

2030 Vision for the Cambridge sub region

Summary of key conclusions from the first six (of ten) topic studies (7.2.12 update)

- **Quality of life** is key. It is important for recruiting and retaining the highly-skilled staff for which our businesses and universities have to compete on a global scale. The historic settlements and rural settings which are the distinctive physical feature of the sub-region must be protected – while enabling the growth upon which prosperity and quality of life depend.
- **University research's economic potential** must be more fully exploited, so that many more of the clever ideas are taken through to market.
- **Businesses** need greater freedom to operate and innovate and grow organically.
- **Demonstration areas** could be formed in the sub-region for developing new technologies. Designated as a 'free zone' test bed, the entire sub-region could jump to 4G.
- **Links with a low-cost manufacturing UK region** on the East Coast mainline might be of mutual benefit to both that region and local hi-tech research and development businesses.
- **The 'Cambridge brand'** is extremely strong. Instead of restricting it to the City, the opportunity should be grasped to expand its coverage (and reduce the pressure on the City). Such an extension might be to the area within 25 miles radius of the city or to the LEP area (which includes Peterborough and, most significantly, the new Alconbury EZ).
- **The old university** (at the centre of the Cambridge brand) should play a major part in developing and protecting the brand regionally and internationally.
- **'Eds and Meds'**, well tended, tend to stay put and grow – while businesses come and go. The sub-region should build on the former and set targets for attracting top businesses.
- **A 'virtual' university agriculture school** and related research cluster should be initiated.
- **Central government** must be persuaded that the sub-region has a massively important role to play in the UK economy, for which it requires both support and autonomy.
- **The sub-region's physical and political structure** needs to be 're-imagined'. In the case of the sub-region, the LEP Peterborough/Alconbury/Cambridge/Stansted spine is a driver while, in Cambridge, the growth of Addenbrookes and the northern fringe are reshaping it.
- **A long-term, cyclically adjustable 'concept' plan** and a fast, locally autonomous control system should be adopted to enhance aspiration and nurture innovation and regional integration. The new plan would run parallel with the 'current' Structure Plan.
- **Local leadership** should be simplified and more visionary – and fulfil a 'championship' role.
- **Fiscal devolution** is required – with control of the local growth dividend (eg bonds, tax revenues and increments) with the public and private sectors taking risks together.
- **The pull of London** must be acknowledged and links strengthened if the sub-region is to develop its full potential. Chesterton station promises well. Stansted, which can handle aircraft up to Heathrow standards, should also be exploited for its 'linking' potential.
- **Land should be used selectively** – for agriculture, water management, eco services and green space. Agricultural yields must be increased sustainably. (Farm) buildings – not land – should be used for energy generation. Green spaces should be integrated with development.
- **The location of employment** must now be given the same attention as that for housing. Employment sites must be given priority in land allocations and should have good access to (preferably fast) public transport.
- **Economic activity should be concentrated** in 'nodes' such as those around Chesterton and Ely stations. Growth on successful but 'full' science parks should be vertical.
- **The market towns should be expanded** as business locations to enable 2-way commuting.
- **The Green Belt** was 'nibbled' in the last Structure Plan. That suggests it should now be left alone – but the greatest challenge posed is ARM's desire to expand locally. This is a defining moment (as with IBM in the 1960s). Without such growth Cambridge will decline.
- **The local education infrastructure** has many distinctive and impressive parts. Build on this – by strengthening the engagement between education and employment – ensuring that students are informed, motivated and prepared for a multi-faceted career.
- **Collaborative education/employment initiatives** – such as the Fenland Engineering Skills Centre and the Addenbrookes apprenticeship scheme and technical training school – must be deployed more widely to develop locally needed skills (including those for agriculture).
- **Carbon reduction in housing** should be promoted through an awareness campaign based on a few evidence-proven, cost-effective ideas with demonstration projects for different

budgets and housing types. Retrofitting existing homes should be promoted as a better investment than moving. Local Retrofit Zones should be introduced throughout the sub-region.

- **The existing housing delivery system** is failing in terms of quality and time. Local authorities should be given a bigger role and power to control their finances for this.
- **Culture and entertainment** provision needs enhancing. The universities and colleges should continue to open up events and resources and help develop a more integrated sub-region.
- **In retail and tourism** terms, historic Cambridge should not be allowed to become a clone city swamped by short-stay low-spend tourists.

***Possible areas where the sub-region can act as an exemplar:** Developing a new administrative and physical form of sub-region; 'concept' plan evolution; technology demonstration 'free zones'; regional manufacturing links; education/employment collaboration; carbon reduction demonstration; a local form to review the role of technology in agriculture; university/sub-regional collaboration.*

***Topics to date:** Economics and Technology, Housing (carbon reduction), Education and Skills, Business and Retail, Agriculture and Green Spaces, Land Use (Workshop 2 to follow).*