

A place of national and global significance.

Foreword



Matthew Pennycook MP
Minister of State for Housing and Planning

Sustained economic growth is the only route to delivering the improved prosperity our country needs and the higher living standards working people deserve. That is why it is this government's number one mission.

In January, the Chancellor announced plans to supercharge growth in the Oxford-Cambridge Corridor, recognising its potential to become one of the most innovative and economically dynamic areas in the world.

The economic growth of Cambridge has been a phenomenal success and the city and its environs are home to the most intensive science and technological cluster in the world. Yet, Cambridge's continued position as a world-leading centre of innovation is dependent on tackling infrastructure deficiencies, commercial accessibility and housing affordability.

That is why the Cambridge Growth Company, a subsidiary of Homes England, was established under the leadership of Peter Freeman. Its efforts to unlock and accelerate prime development opportunities have already facilitated the delivery of over 9,000 additional homes, a new cancer hospital, and new commercial and laboratory space.

I welcome this strategic narrative which sets out the important role that the Cambridge Growth Company will play in identifying and enabling more near-term development opportunities, addressing infrastructure challenges, and removing barriers to sustainable growth.

I believe that the nature, scale and complexity of ambitious and high quality sustainable growth in Cambridge and its environs will require a delivery vehicle with the necessary powers, authority and access to finance. That is why the government intends to consult on establishing a centrally-led development corporation to deliver nationally significant growth in Greater Cambridge.

To support the delivery of new homes, infrastructure, business and laboratory space, and a programme of water-savings measures, the government is also making available up to £400 million of initial funding.

In order that the benefits of further growth will be felt by new and existing communities alike, we are committed to an ongoing partnership with local leaders, communities and residents. Their insights, knowledge and direct input will steer the precise form of any delivery vehicle's ambition.

I am extremely grateful to Peter and the Cambridge Growth Company for the dedication and commitment they have shown to realising the full potential of Greater Cambridge, and for clearly setting out their vision in this important document. I look forward to working with them and local partners to support ambitious and high-quality sustainable growth in the city and its surrounding areas.

