

CAMBRIDGE: A CITY OF QUARTERS

Cambridge Ahead
Young Advisory Committee 2023



**A vision that
speaks to all
generations**

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FOREWORD

In 2018 we created a forum for young professionals to have a voice in the future of Cambridge and its region by bringing insight and producing research on how our city could flourish for future generations.



Credit: Ethan Hu



The result is a piece of work that speaks to all generations but has been crafted by the hands of a younger generation.



JANE PATERSON-TODD
CEO, Cambridge Ahead

Our Young Advisory Committee (YAC) has become integral to Cambridge Ahead's mission to create a city that sustainably evolves for all its citizens. This committee has been welcomed by our key stakeholders in the civic community, which it has worked hard to engage with. The new research presented here is a testament to quite how far this impassioned group of young people has come. It is a thorough, creative, and important piece of thought leadership. I am sure it will have lasting impact.

The YAC has taken some themes introduced in our 2022 New Era for the Cambridge Economy (NECE report) which provoked thinking into a new era for city economies as we evolve through new demands towards our working habits and expectations for city living.

The report takes the idea of the 15-minute city and develops the concept to focus on celebrating diverse communities, presented here as 'quarters'. This concept is born out of grassroots conversations with groups and organisations across the city. In this regard, I consider the YAC to be setting a new standard for outreach and engagement, not ever pretending to represent groups other than their own but working hard to reflect others' views. The result is a piece of work that speaks to all generations but has been crafted by the hands of a younger generation. I see that as a unique and important contribution to Cambridge Ahead's wider offering.

Cambridge Ahead hopes that this work builds a new platform for collaboration and action across our academic, business and civic communities. We share a common purpose – to make the Cambridge economy more sustainable and more inclusive. A City of Quarters mindset and the ideas presented here may well be transformational in better achieving that together.



ROB CARTER
Chair, Cambridge Ahead
Young Advisory Committee

The pace of evolution, innovation, and entrepreneurship delivered by teams of people and companies based in and around Cambridge is quite staggering. The positive impacts that this research, technology, and thought leadership has had on the planet we all share is truly remarkable. This city we call home has creatively adapted and at times been pressured to keep up with this growing population alongside growing international expectations.

All of the contributors to this report highlight the value of human interaction, and these emotions have become even more acute following a time when spontaneous human contacts were highly limited. Communities in Cambridge are strong and, in many places, thriving. Though we know of course many people face significant struggles. With collective action, our communities could flourish further.

Likewise, the report reinforces how vital access to nature and open spaces is for community wellbeing and quality of life. It is apparent that innovation and collaboration stand ready to address grand challenges like decarbonising our city and reducing its impact on the natural environment. With strategic, cross-sector efforts Cambridge can become a vanguard of sustainable cities in the UK, if not internationally.

The Young Advisory Committee started conversations about the future of Cambridge back in 2020. The "city we wish to inherit" event we held then solidified our purpose as a group. The YAC is not just passionate about a better Cambridge, it is proactive in wanting to be a part of that change. That is why we offer in this report not only our considerations for shaping Cambridge's future, but also our commitment for the specific role our committee wants to play.

Our report highlights a number of areas and opportunities to support and enhance our communities to ensure that the next generation that call Cambridge home will be as proud of, and connected to, their city as we are.

We structure this report under the themes of community space, community engagement, social connectivity, housing, and climate resilience. That provides us with a framework to put forward the following 'Ideas for Change' that are the crux of this stage of our work.

In this report, "Cambridge: A City of Quarters", we (Cambridge Ahead's Young Advisory Committee) put forward a vision that we hope establishes a path towards an even greater Cambridge, where the assets of every neighbourhood are given space to thrive and be celebrated. Sometimes reinforcing what is already excellent about our city region and sometimes highlighting what isn't, we recognise that Cambridge is a place facing diverse opportunities and challenges.

We want the growth of the Cambridge economy to be a better thing for people across its diverse communities, many of whom experience too many barriers in benefiting from a buoyant economy, a situation we must do better at overcoming. Inclusion and sustainability of all kinds are fundamental to a good quality of life for those that live here, and a good quality of life is fundamental to the city's future success.

