

2030 vision

for the Cambridge sub-region

Response to the consultation on the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough LEP Growth Prospectus

This response is based on the work of the 2030 Vision project, which is a joint venture of Cambridge University, Cambridge Past, Present & Future, Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce, and the Federation of Cambridge Residents Associations. The aim of the project is to enhance both the quality of life in the sub-region, and its contribution to the national economy. The project has so far organised workshops on 9 topics, which have gathered the views of some 300 people with deep and varying expertise, plus a similar number of councillors, residents associations and individuals.

Key to the project is that it is only by taking a comprehensive strategic overview of the whole Cambridge sub-region that rational decisions can be made about its future. Although the area makes a significant contribution to the national economy, it is not achieving its full potential. Central government must be persuaded that the Cambridge sub-region has a massively important role to play in the UK economy for which it requires both support and autonomy.

For each of the 9 topics that the 2030 Vision project has considered, there is a single page of detailed conclusions, some of which are summarised below.

Enterprise

The Cambridge Cluster is chaotic but agile – it works because of the talent. Our universities and hospitals are important for local growth: they provide buzz and knowledge exchange, and absorb economic shocks. The sub-region's prosperity is neither even nor robust – if its universities decline the impact will be huge.

The Cambridge brand needs intensive and exemplary international marketing, making best use of our strengths; examples include 3d printers, new polymers for electronics, stem cells, cleantech. Business needs cross-fertilisation of expertise and so as far as possible it should be accommodated in compact areas or 'nodes' where many kinds of activity are gathered together and which are well-connected to one another by public transport. People prefer to work in a lively city rather than outside it and allocating land for employment should be given the same attention as that for housing

Work opportunities need to be redistributed and working hours should be reduced to allow greater family and community engagement: consider lower wages in return for flexible hours.

Science, innovation and industry

A concerted effort should be made to find ways of more fully exploiting the economic potential of university research. Innovation, which flourishes in the sub-region, takes a long time to have an impact and does not initially result in much employment. It is unwise to push

technology that is not ready. Far more jobs are created by the use of technology than by its development.

We cannot rely on maintaining existing jobs; new ones need to be continually created. It is not sufficient to support pure science; there must be support from a balanced employment structure, not just jobs for the very talented.

We need to encourage the skills to bring products to market successfully. This involves product development, design for manufacture, and marketing skills, together with finance availability. These demand creative and intellectual skills in which the sub-region is not strong.

We live in an agrarian region, whose scale and products are very diverse; the initiative should be taken to establish a virtual agriculture school to lead a local cluster of agricultural research firms capable of exporting and selling expertise and exemplars.

Business needs to accept that it has much to gain from employee involvement in the community, assisting younger employees to develop and enjoy vibrant communities. Social enterprise, which constructs its business model on community interests, should be encouraged.

Employment and skills

The area's schools and businesses must work closely together, to ensure both that students learn problem solving that will get them jobs, and that skills deficits are avoided. It is important to provide jobs for the less talented. Valuable initiatives to bring schools and business together, such as Business Class and Peterborough Skills Vision, should be extended through the whole sub-region and information flow between schools and business greatly improved.

Students should acquire mental and social skills such as problem solving and team working. They should be encouraged to develop communication skills and gain an insight into employment possibilities through undertaking voluntary work in the community.

There is deep concern among both employers *and* sixth-formers about the downgrading of vocational education.

Transport

Government must recognise that the Cambridge sub-region should be a priority. It occupies a key location on the international east-west route from Felixstowe to the Midlands and Northern Ireland, is among best performers in UK economy and is in the region with the highest predicted population growth in England. Could not the wealth it creates be put towards improving the sub-regional infrastructure?

Good rail connectivity with London is vital and Stansted must offer long-haul flights.

A sophisticated road-pricing system is essential to fund an increase in road capacity, ease congestion and generate money for public transport. Hypothecation is vital. The LEP should lobby government to set up a national transport policy embracing road and congestion charging. Congestion-type charging already applies on railways – why not on roads?

Movement within both the city and the sub-region must be improved by better pedestrian and cycle routes, more public transport, cycle parking and controlled car speeds. More employers and schools should be encouraged to to pick-up from both P& R and the station. Car clubs should be promoted and employers encouraged to set up means by which employees can share information on their journeys and organise car sharing. Load combining should be developed for goods distribution and delivery.

Staggered work hours should be encouraged. Secondary schools and sixth-form colleges, many of whose students use cars, and are among obvious targets. Older students should be encouraged to travel to and from school on their own.

Broadband

Most want to meet their colleagues, rather than work from home – though, with adequate power and broadband, cloud-based computing will enable federated working in different locations over a wide area.

Digital can help to promote culture in the sub-region, for example empowering audiences to discover and try things out, making possible the seemingly far-fetched. Cambridge could become a constant experimental space, with a mass of data (population, health, transport, economic) that could be mashed together with data on participation and venue use, and made available for policy making and programme development.

Housing

The greatest sustainability challenge in the nation's built environment is its existing housing stock. The rate of replacement is so slow that new housing, however efficient, will never begin to compensate for the inefficiency of the existing stock. The Government's target of an 80% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050 depends to a great extent both on the degree to which the energy efficiency of this existing housing stock can be improved and on the capacity and willingness of existing households to change their behaviour and adopt energy efficiency measures. There is not enough cooperation among the designers and suppliers of technology, merchants, manufacturers, architects, engineers and approved installers. Rather than relying on individual initiatives, RSLs, local authorities and local community groups should collaborate in setting up energy efficiency programmes as a matter of some urgency.

Alconbury Enterprise Zone

Cambridge innovations should be manufactured as UK products. It is important that proper use is made of Alconbury. This cannot be left to the developer, who inevitably will be motivated to some extent by the need to maximise his profit. Experience with large projects makes clear the need for strong and continued leadership by a single person able to commit themselves full time.

Place

The area must be kept attractive. This is not only for the happiness and health of all who live and work there but also because business needs to recruit and retain staff against global competition. Towns in the sub-region must be made more welcoming and cleaner. Cultural, sports and entertainment provisions need enhancing. Easy movement, good places, good schools and good healthcare are critical. Public space is a huge issue. People – both old

and young – need the stimulation of meeting in both formal and informal contexts. The city needs an auditorium large enough for conference plenary sessions. And the older University and colleges need to share more of their facilities (buildings and sports grounds) with the community. Loss of pubs and village stores must be compensated by multi-function community buildings. Unbuilt space is important too.

The Green Belt and fingers define both the setting and form of Cambridge. Clear guidelines are needed for any changes.

Multifunctional uses of green spaces must be developed, for both ecosystem services and agriculture, and there must be more dialogue between those concerned with each of these and with development of land for housing and business. Green infrastructure will help to help prevent flooding and to ensure a supply of water.

Peter Carolin pc207@cam.ac.uk

Peter Landshoff pvl@damtp.cam.ac.uk