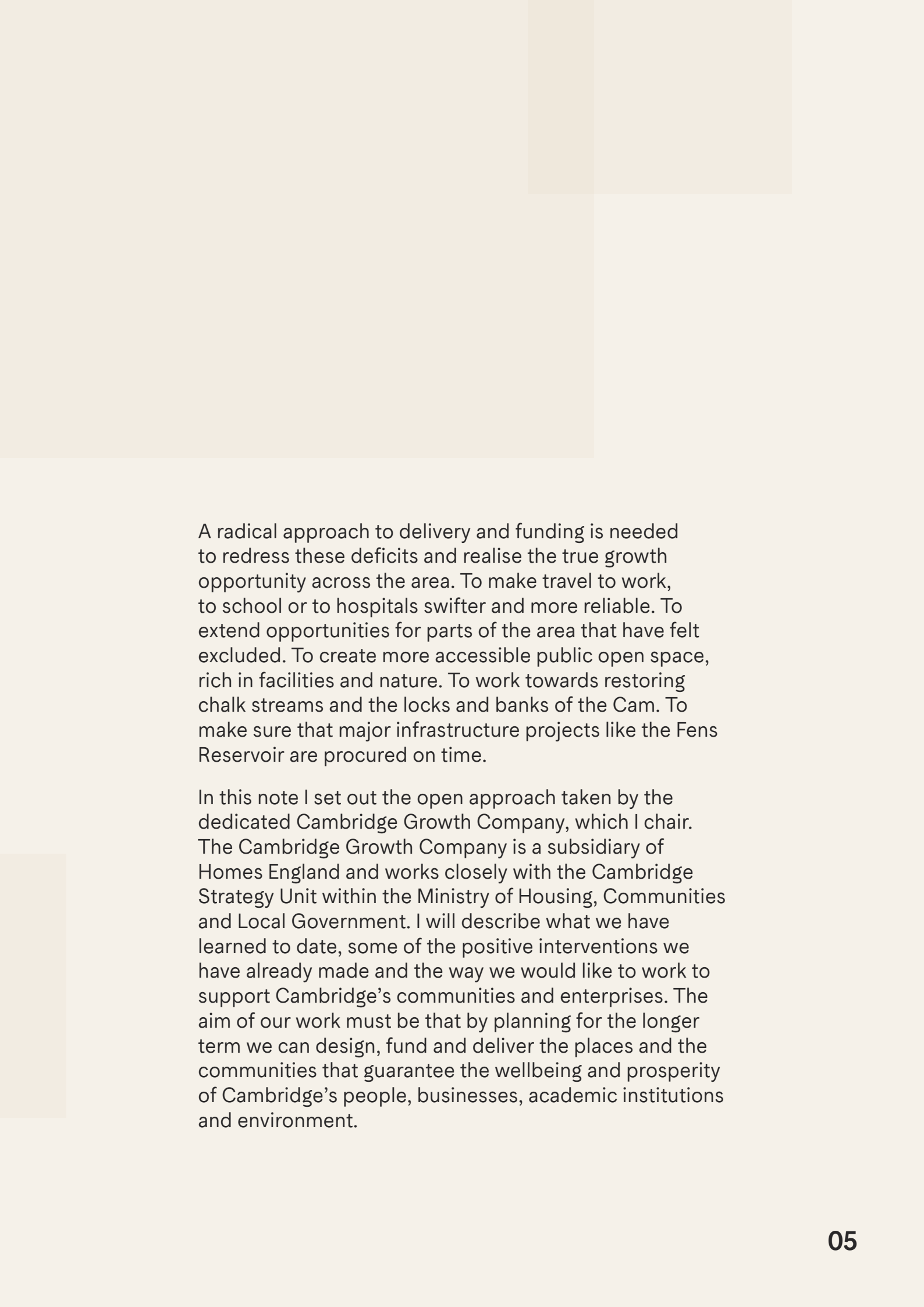
Introduction



Peter Freeman CBE
Chair, Cambridge Growth Company

For the last two years I have been in Cambridge to meet the people who understand its opportunities and challenges best – the local leaders and their officers, representatives of community associations, universities, business and innovation, transport and the hospitals. Each meeting brings further insights and friendships. No city of similar size in the world has been home to so many Nobel prize winners, so many \$1bn tech start-ups and has such an extraordinary architectural and landscape heritage. Nor has any other city in England grown as fast over recent years. Cambridge is a great place to be and there's a tremendous appetite for the area to be an engine for innovation.

But Cambridge is also said to be the most unequal city in England. Quality of life for many is affected by congestion and the poor connectivity and the very high price paid to buy or rent homes. Further sustainable growth is restrained by the availability of both water and transport infrastructure and, a number of sites already identified could deliver more to meet the government's ambitions more rapidly.



A radical approach to delivery and funding is needed to redress these deficits and realise the true growth opportunity across the area. To make travel to work, to school or to hospitals swifter and more reliable. To extend opportunities for parts of the area that have felt excluded. To create more accessible public open space, rich in facilities and nature. To work towards restoring chalk streams and the locks and banks of the Cam. To make sure that major infrastructure projects like the Fens Reservoir are procured on time.

In this note I set out the open approach taken by the dedicated Cambridge Growth Company, which I chair. The Cambridge Growth Company is a subsidiary of Homes England and works closely with the Cambridge Strategy Unit within the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. I will describe what we have learned to date, some of the positive interventions we have already made and the way we would like to work to support Cambridge's communities and enterprises. The aim of our work must be that by planning for the longer term we can design, fund and deliver the places and the communities that guarantee the wellbeing and prosperity of Cambridge's people, businesses, academic institutions and environment.

Good growth for the long term

Greater Cambridge is one of the UK's greatest success stories. An area known across the world for its cutting-edge science, thriving business clusters, and world-class research institutions. It's a place full of pride, ambition and innovation. But we recognise that it's also a place under pressure, with some communities already feeling left behind by the very growth that's made Greater Cambridge a global success.

The government has set out its ambitions for Greater Cambridge. The objective is to maximise the area's full economic potential to deliver nationally significant growth. However, delivering this objective is made more difficult because of the infrastructure problems the area is facing.

The government recognises that achieving nationally significant growth, requires delivering nationally significant infrastructure.