We are only too aware that Cambridge needs to act now to ensure that it will retain and attract talented and vital workers, across the public and private sector, in coming years. Particularly from our own perspective as young people who have chosen Cambridge for our jobs, we see vibrancy of the city's offering, affordability of good housing, and good connectivity as important factors in knowing where to call home and make a life. These are factors we worry about when we look across our city today.

We have generated a vision to bring the things we care about together, and articulate the role we want to play in making change. We were inspired by the positive response from civic, business, and academic leaders at our virtual event "The City We Want to Inherit" in late 2020, and grateful to Cambridge Ahead for giving us that platform for the first time. Our starting point was to speak to

CREATE SPACES FOR QUARTERS TO FLOURISH

1

Convene Cambridge Ahead members, Local Authorities, and other partners to explore opportunities for meanwhile use which has social impact at its heart, to encourage vibrancy, entrepreneurialism, and community-focused activity in the city.

2

Create more community farming opportunities and biodiverse spaces across the city region, strengthening institutional support for CoFarm's flagship Coldham's Common site, and encouraging new developments to proactively plan for community farming spaces to establish their long-term viability. In doing so, support community interactions, food security, and nature recovery.

CREATE ENGAGED AND STRENGTHENED COMMUNITIES AT THE HEART OF EVERY QUARTER

3

Commission research to evidence and understand the risk of loss of voluntary and community support roles to the civic system in Cambridge. Support community organisations to facilitate local volunteering by making dedicated volunteer coordinator funding more readily available.

4

Create 'bumping spaces' across the city by providing equitably accessible spaces where people from all communities can enjoy themselves and interact.

others outside our own demographic and life experiences to understand and offer something which reflected a wider set of views than our own.

Building on these conversations and our research across the city, we offer a view of where Cambridge should be trying to get to and some of the actions that can get us there. At the heart of this vision is one big idea: that thinking about Cambridge as a 'City of Quarters' reflects the changes that have taken place in its urban fabric and creates a pathway for how the city can achieve its maximum potential. We are shifting to becoming a more polycentric city with new centres becoming established. Decision makers and leaders across Cambridge adopting a 'City of Quarters mindset' is the first suggestion we make, establishing a productive new paradigm for the city's future.

To become a City of Quarters will require action across our city's institutions. No single organisation can or should have responsibility for where Cambridge is going and the quality of life experienced across its communities. Major institutions across business, academia, and the civic community all have roles and responsibilities. We are pleased that Cambridge Ahead is one forum through which key players can engage collectively on this and where ambitions for our future city can overlap and find synergy.

We see this as a starting point, one which we hope gains traction and creates action, and one which we want to play a direct role in as the Cambridge Ahead Young Advisory Committee. We thank all those who helped shape this work, and contributed thought pieces for this report, and look forward to working with you all.

A CITY OF QUARTERS IS ONE WHERE

- Each part of the city belongs to a quarter - no-one is left out.
- Every quarter has
 - Its own character (perhaps represented by an emblem, site, or other recognisable symbol)
 - Diverse facilities and services
 - Diverse housing types and tenures
 - Social infrastructure, bumping spaces and green spaces
 - Community social media/ website(s) for providing local information and coordination
- Each quarter has a role and voice in the whole.

ENGAGE COMMUNITIES IN LOCAL DECISION MAKING AND INTERVENTIONS THROUGH INNOVATIVE MEANS

5

Engage with people in our city by using innovative, inclusive, and accessible methods like Citizens' Juries or other deliberative democratic models, Community Wealth Building, and online platforms like Pol.is and Citizen Lab, to move beyond polarising discourse and top-down interventions towards more nuanced conversations and constructive participation.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND URBAN DESIGN TO ENHANCE QUARTERS

6

Introduce a more diverse mix of housing types in Cambridge such as build-to-rent, co-living, compact living, employer backed housing, and social housing, whilst making the case to Government for further affordable housing funding to help overcome viability barriers in providing housing that meets the need of essential workers.

7

Think boldly about high-quality densification opportunities in new/ re-developments in Cambridge and consider the positive implications for viability of local public services, public transport, carbon reduction, and other issues that can come from high-quality denser development.

