

Cambridge Growth Company Advisory Council – July 2025**Agenda Item 4: Evidence Base – Update Report****1 Context**

- 1.1. The Cambridge Growth Company (CGC) commissioned Buro Happold to create and shape the evidence base that will underpin and support the Government's growth ambitions for Cambridge.
- 1.1. Working closely with stakeholders, the evidence base is an important step in quantifying the scale of opportunity.
- 1.2. Prior + Partners are supporting Buro Happold in this work to ensure the evidence base can be captured in placemaking terms and articulated spatially. The BH team is further supported by subject-matter cross-disciplinary expertise, providing breadth and depth of the CGC agenda.
- 1.3. The Evidence Base activity is structured in four stages: a rapid review of existing information and evidence; a public-facing strategic narrative for CGC and growth scenario mapping; supplementing the evidence base; and creating a strategy for infrastructure delivery.
- 1.4. An approach to engagement with strategic stakeholders, including local authorities, the Combined Mayoral Authority, universities, infrastructure providers, regulators, and communities, is outlined below.

2 Current Status

- 2.1. The Advisory Council may recall that CGC commissioned Buro Happold to support it in creating a robust, evidence-based framework to underpin, inform and support the delivery of objectives set out in the written ministerial statement at the time of the CGC incorporation.
- 2.2. The first part of this work, to conduct a gap analysis of the existing evidence base, understand constraints and opportunities, is nearing the completion of Stage 1. The outcome will be shared with AC members following a process of internal QA/QC.
- 2.3. Stage 2 is about to commence. It has two elements. First, and supported by direction from Government, the co-creation of a public-facing strategic narrative, establishing a suite of principles that will frame and guide future CGC activity over the coming years. Second, building on the baseline, the creation of different growth scenarios will explore the potential for future growth, linking job creation, housing, infrastructure, and the environment. These growth scenarios will be framed by combinations of assumptions and trajectories, i.e., low, medium, or high growth, with a tech-led focus, for example, or a focus on green infrastructure.
- 2.4. Looking ahead, stage 3 will aim to supplement the existing evidence base. A fourth stage will examine and shape the options for growth in spatial terms, while a final stage will produce an Implementation and Delivery Plan.

3 Adapting our approach to Future Engagement with the Advisory Council and its membership

- 3.1. As part of the work programme set out above Buro Happold recommended a detailed engagement strategy to support each stage, reflecting best practice engagement in place-making. Moving forward, the development of a more detailed engagement plan will require careful navigation, and the CGC continues to adapt and respond as the strategic context of Cambridge evolves. This requires careful consideration of factors such as Spending Review outcomes and their implications for delivery; the likely form of the long-term delivery vehicle most suited to the Government's ambitions for Cambridge; the timetable of local spatial planning processes (including GCTS); the evolving planning legislation; and the input and engagement of local stakeholders. These factors have constrained our ability to establish a complete engagement strategy.
- 3.2. We would like to discuss the timing of engagement around stage 2 (the co-creation of a public-facing strategic narrative, establishing a suite of principles that will frame and guide future CGC activity over the coming years) and its potential alignment to upcoming local engagement (GCTS and Reg 18). The Advisory Council is a vital part of our governance arrangements as an opportunity to communicate and engage with stakeholders.
- 3.3. Future phases of the engagement strategy need to be thought through as per 3.1 above. We will continue to work with communication team to ensure our engagement strategy aligned with CGC's and local programme milestones.
- 3.4. Recognising the Advisory Council's desire and appetite to actively engage with CGC to ensure opportunities for place-based growth are maximised, CGC values the opportunity to work with AC to shape the next steps of its delivery programme. The views and input of the AC on its next steps are welcome.

4 Next Steps

- 4.1. AC members will receive the outcome of Stage 1 work, comprising a summary of the Evidence Base and Gap Analysis.
- 4.2. The second stage of our delivery programme is about to commence. The outputs of this stage will be (1) the creation of a public-facing strategic narrative for CGC to frame and guide future place-making activity, and (2) to shape and develop a series of growth scenarios and programme of activities over the coming years.
- 4.3. While details are to be agreed, the core activity anticipated to shape the strategic narrative includes:
 - Initial feedback from AC members – AC members will be asked to provide feedback on the emerging draft document .
 - Targeted feedback – A series of 1-1 or small group discussions throughout July to test the direction of travel and gather feedback to inform the preparation of the Strategic

Narrative. Engagement with CEOs and Leaders to shape a final narrative will draw on available expertise and understanding of the messages that will resonate locally.

- The final strategic narrative will be published by CGC, with the established principles to frame and guide future CGC activity and we welcome comments from the Advisory Council on the timing of this publication.

5 Discussion

- 5.1. AC members will receive the Stage 1 Evidence Baseline and Gap Analysis outcomes and will be invited to comment to ensure it resonates locally. This will inform CGC programme of activity to address gaps and omissions in the evidence base which are required to fully test government ambitions for growth in Cambridge.
- 5.2. Does the approach for producing the strategic narrative in paragraph 4.3 seem appropriate? Which partners should be involved in co-producing the public-facing strategic narrative for CGC?
- 5.3. The narrative is programmed to be completed in Autumn 2025. CGC intends to engage publicly. AC members are invited to provide views on the timing of this engagement alongside the GCSPs Regulation 18 Local Plan Consultation.