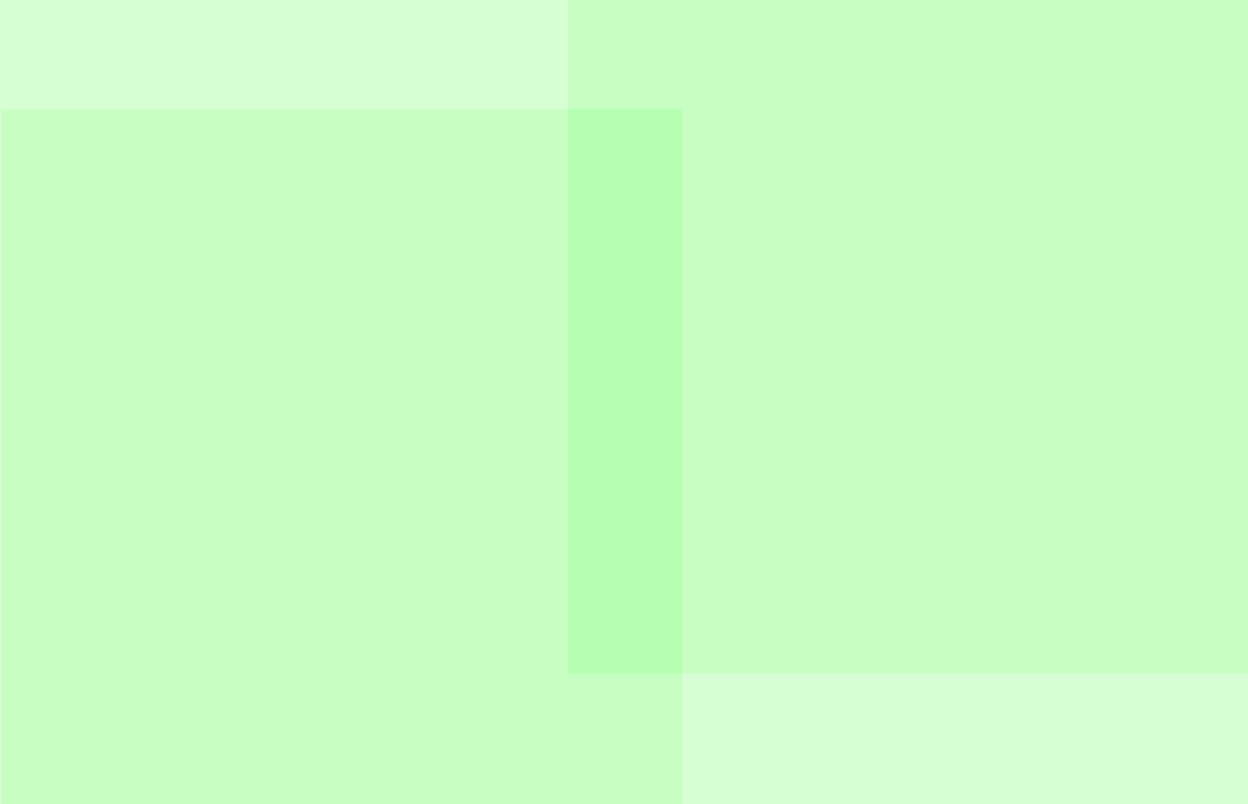
Addressing the challenges therefore is why the government has brought together key partners, through the Cambridge Growth Company, to target interventions and focus investment towards tackling the barriers to Greater Cambridge's sustainable growth: addressing the stressed water and nature systems, improving creaking infrastructure, tackling the unaffordability of homes and easing congestion on the roads.



Championing Greater Cambridge's strengths: addressing challenges to inclusive growth

The city's knowledge-led economy is globally competitive and over decades has been one of the fastest growing innovation economies. Recent data from the University of Cambridge's Centre for Business Research¹, commissioned by Cambridge Ahead, shows continued intensification of innovation activity across the business clusters. The area's science and innovation parks are now home to over 4,000 companies and their 100,000 employees.

Greater Cambridge continues to be an important contributor to the UK economy, but some of the short-term pressures faced by companies are impacting the confidence of those businesses who would thrive in Greater Cambridge. Alongside tackling the short-term economic challenges, the government is committed to tackling the big local factors that impact upon investor and community confidence for the long term.



Investment in infrastructure, including the transport schemes of Cambridge North Station, the guided busway, and the forthcoming Cambridge South Station has unlocked opportunities for growth and opened access to jobs to more residents but, there's a lot more to do.