EMBEDDING CLIMATE RESILIENCE

8

Prioritise the decarbonisation of our buildings by: supporting the City Council's scoping of a district heating network, introducing high standards for new buildings through the next Local Plan, and examining the carbon offsetting / social investment case to leverage investment into the costly retrofitting of existing building stock.

9

Convene industry partners, planners, water companies and other key stakeholders to introduce the concept of water neutrality in Cambridge. In doing so, support ambitions to introduce an 80L per person/day benchmark in the Local Plan and contribute to behavioural change to reduce customer usage levels.

10

Support equitable access to quality open spaces by supporting e.g., the work of the Cambridge Nature Network and Natural Cambridgeshire's pledge to 'double nature', thus increasing the environmental sustainability and natural capital of the city.



Credit: Chris Boland

INTRODUCTION

Our vision

Cambridge is a vibrant mosaic of quarters, connected by inclusive, sustainable, and thriving communities. It's the greatest small city in the world.



What do we mean by “Cambridge”?

When we talk about Cambridge in this report, we are thinking about Cambridge and its surrounding communities which have strong links to the city but may sit outside its administrative boundaries. We strongly believe that the principles of this report are not only applicable to Cambridge city, but could be applied to other cities, market towns or villages in our region and beyond.

In this report, “Cambridge: A City of Quarters”, we put forward a vision that we hope establishes a path towards an even greater Cambridge, where the assets of every neighbourhood are given space to thrive and be celebrated. Sometimes reinforcing what is already excellent about our city region and sometimes highlighting what isn't, we recognise that Cambridge is a place facing diverse opportunities and challenges. Building on conversations across the city, we offer a view of where Cambridge should be trying to get to and some of the actions that can get us there.

At the heart of this vision is one big idea: that thinking about Cambridge as a ‘City of Quarters’ reflects the changes that have taken place in its urban fabric and creates a pathway for how the city can achieve its maximum potential. We are shifting to becoming a more polycentric city with new centres emerging or developing. Decision makers and leaders across Cambridge adopting a ‘City of Quarters mindset’ is the first suggestion we make, establishing a productive new paradigm for the city's future.

Traditionally, Cambridge was a hub and spoke city, with the centre of activity the historical core. There exists today a real disparity of outcomes and experiences across different parts of our city. So, what potential do our neighbourhoods have? What social and physical infrastructures need

to be in place to allow the unique characteristics of each to be brought to life in a way that is socio-economically and environmentally sustainable?

Our assertion is that by adopting a City of Quarters mentality we can explore this dynamic. ‘Quarters thinking’ requires imagining Cambridge as containing (or having the potential to contain) ‘urban villages’ or ‘15-minute neighbourhoods.’¹ These ‘quarters’ should have their own distinct and recognisable identities. Understanding our city in this way allows us to ask how we can bring places to life in a way that supports people to feel like they live in vibrant and inclusive communities that are connected to the rest of the city. We want people to feel empowered to influence change at the local level. Through this, we want to improve the quality of life across communities in our city.

To become a City of Quarters will require action across our city's institutions. No single organisation can or should have responsibility for where Cambridge is going and the quality of life experienced across its communities. Major institutions across business, academia, and the civic community all have roles and responsibilities. We are pleased that Cambridge Ahead is one forum through which key players can engage collectively on this and where ambitions for our future city can overlap and find synergy.

¹ See page 28 for an explanation of what ‘15-minute cities’ are.

30/90

Our research draw on conversations with over 30 stakeholders, in addition to approximately 90 citizens across six workshops in Cambridge.

The Young Advisory Committee and our approach to this research

The Young Advisory Committee (YAC) is a collective of young professionals under 35-years old from across different Cambridge Ahead member organisations, and therefore different business sectors, in and around the city. We exist to bring the voice of younger people into the wider Cambridge Ahead voice for the economy, and into the public discourse on the future of Cambridge. Our objective is to leave a positive legacy for the city.

