

Greater Cambridge Local Plan

Sustainable Transport and Connectivity

Cambridge Area Bus Users response

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning invited representations on the draft update to the Greater Cambridge Local Plan. Cambridge Area Bus Users collaborated closely with Cambridgeshire Sustainable Travel Alliance to scrutinise the policies' provision for sustainable and active travel.

Cambridge Area Bus Users was particularly concerned about [Policy I/ST - Sustainable Transport and connectivity](#). In our view this policy is ineffective in ensuring that new developments are highly permeable by buses.

This document outlines our reasoning. It is adapted from the representation and supporting evidence submitted to Greater Cambridge Shared Planning.

(Note: [Greater Cambridge Shared Planning](#) is the Shared Planning Service between [Cambridge City Council](#) and [South Cambridgeshire District Council](#). It is not the same body as [Greater Cambridge Partnership](#) which is the delivery body for the devolved City Deal signed in 2014)

Summary of representation

Policy I/ST is unsound because it is not effective. The Plan depends on increased bus use to reduce reliance on the private car, however Policy I/ST does not set sufficiently clear requirements to ensure residential development is designed from the outset to enable safe, direct and efficient bus services, including high-frequency services where needed. Without such requirements, development may constrain effective bus routes and services, making the Plan's intended modal shift and reduction in car reliance less achievable. The policy thereby fails to provide an effective mechanism for delivering the transport outcomes on which the Plan depends.

Long representation

Policy I/ST is unsound because it is not effective. The Plan depends on increased use of public transport, including buses, to reduce reliance on the private car. However, Policy I/ST does not set sufficiently clear requirements to ensure that residential development is designed from the outset to enable the operation of high-quality, high-frequency bus services. In particular, it does not require bus permeability, routing and infrastructure to be properly considered at the location, masterplanning and detailed-design stages. Without such requirements, developments may be designed in ways that constrain the delivery of direct, efficient and frequent bus services, making the Plan's intended modal shift and reduction in car reliance more difficult to achieve. The policy thereby fails to provide an effective mechanism for securing the development patterns and highway infrastructure needed to deliver the transport outcomes on which the Plan's development strategy depends.

Policy I/ST: Sustainable transport and connectivity states (inter alia) that:

(2.) development should ...

(2.e.) Maximise the incorporation of public and community transport (including demand responsive transport) into development by

(2.e.i.) through the design embedding direct routes for and access to high quality

public transport (2.e.ii.) Contributing to new or improved public transport routes, as necessary, that serve key destinations ...

(2.f.) Ensure that where new road or road access is provided within or into the site ...

(2.f.i.) It secures the safety of all road users, utilising proportionate design solutions that slow the speed of traffic ...

(2.f.iii.) In appropriate circumstances, it restricts and/or affords lower priority to through access for general motor traffic, maintaining access for essential road users ...

The Supporting information of Policy I/ST: Sustainable transport and connectivity states (inter alia) that:

10.8. New developments should deliver high quality places, designed around people ... Where road access is provided through a site, generally the design should ... facilitate easy access to public transport...

10.11. Major development will be expected to provide access to high quality public transport within reasonable walking distance of homes and jobs ... Public transport infrastructure should be designed in accordance with LTN 1/24...

10.13. The policy sets out clear requirements regarding transport infrastructure provision and connectivity that is expected to address increased demand arising from new developments through the planning application process.

These paragraphs do not set sufficiently clear requirements to ensure that residential development is designed from the outset to enable high-quality, high-frequency bus services. Policy I/ST: Sustainable transport and connectivity and its supporting information require strengthening as they do not require bus permeability, routing and infrastructure to be properly considered at the location, masterplanning and detailed-design stages:

- The Policy and supporting information lack a stipulation that bus provision should be properly considered at the outset – in development location, in master planning and in detailed design.
- The Policy lacks a requirement that new developments' transport infrastructure design must ensure permeability by high-quality, high-frequency bus services.
- The reference to LTN 1/24 is insufficient to address this issue. LTN 1/24 provides guidance principally on bus-user priority and the identification of appropriate priority measures. Policy I/ST also needs to establish requirements concerning the design of new residential street networks.

The following changes need to be made to Policy I/ST:

Section 2.e. should have an additional sub-clause:

iv. Specifying which streets will facilitate safe, direct and efficient bus operation, with bus priority measures (i.e. bus lanes or gates) where needed and good visibility and access, free of unnecessary deflections and parked vehicles.

Section 2.f. should have an additional sub-clause:

v. The streets intended for use by buses will be identified at the outset, in line with 2.e.iv. above.