The Government's ambitions for economic expansion and Cambridge's potential as a science and technology powerhouse are clear. Despite the efforts of local partners, not all of the communities have felt the benefits of growth. There remains much that can be done to improve health outcomes and boost opportunity across the area.

Greater Cambridge housing regularly tops the unaffordability index. The area needs many more affordable, social and council houses. Water scarcity and wastewater capacity is halting progress; nature continues to be squeezed in an area with one of the lowest proportions of land designated for nature, dominated by large arable fields offering limited biodiversity.

Realising the growth potential of Greater Cambridge is of national and international importance. Therefore, addressing the constraints on sustainable and inclusive economic growth is a national imperative.

What we've achieved so far

The Cambridge Growth Company was established to develop, and start to deliver, the Government's ambitions for Greater Cambridge.

As a subsidiary of Homes England, the government's housing and regeneration agency, we are bringing forward near-term priorities to accelerate and unblock already identified key development opportunities.

Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

We secured £3 million of government funding for Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (CUH) to support a new model of urgent and emergency care, including preparations for a state-of-the-art acute hospital, on the Cambridge Biomedical Campus.

This marks a vital first step in transforming local urgent and emergency care. The current Emergency Department was built 60 years ago for a quarter of today's patients, and over 70% of the acute hospital estate is in poor or bad condition.

Our support unlocked this early investment, enabling plans for modern, resilient health infrastructure that will strengthen care for communities and underpin sustainable growth across Greater Cambridge.

To date, we have worked alongside our Homes England colleagues, with wider government, local partners and members of the Cambridge Water Scarcity Group, to unlock planning applications in sites already allocated for development totalling over 9,000 new homes and 528,000sqm of commercial space.

Waterbeach New Town

Homes England committed £23 million in recoverable funding, alongside £20 million from the Greater Cambridge Partnership, to relocate Waterbeach Station – a critical piece of infrastructure for delivering Waterbeach New Town.

The new, modern transport hub will replace the existing station and enable the next phase of 4,500 homes to move forward, supporting sustainable growth and improved connectivity for residents.

Transport as an enabler: CSET and Cambourne to Cambridge (C-C)

We secured £7.2 million of government funding in March 2024 to progress the Cambridge South East Transport (CSET) project. CSET will improve local transport links for the Cambridge Biomedical Campus (CBC) and other key employment sites in the southern travel corridor, including preparation of a Transport and Works Act Order for the Cambridge South East Transport (CSET) project.

CSET will provide a reliable, sustainable link between a travel hub near the A11 and CBC easing congestion, connecting communities and improving access to jobs, research, and healthcare.

We have provided a funding letter to support the project's Statement of Case, helping move it to the next stage of approvals and ensuring the infrastructure is in place to keep Cambridge connected and competitive.

Longer term actions

A key part of our role is to develop a long-term strategy for housing, employment space and infrastructure, informed by a robust evidence base. The plan, when complete, will look beyond the timeframe envisaged by normal planning processes. It will take forward the government's growth ambitions by building on those the local authorities set out in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan and will, in due course, have regard to a Spatial Development Strategy to be prepared by the Mayor. The plan will, over time, enable us to unlock the infrastructure necessary for nationally significant growth.

We are already working with government on two key long term infrastructure issues, water and transport.

Nationally significant infrastructure

As part of the programme to deliver long-term water supply, continue its water savings measures and address wastewater capacity issues, the government has outlined new measures being taken forward to switch on an Eddington water reuse system. Alongside this, it has commissioned Anglian Water to prepare a plan to rectify issues on wastewater, which is a significant barrier to planned development. Work also continues with the Advisory Water Scarcity Group to assure the delivery of major water infrastructure, including the Fens Reservoir.

On transport we are working with other government departments and with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, as the Strategic Transport Authority, to explore mass rapid transit solutions for Cambridge.

Our objectives are clear: to create vibrant places where people enjoy living, working and visiting.

By emphasising good placemaking; by bringing forward critical infrastructure and affordable housing; and by tackling inequality we can support the community and deliver sustainable economic growth.

We want to create high-quality, mixed-use neighbourhoods where quality, sustainable homes and green spaces, rewarding jobs and training, local amenities and public services are integrated from the outset.