The YAC used Cambridge Ahead's 'New Era for the Cambridge Economy' (NECE) project ² as a prompt to take stock of how urban life in Cambridge is changing, and the opportunities that exist to direct the course of the city's development. Our objective therefore is to highlight how Cambridge can continue to be an attractor and retainer of talent. We believe we can make this happen by ensuring a high standard of intergenerational quality of life. Being led by under-35s, who are traditionally footloose and experience-led, our intention is to capture what we can do to make Cambridge competitive against other cities in the UK and internationally.

On our journey we have sought first to understand views and experiences that we do not represent and cannot claim to have. It is challenging, if not impossible, to create a Vision that is fully representative of Cambridge's diverse communities. Therefore, we have sought the perspectives of individuals or organisations who are positioned in a way that they are able to discuss the assets and challenges their communities face and contextualise them within a wider network of activity and politics in the city. Our report therefore reflects perspectives from across the city, drawing on conversations with over 30 stakeholders between December 2021 and September 2022, in addition to approximately 90 citizens across six workshops in Cambridge. Community leaders and organisations shared expertise about the areas where they live, work, and represent to inform a view on how the fabric of local neighbourhoods can be enhanced and consolidated, in a way that brings the city together as part of a wider urban geography.

What our engagement told us

Through our conversations, we learnt about the diversity of life and culture in Cambridge: our city is an assemblage of industries and socioeconomic sectors. Many people wanted us to emphasise that Cambridge is more than its academic prowess and booming innovation industries. Cambridge is also a city teeming with heritage, arts, and culture, and boasts an abundance of natural assets. All parts of the city have rich histories and cultural presents, but these jostle to be heard against the dominant narrative that Cambridge is foremost a city of academic and knowledge industries. Celebrating all those that contribute to quality of life in the city and sharing the diversity of urban experience is necessary to build connections between communities and place. This, for example, we have heard has been a principle in the growth story of Greater Manchester which has much to be admired.

Additionally, a prevalent theme of our conversations concerned the need for well-connected and serviced communities. Community leaders reflected the aspirations communities had for access to shops, entertainment, public services, and quality green spaces within close walking or cycling distance. We therefore combined imagining Cambridge as a city of many stories with one where demand for empowered, well-served communities exists. This led us to think about Cambridge as a 'City of Quarters'. This builds on the idea developed by Professor Carlos Moreno that Cambridge Ahead also explored through the NECE project of a 15-minute city, but puts culture, stories, and social connections at the heart of the places people live or work. Seeing Cambridge through this lens has helped us articulate what interventions could be made at the community level to increase geographical equality and quality of life across our city.

² www.cambridgeahead.co.uk/news-insights/2022/a-new-era-for-the-cambridge-economy-nece

The structure of this report

The first chapter of this report explores what a City of Quarters is, practically speaking, and describes the opportunities that this framing of urban life can give us. Thereafter, the report is structured around the key themes that came out of conversations in the city. At the heart of a sustainable, liveable Cambridge is its climate resilience. Upon this, layers of social, economic, infrastructural, and political assets can be nurtured to fulfil their potential. As such, we set out what we heard and evidence around each of the following themes:

- Community spaces
- Connectivity
- Community engagement
- Housing
- Climate resilience

Next steps

This report is ambitious and includes examples in each chapter from other cities across the UK. We take some of the best examples of city living and put them forward for consideration in Cambridge. For each theme, we also present pragmatic proposals alongside the ambitious. These are suggestions that could be explored or adopted by Cambridge Ahead, its members or partners in the city. Importantly, the 'Ideas for Change' should be understood as way markers, rather than concrete recommendations demanding action by specific actors. Many are broad, and our intention is to use them to open conversations to narrow down where responsibility and opportunity lies to make aspirations reality.

We hope that this report will serve as a catalyst for inspiration and action in our city and look forward to seeing our city evolve and thrive.

