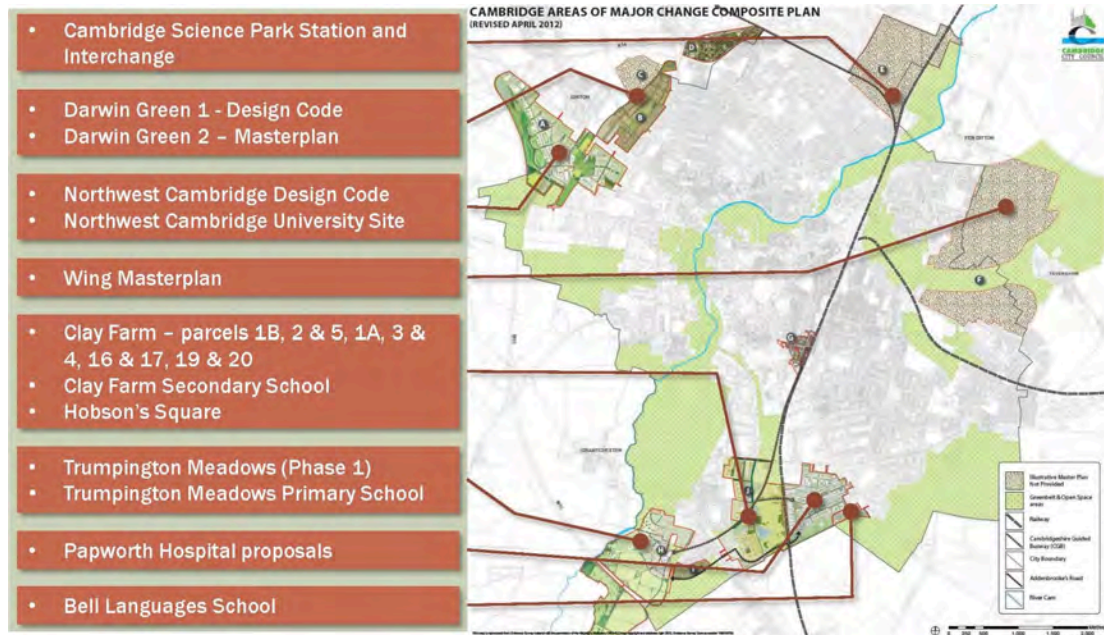


Figure 7: Cambridge City urban extensions with planning permission

Figure 8 shows that the green belt is still in place, albeit a little further out and the same battles may need to be refought. One of the key questions is whether the degree of cooperation between the various local authorities can be maintained.

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 – the North Fringe East (including the current airport) and the new settlement of Northstowe – are still missing.

Regarding transport, we have better rail links and a guided busway, but we need stations at Chesterton Sidings and Fulbourne, an upgrade to the A14 and a traffic demand management system. Cycling provision is still a mess and a particular bete noire is the Cambridge Station cycle park. Clearly there is still a great deal to be done.

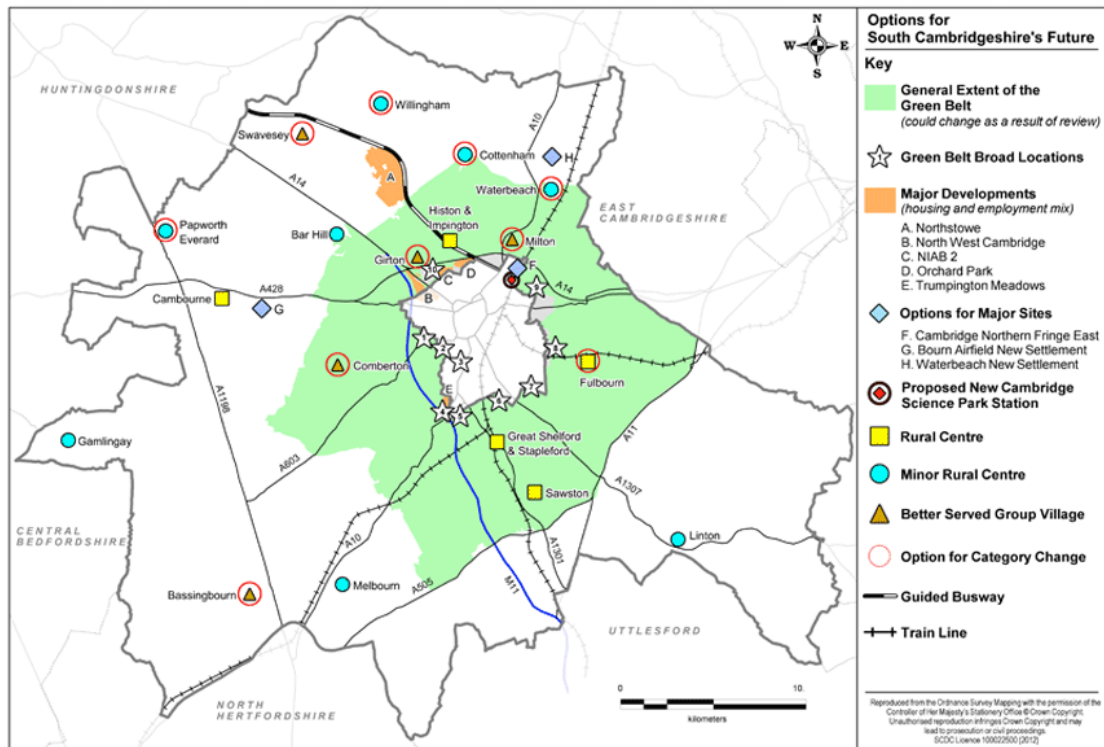


Figure 8: South Cambs Local Plan 2013

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