



Chapter 3

The Current Development Strategy



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- 3.1. Cambridge is an acknowledged world leader in higher education, research and knowledge-based industries and has a prosperous and dynamic economy. It also has a renowned landscape setting with a network of open spaces linking into a thriving and accessible historic centre. The success of Cambridge means there are also many competing development needs and pressures on what is a small, compact city. There is, in addition to a high demand for housing, a need for more affordable housing to: maintain the economy; provide more jobs; support the continued success of the University of Cambridge, the colleges, and Anglia Ruskin University (ARU); to provide essential services and facilities to meet the day to day needs of residents; and to maintain the city as a sub-regional centre for shopping, leisure and cultural activities.
- 3.2. South Cambridgeshire is a prosperous area with high levels of economic activity and low levels of unemployment and the area close to Cambridge forms an important part of the Cambridge Cluster of research and knowledge-based industries and has experienced significant jobs growth. Its 350 square miles of countryside provide a high quality setting for its 105 settlements. In recent decades, the district has experienced significant growth, reflecting the success of the local economy and the need for new homes.
- 3.3. There is a close functional relationship between the city of Cambridge and surrounding South Cambridgeshire, which provides most of the setting to Cambridge, but also a rural hinterland to the city and includes a number of significant and world leading business parks that contribute to the national as well as the Cambridge economy.
- 3.4. The current development strategy for the Cambridge area stems from as far back as 1999, from the work undertaken by Cambridge Futures, which influenced the 1999 Regional Plan for East Anglia and the 2003 Cambridgeshire Structure Plan. Prior to that date, development in Cambridge had been constrained by the Green Belt. One of the effects of this constraint was that housing development which would have taken place in Cambridge was dispersed to towns and villages beyond the outer boundary of the Green Belt, with people commuting back to jobs in Cambridge contributing to congestion, greenhouse gas emissions, air quality problems and other quality of life issues. The change in strategy introduced in the 2003 Cambridgeshire Structure Plan recognised that a significant change in the approach to the planning of the city was required in order to redress the imbalance between homes and jobs in, and close to, Cambridge. It also needed to, provide for the long-term growth of the University of Cambridge and Addenbrooke's Hospital, whilst minimising increases in congestion on radial routes into the city.

- 3.5. The existing Cambridge Local Plan (2006) and South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (adopted between 2007 and 2010) introduced a step change in levels of planned growth, unmatched since the interwar years. This was consistent with the agreed development strategy for the Cambridge area set out in the 2003 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan. The Plans released significant land from the Cambridge Green Belt and allocated a number of urban extensions to the city in the south, north west, north east and east of the city.
- 3.6. The strategy in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and carried into the two Councils' current plans aims to focus development according to the sequence:

Current Development Sequence

1. Within the urban area of Cambridge
2. On the edge of Cambridge
3. In the new town of Northstowe
4. In the market towns and better served villages in South Cambridgeshire

- 3.7. The 2003 Structure Plan identified broad locations to be released from the Green Belt on the edge of Cambridge and the strategy was put into effect through the Cambridge Local Plan, the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework, and the joint Area Action Plans for North West Cambridge and Cambridge East. All of these plans were subject to extensive periods of public consultation and examination by planning inspectors. The strategy was endorsed and included in the East of England Plan 2008.
- 3.8. Significant progress is being made on the growth sites identified in the Councils' current plans, although progress was slowed just as sites were coming forward due to the effects of the recession when it took hold in 2008. Development slowed on the major sites but over the last year housing development has got underway on the large sites on the edge of Cambridge at Clay Farm, Glebe Farm and Trumpington Meadows in the Southern Fringe, and on Huntingdon Road as part of the larger NIAB site. Progress is also being made in relation to the Station area, Addenbrooke's and the University site at North West Cambridge. A resolution to grant permission for a first phase of development at Northstowe has also recently been made and, whilst development is planned to start as soon as possible, it will take a number of years for development at the new town to deliver large volumes of new homes. The table below pulls together the sites currently allocated or with planning permission on the edge of Cambridge in both Councils' areas, and the expected number of homes that will be built between 2011 and 2031, including Orchard Park which was in an earlier plan.