THEME	OBJECTIVE			
	Cambridge the greatest small city in the world.	Benefits of growth felt equitably across communities.	Attract and retain the best talent.	Create vibrant, inclusive, sustainable and accessible neighbourhoods.
	Community space	Community engagement	Social connectivity	Housing
	Climate resilience			
PROPOSAL	Explore the opportunity for meanwhile spaces to uplift communities. Create equitably accessible spaces across the city. Support community farming opportunities.	Trial more inclusive ways to generate bottom-up engagement in local issues. Explore Community Wealth Building as an operational model.	Understand and evidence the risk to wider public services of the loss of funding for voluntary and community support.	Introduce a more diverse mix of housing types in Cambridge.
	Prioritise the decarbonisation of existing building stock. Work towards introducing the concept of water neutrality in Cambridge. Ensure equitable access to good quality, biodiverse outdoor spaces in the city region.			
METRICS OF SUCCESS	Attain 'Gold Food' Status by 2025. Establish a viable network of meanwhile spaces by 2024.	By 2024, evaluate anchor institutions local procurement spending.	Assess the value of NGO's services to communities.	Achieve a greater mix of housing products on the Cambridge private market. Create a roadmap by 2024 for decarbonising housing stock.
	Cambridge Nature Festival the best in the UK. Create a pathway by 2024 for water neutrality.			

WHAT IS A CITY OF QUARTERS?



Credit: Dorin Seremet



A city's residents, regardless of age, background or ability, should be able to access their daily needs – housing, work, food, health, education, culture and leisure – within a 15-minute walk or bike ride.

Through review of contemporary urban planning literature, a 'City of Quarters' emerged as a starting point through which to explore Cambridge's future. A 'quarter' is described by Mark Jayne and David Bell³ as akin to an urban village with a distinct socio-cultural or economic identity. In some jurisdictions like France and Italy, 'quarters' refer to distinct administrative areas. However, for the purposes of this report and the proposals within it, we consider quarters not as jurisdictionally bounded places, but rather as fluid spaces defined by their cultures, economies, histories, and identities. Quarters are therefore parts of urban areas given identities associated with industrial activities (e.g., the Jewellery Quarter in Birmingham, Merchants' Quarter in York), ethnicities (e.g., China Towns) and social groups (e.g., the Gay Village in Manchester, Reeperbahn in Hamburg). Across literature on quarters, a unifying element is therefore the attribution of distinct identity to place.

Choosing a 'City of Quarters' as a framework through which to socialise our vision for Cambridge's future sets the intention that we believe Cambridge's multiple and diverse identities are something that should be celebrated, amplified, and shared.⁴ Cambridge has world renowned universities and industries. Yet there are also rhythms of life in our city waiting to be given spaces and support to openly thrive, whether around the arts and music, environment, or sports. Quarters-thinking creates opportunity for those stories to be heard and aspirations to be realised whilst diversifying both how other people understand Cambridge, and more crucially, how it understands itself. Through discussion with community groups and organisations, we learned that paying attention to and elevating the at-present marginalised or hidden communities or assets in Cambridge may be an important step in levelling up our city, and creating the feeling that Cambridge is a city for all.

3 Jayne, M. and Bell, D., 2017. City of quarters: urban villages in the contemporary city. Routledge.

4 It is crucial to note that criticism exists around the commercialisation of urban identities (e.g., of Afro-Caribbean culture in Brixton, London) with resulting damage to that community that can occur through gentrification and associated community displacement. This dynamic was considered throughout our project.



↑ An archway to the Merchants' Quarter in York.

Credit: MalcolmXL5

A 15-Minute City or a City of Quarters?

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted to the public, planners, and politicians how crucial healthy and sustainable local neighbourhoods are in supporting wellbeing in our populations. The importance of the availability of good services and strong social networks proximal to peoples' homes became apparent as lockdowns wore on, and residents' worlds spatially contracted. Yet as our day-to-day activities became increasingly localised, the lockdown period provided a hiatus for us to consider the importance of our immediate neighbourhoods. Do they support wellbeing and quality of life? Are they socially and environmentally just? Who in our neighbourhoods can access which facilities, services, and activities, or not?