Then in addition:

- LTN1/24, referred to in Policy I/ST's supporting information, gives general guidance "for supporting and prioritising buses and their passengers within an integrated road network" to which "Local authorities are expected to demonstrate that they have given due consideration ... when designing schemes that qualify for dedicated Government funding. [LTN1/24, p8]
- Whilst LTN1/24 links to two documents on "Existing guidance on planning for buses in new developments" [LTN1/24, pp17/18] the first, from Stagecoach is no longer available, having been superseded by [Bus Services & New Residential Developments Second Edition January 2025](#) [Go-Ahead, Stagecoach and Bus Centre of Excellence, January 2025].
- This, and [Buses in Urban Developments](#) [Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation, January 2018] referenced in LTN1/24, should be referred to directly in the supporting information to *Policy I/ST: Sustainable transport and connectivity*, as enshrining principles whose observance will be required by Greater Cambridge Shared Planning, for new residential developments to gain approval.

- Subsequent pages of LTN1/24 give flow charts on “Problem identification” identifying “potential bus user priority solutions”, “Assess [sic] the road or street to determine its desired environment” [LTN1/24, pp19-21] which are not specific to new developments.
 - For new developments “Problem identification” should be irrelevant as excellent planning and design, informed by best practice in other LPA areas, with input from bus operator professionals, in collaboration with the Transport and Highway Authorities, will have prevented the occurrence of problems.
 - There is a need to include a requirement to collaborate at the pre-planning stage with bus operators to ensure that initial highway design specifies which streets will facilitate safe, direct and efficient bus operation.
 - *Policy I/ST: Sustainable transport and connectivity* should reference best practice as exemplified in [Bus Services & New Residential Developments Second Edition January 2025](#) (BS&NRD) [Go-Ahead, Stagecoach and Bus Centre of Excellence, January 2025], and [Buses in Urban Developments](#) (BUD) [Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation, January 2018] which would include bus permeability as an essential part of planning the road network, not as a retro-fit.
 - The avoidance of gratuitous curves [BUD, p24] and tight bends with poor visibility [BS&NRD, p5/PDFp4] on a planned bus route should be explicitly referenced.
 - The Policy should also reference the potential for pairs of distributor roads in new developments to be linked with a modal filter (bus/cycle section) to ease bus permeability. [BUD, p29 fig 26; BS&NRD, p9/PDFp4, fig9].
 - There is also a need to include a requirement for developers to work with the Highway and Transport Authorities to ensure that bus stops identified in planning applications are registered on the NaPTAN database when constructed so that they are ready for use the moment bus services start to operate.
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Supporting information/evidence