Embedding the passion and vision of Greater Cambridge's communities for a healthy natural environment, our work will be guided by best practice environment principles¹ adopted by the area's local councils. Those principles establish a pathway towards achieving sustainable inclusive place-based growth, focusing on the themes: net zero carbon, nature and land, water, the circular economy and climate change adaptation.

1 [https://thecgc.org.uk/files/67e659c467a7c58456ede744_OXCAM_ENVIRONMENTAL_PRINCIPLES_2025_\(FINAL\).pdf](https://thecgc.org.uk/files/67e659c467a7c58456ede744_OXCAM_ENVIRONMENTAL_PRINCIPLES_2025_(FINAL).pdf)

Looking ahead: a stronger partnership

The local councils, working with forward-thinking partners and developers, are innovating in environmentally distinctive and sustainable place-making to deliver some of the fastest rates of housebuilding in the country. The award-winning Greater Cambridge Local Planning Authority is planning for growth within the framework of the statutory local plan process. To deliver more ambitious levels of sustainable growth for Greater Cambridge, we need to go beyond the capabilities of local partners. We need to move at pace to seize opportunities and critically, show how accelerated growth can be done well.

To do this, we need a coming together of national and local partners, through a dedicated delivery body with the powers, resources, and national clout to make real change.

We have already started our work to lay the foundations for a long-term delivery vehicle.

The government has now confirmed its intention to consult on the case for setting up a centrally led development corporation as a route to achieving its ambitions.

Over the coming months, through a government statutory public consultation, local partners, residents and businesses will have the opportunity to shape what the future delivery arrangements for Greater Cambridge could be and what a development corporation needs to focus on to succeed.



Delivering for Greater Cambridge

What could a centrally led development corporation bring to Greater Cambridge? From the start, a development corporation would bring dedicated resources, an expert team and powers to fund and coordinate interventions that resolve the known bottlenecks causing delays to sustainable development.

A centrally led development corporation could:

- Put in place early-stage funding to accelerate delivery of sites already in local plans to remove known barriers such as water, enabling infrastructure, land ownership issues, and transport connectivity.
- Bring to bear the power, convening role and funding capacity of national government to improve residents' quality of life, alongside supporting Cambridge to contribute to national economic growth.
- Be innovative in leveraging and integrating large-scale public and private investment to achieve long-term transformation, creating lasting social, economic and environmental benefits.
- Use its powers to make targeted interventions that drive forward areas with the greatest potential for sustainable growth, with the right investment in transport to join workplaces up with homes and social and green infrastructure.
- Provide assurance to communities, by working closely with local partners to ensure long-term stewardship of developments to support the wellbeing of current and future residents in inclusive, thriving places.
- Provide stability and continuity by working well beyond the limitations of single economic, political or planning cycles.
- Plan for long-term sustainable growth, underpinned by a robust evidence base.

Should the Secretary of State decide to establish a centrally led development corporation, it is the intention for locally democratically elected leaders to be invited to join the Board working alongside directors chosen for their expertise in placemaking, delivering physical, social and environmental infrastructure, innovation and business growth, health and education, and community services.

If a decision is made to progress, the development corporation board would establish a clear framework for measuring success, grounded in what matters most to local communities. This could include the number of homes more affordable to local residents and a greater diversity of housing types and tenures; better skills and training opportunities; additional and enhanced green spaces and protections for nature; and better active travel options. The Board will be supported by the government to ensure that the proposed development corporation is empowered to deliver.

The Government will bring forward its full proposals in a statutory consultation.

The Cambridge Growth Company

The Cambridge Growth Company Board comprises senior representatives from MHCLG and Homes England.

The Company's Advisory Council comprises the Mayor of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, Leaders of Cambridge City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council, the Chair of Cambridge Water Scarcity Group, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research at the University of Cambridge and the Chair of the Cambridge University NHS Foundation Trust.

Download the CGC Advisory Council [Memorandum of Understanding](#) via the website.



It is essential that the benefits of growth are felt by existing communities. Greater Cambridge must become an exemplar for ambitious sustainable development and placemaking, a model for growth that sets the bar for how our cities, towns and villages adapt to new challenges and seize opportunities.



Homes
England

Cambridge
Growth
Company

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