SITE	Cambridge	South Cambridgeshire	Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire
North West Cambridge	1,910	1,090	3,000
NIAB 1	1,744	0	1,744
NIAB 2	0	1,100	1,100
Orchard Park	0	384	384
North of Newmarket Road	0	1,500	1,500
Clay Farm	2,217	0	2,217
Glebe Farm	286	0	286
Bell School	347	0	347
Trumpington Meadows	557	629	1,186
Total	7,061	4,703	11,764

Source: Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Annual Monitoring Reports 2011
(Updated for Cambridge East to reflect Marshall's latest proposals)

- 3.9. At the heart of the strategy established in 2003 was the review of the Cambridge Green Belt which released land for a total of around 22,000 homes, of which some 10,000 to 12,000 were to be built at Cambridge Airport in both Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. In 2009, the landowner - Marshalls of Cambridge - indicated that their land would not be made available in this plan period. This means that there will be a delay in delivering the major development opportunities at Cambridge East, and so the full implementation of the current development strategy cannot take place in the plan period to 2031. Marshall has recently announced a renewed intention to develop the allocated site north of Newmarket Road for 1,500 homes with a planning application expected in 2013.
- 3.10. In 2006, before any of the housing in the current development strategy was built, Cambridge had 46,783 homes. The development of 22,000 homes on the edge of Cambridge that was included in current plans (in both districts) together with planned development within Cambridge would have seen Cambridge grow by 47%. Marshall's decision not to move will mean the planned 9,500 new homes at Cambridge East will not now be realised in this plan period at least. This means that the current strategy will now increase Cambridge by 27% compared with 2006. The site options on the edge of Cambridge in this consultation would increase Cambridge by 28% compared with 2006.

3.11. Notwithstanding the loss of a significant number of homes at Cambridge East, at the base date of the new Local Plan period of end March 2011, the Councils had identified a total housing supply in their current plans of 24,800 new homes that will contribute to meeting development needs to 2031, as set out in the table below. This includes all development in both areas, such as the major developments within and on the edge of Cambridge and the new town of Northstowe.

HOUSING SUPPLY	Cambridge	South Cambridgeshire	Cambridge & South Cambridgeshire
Planning permissions	9,065	2,897	11,962
Allocations	1,547	11,300	12,847
Total	10,612	14,197	24,809

3.12. Throughout the preparation of the current plans, there was strong local acknowledgement of the growing need for the most sustainable form of development and delivery of new affordable homes in the Cambridge area to address commuting by car to jobs in and close to Cambridge and the congestion and emissions that causes.

3.13. As part of the review of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the East of England, the Cambridgeshire authorities commissioned consultants to prepare the Cambridgeshire Development Study. The study was completed in 2009 and looked at how well the existing development strategy was working, forecasts for economic growth, and how the strategy could be developed if further growth was needed.

3.14. The study identified a range of challenges for growth beyond the current development strategy. These included that significant additional expansion to Cambridge (where the economy is stronger) would impact on the integrity of the Green Belt and the concept of Cambridge as a compact city. The study also concluded that without deliverable solutions for transport and land supply, Cambridge centred growth would be difficult to achieve, and would require a fundamental step change in traffic management and travel behaviour.

3.15. The study recommended a spatial strategy for Cambridgeshire that is based on delivering the current strategy with further balanced expansion through regeneration in selected market towns, and focussed on making best use of existing infrastructure. However, it did indicate that some additional growth could be located on the edge of Cambridge incorporating a limited review of the Green

Belt boundary, in the long term. The key objective of the strategy was to locate homes close to Cambridge or other main employment centres, avoiding dispersed development, and ensuring that travel by sustainable modes is maximised through connections focussing on improved public transport and reducing the need to travel.

- 3.16. The Cambridgeshire local authorities endorsed the findings of the study, which were included in the draft version of the revised East of England Plan that planned for the period 2011 to 2031. The review suggested 14,000 homes and 20,000 jobs for Cambridge over the plan period, and for South Cambridgeshire, it suggested 21,500 homes and 21,200 jobs. This was based on rolling forward the current development strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. The draft regional plan was submitted to the previous Government in March 2010, but was not ultimately progressed due to the Coalition Government's statement soon after coming into power in May 2010 that it intended to abolish regional plans.
- 3.17. An issue for the Councils now is whether the current strategy remains the most appropriate development strategy to 2031, or whether an alternative would be more suitable as a result of current circumstances. The interrelationship between the two areas means that decisions cannot be taken in isolation and the future approach needs to be joined up, as it has been in the past. On the whole, South Cambridgeshire looks towards Cambridge in functional terms whilst Cambridge is affected by a tight administrative boundary and surrounding Green Belt, and therefore any decision relating to the spatial strategy in South Cambridgeshire is likely to have an impact on Cambridge and vice versa.
- 3.18. This stage of plan making needs to review jointly how far the current sustainable development strategy has progressed, what evidence there is that it is achieving its original objectives and what a new sustainable development strategy looks like in view of changes in economic and other circumstances since the current strategy was adopted.