Bar Hill, established in the 1960s

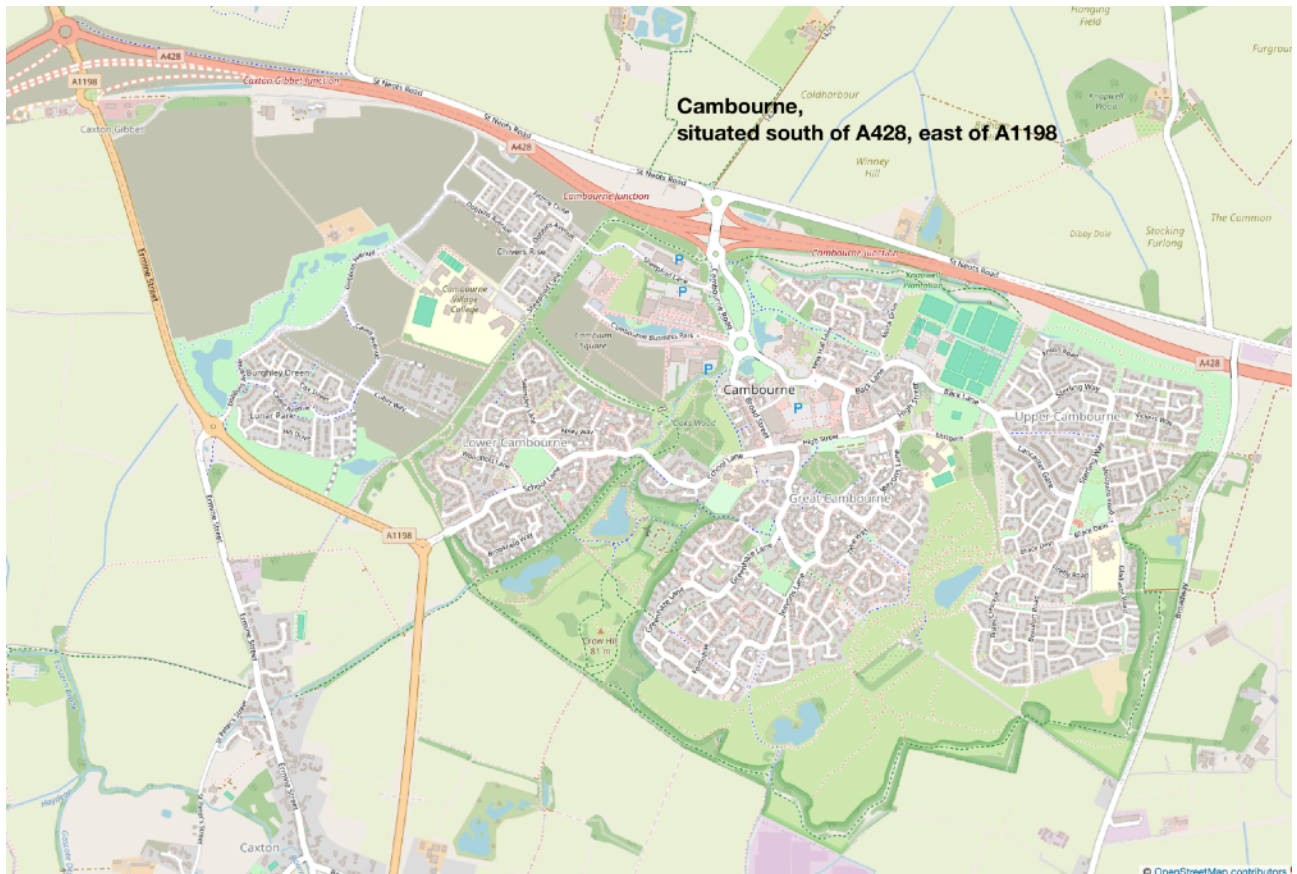


Bar Hill, established in the 1960s, SW of what was, at the time, the A604 Cambridge - Huntingdon road was a missed opportunity for bus permeability. In particular the possibility of being served by attractive, fast, Cambridge - Bar Hill - Huntingdon services, was lost as a result of the car-centric layout of an orbital distributor road with residential culs-de-sacs. This imposes an unattractive, loop service on the bus operator, with a time penalty of around 10 minutes to access, loop and exit the settlement. Albeit there is a network of footways throughout the village, to encourage active travel, the highway layout is fundamentally flawed in failing to plan for attractive bus services.

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning policies must ensure that this design is never repeated.

Cambourne, established in the late 1990s

Construction of Cambourne, situated south of the A428 and east of the A1198, began in June 1998, with the first house occupied in August 1999. The road layout exemplifies the gratuitous curves [BUD, p24] and tight bends with poor visibility [BS&NRD, p5/PDFp4] which should be avoided in planning for bus permeability in new developments.



With only northern (A428) and western (A1198) entry/egress to the 'super village', Stagecoach East's service 4 must follow a difficult and indirect pair of loops, to serve Great Cambourne and Upper Cambourne, as shown on the route map, below.



Passengers travelling to/from Cambridge thus have much slower services because of the lack of planning for any direct, east-west bus priority route through the settlement. The time penalty disadvantage of the sub-optimal nature of bus route 4 further imposes costs on the bus operator, threatening the sustainability of the service. Furthermore, the southernmost parts of the settlement are not served by buses, leaving residences in Jeavons Lane and Whittle Way some considerable distance (600m - 800m) from the nearest bus stop.

Additionally, the smooth operation of Stagecoach's route 4 and the two through services – Whippet's routes 18 and X3 – are hampered by the gratuitous curves, tight bends and poorly regulated car parking on the shared section along School Lane and Broad Street.

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning policies must ensure that this lack of pre-planning for bus services in settlement access/egress and road design is never repeated

Waterbeach New Town, being constructed 2020s

A positive exemplar which should be replicated in future developments is Waterbeach New Town.



The Waterbeach new town development of around 11,000 homes, being built on the site of the former Waterbeach Barracks and Airfield, has been designed to prioritise active travel and public transport from the start. The western sector of the development is led by

Urban&Civic as the master developer and has included a Sustainable Travel Hub, installed ready for the arrival of the first residents, and an initially half-hourly shuttle bus service connecting to Waterbeach Station, the Science Park, and Cambridge city centre [[Waterbeach website: Connections](#)]. Phase 2 will include a “bus only main link” through the site, connecting destinations including schools, a health facility and a new town centre [[Waterbeach website, news blog, 19 May 2026](#)].



The eastern sector, progressed by the Waterbeach Development Company, has been designed to provide a bus network that puts 90% of homes within five minutes' walk of a bus stop [[WSP projects: Waterbeach New Town East](#)].

The town as a whole will also be served by the Waterbeach to Cambridge busway being delivered by the Greater Cambridge Partnership [[Greater Cambridge Partnership website: Waterbeach to Cambridge: background](#)].

URLs for references quoted in representation

- [Bus Services & New Residential Developments Second Edition January 2025](#) (BS&NRD) [Go-Ahead, Stagecoach and Bus Centre of Excellence, January 2025]
- [Buses in Urban Developments \(BUD\)](#) [Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation, January 2018]