

## Response to The Greater Cambridge Local Plan 'First Proposals' - S/CBC from:

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### Landscape vs Townscape; Urbanism; and Urbanization

The globally-recognised, rapidly-expanding clusters of the 'Cambridge Phenomenon', together with the slower growth and development of Cambridge Biomedical Campus (CBC) since its 'birth' in 1967, have achieved extraordinary success stories for 'Greater Cambridge' and the UK across a broad range of medical and other technologically advanced initiatives.

However, we now know (according to research from the Centre for Cities thinktank) that this level of success has come at a considerable human cost, reducing Cambridge City to the shameful status of "the most unequal city in the country" where "the least well-off 20% of local people receive only 2% of the city's income". How is the depth of this truly shocking statistic to be addressed, as a matter of priority, within the current framework of GCSPS's 'Our vision' and 'Our aims'?

#### 1. S/CBC/A

'Our vision' talks of safeguarding "our unique heritage and landscapes". However, so far as S/CBC/A is concerned, the continuing emphasis on 'growth' generally (whatever happened to '*Doughnut Economics*', CCC?) will also come, at an accelerating pace and cost, to "the unique heritage and landscapes" of the very City that sparked the initiatives and success referred to above. **How come** that, in a city with so many unique University townscape features, and yet with such limited exceptional landscape to its north, east and west, GCSPS is proposing to allow CBC to encroach massively on the Gog Magog Hills and Downs, thereby destroying the exceptional rising landscape across the Downs to the Hills, and the spectacular view, down to and across the City – a view that so enriches the cresting of the Hills at, and the descent and view from, Wandlebury?

The Ninewells development was promised as a "soft edge" to the city. Allowing CBC to expand into the fields to the south will cause irreparable damage to the environment, the biodiversity, and the setting of Cambridge.

The draft Local Plan allocates a fraction of the land sought by CBC in their 2050 Vision. The (relatively small) area of S/CBC/A will be insufficient for CBC in the longer term. So at what point do we draw the red line? The answer has to be now. They should not be allocated this land, the suitability of which has been rated "Red" in the GCP's own Site Assessment Summary, and the release of which would cause "Very High Harm" to the environment.

On behalf of CBC, Dr Jan Lowe said that the 2020 masterplan "is almost fulfilled". The 2050 Vision talks about providing shops, restaurants and other facilities. Where were those on the **2020** Masterplan? and where was the station? There must be an updated masterplan for the **existing CBC land allocations**, which must provide for all the facilities required on a campus of this size, before any further land allocation is considered.

To date, CBC has not only failed to make best use of the land it already has, but it has failed to provide even the most basic infrastructure required on a campus of that size:

- No planning was done for the location of Cambridge South station: not only is there insufficient land for the station itself, but no thought was given to the necessary connections to bus and other transport.
- The latest plan for the station is based on a material underestimate of future passenger numbers.
- There is totally inadequate cycle and pedestrian permeability through the campus.
- There aren't even basic facilities for employees or visitors to the campus.

Why should we believe that an organisation that has signally failed, in over 50 years, to create a rounded community will now do so just because it is given more (irreplaceable green belt) land? Why should such demonstrable lack of planning be rewarded with a blank slate?

The new railway station and busway, improved bus services and a real permeability of the site for pedestrians and cyclists, would enable faster links with other sites. Finally, it is too early to fully understand the long-term impacts of Covid on homeworking, and therefore on requirements for commercial space.

2. **Who will judge** whether the existing CBC site (including its current allocations) has been properly utilised before releasing development land at S/CBC/A?

### 3. **GCP Site Assessment Summary**

GCP's own Site Assessment Summary grades the suitability of S/CBC/A as "RED". If a site is rated "Red", with a rating of "Very High harm", then this site should not have been included in the Draft Local Plan.

Further, your assessment states:

- "There are no apparent priority habitats within the site". This is not so: please see [John Meed's Response to Local Plan Policy S/CBC](https://queen-ediths.info/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Response-to-Policy-S_CBC-JM.pdf) detailing the red-list endangered bird species on the site (https://queen-ediths.info/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Response-to-Policy-S\_CBC-JM.pdf)
- That the development would "not have a detrimental impact on the functioning of trunk roads and/or local roads". This is highly improbable.
- "Distance to City ... Centre: Less than or Equal to 2,000m". This is incorrect. The distance from Ninewells to the City centre is more than 4,000m.
- "Distance to Rapid Public Transport: Less than or Equal to 1,800m". This is incorrect. The distance from Ninewells to the Central Railway Station is 3,300m.

### 4. **Water management and Flood risk**

A large part of S/CBC/A, exactly coinciding with the Environment Agency's flooding maps, spent months last winter under water (please see below). At the height of the flooding in S/CBC/A, the water in the surrounding ditches was not moving at all: there was nowhere for it to go. This area would be best managed by turning it into a wetland area to encourage and promote the existing wildlife of the area, not to mention promoting the well-being of residents of Queen Edith's, and employees on the Biomedical Campus.



**5. Proposed Area of Major Change**

The permissive paths around the S/CBC/A area are already heavily used – by scores of people every single day. Where will these people be able to go for exercise if these fields are built on? Add to them the potential residents and employees of 990 dwellings and 132,000 m2 commercial building – and the open space required to be associated with this development would be at least double the area of “Green belt enhancement”.

[John Meed points out](#) that it would require a greater area than proposed to offset the biodiversity loss, let alone create a 20% net gain.

([https://queen-ediths.info/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Response-to-Policy-S\\_CBC-JM.pdf](https://queen-ediths.info/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Response-to-Policy-S_CBC-JM.pdf))