Under these conditions, the work of Professor Carlos Moreno on the 15-minute city has been able to flourish. As the RIBA Journal explains: "Moreno's idea for a human-centric, environmentally sustainable model of urban development has a simple premise at its heart: that a city's residents, regardless of age, background or ability, should be able to access their daily needs – housing, work, food, health, education, culture and leisure – within a 15-minute walk or bike ride."⁵ The 15-minute city therefore advocates that cities should work for people, rather than the other way around. The 15-minute city has found popularity amongst politicians, architects, and urban planners. Paris, under the Mayorship of Anne Hidalgo, has pledged to become a 15-minute city and dedicated 10% of its annual spending to this. Planning our cities and providing services and facilities close to where people live has significant impacts on the health of our communities.^{6,7} Where services are within walking or cycling distance, physical health improves.⁸ Regularity of social interactions in spaces near people's homes is also attributed with improving mental health.⁹ Where these opportunities are limited or absent, especially in low-income communities, deprivation and associated health impacts are amplified.¹⁰

Thus, the 15-minute city informs our thinking, but we want to be broader and more ambitious. From our experiences in Cambridge, and informed by academic literature, we

argue that although the components of the 15-minute city are critical to creating sustainable and accessible neighbourhoods, centring identity rather than time as the spatial descriptor allows for better fluidity and connection between places. Identity allows us to get to the heart of what helps generate vitality. Architects and urban designers Richard Hayward and Sue McGynn describe vitality as "the single most sought-after characteristic of good urbanism."¹¹ Incubating and nurturing identity to generate social value rather than for commercialisation or appropriation (identity-for-profit) is crucial in generating socially just, non-exclusionary quarters.

A focus on identity therefore embraces the idea that quarters are not static, but always in the making and reflective of demographic, economic, cultural, and political changes within and beyond them. Through our interviews and workshops, we learned about the diverse pressures on Cambridge's different neighbourhoods, and the ways in which demographic and socioeconomic changes have been responded to and internalised within them. Of course, it is critical to reflect on who identity is being produced by and for, and more broadly who is 'producing' the city. We argue that the 'Right to the City' (which "affirms the right for the inhabitant to occupy a role in the city in order to participate in its production.")¹² should underpin any thinking and planning around a City of Quarters. This requires consideration of who is involved in the platforms and processes through which decisions about our city is made.

So...what does a 'good' quarter look like?

Work within urban planning literature on cultural quarters, food quarters and the European City Model of urban design helps explore some of the ingredients that make 'good' quarters. As outlined on page 17, a key element of good quarters is the presence of mixed-use areas, with a diversity of amenities and land uses. Housing, recreation, quality green space, transport, public services, fresh food, and community spaces are some of the key components of quarters. These are themes that emerged in our engagement too.

Using Ordnance Survey's "Points of Interest" dataset, we mapped where

- 5 The RIBA Journal, 2021. Carlos Moreno, 15 minutes to save the world. Available from: <https://www.ribaj.com/culture/profile-carlos-moreno-15-minute-city-obel-award-planning>
- 6 WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health and World Health Organization, 2008. Closing the gap in a generation: health equity through action on the social determinants of health: Commission on Social Determinants of Health final report. Geneva: World Health Organization.
- 7 Davern, M., et al., 2017. Using spatial measures to test a conceptual model of social infrastructure that supports health and wellbeing. *Cities & health*, 1(2), pp.194-209.
- 8 Sallis, J.F., et al., 2009. Neighborhood environments and physical activity among adults in 11 countries. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 36 (6), 484-490.
- 9 Evans, G.W., 2003. The built environment and mental health. *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, 80 (4), 536-555.
- 10 Macintyre, S., 2007. Deprivation amplification revisited; or, is it always true that poorer places have poorer access to resources for healthy diets and physical activity? *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 4 (1), 32.
- 11 Hayward R., and McGlynn S., 2002. Editorial. *Urban Design International*. Volume 7, Issue 5.
- 12 Lecoq, M., 2020. The Right to the City: An Emancipating Concept? <https://metropolitix.org/The-Right-to-the-City-An-Emancipating-Concept.html>



↑ Cambridge city centre

Credit: Akash Banerjee

facilities and amenities in Cambridge City can be found (See page 16).¹³ We selected data points based on the services included in our list of what comprises 'good' quarters. Our map helps understand which parts of the city are well served, and which have a more limited choice of amenities nearby. We hope this map will contribute towards discussions about the choices and opportunities available in different parts of the city and help focus energies on where more facilities may be needed. We also hope this map can be used as a starting point to consider where Cambridge's quarters might be found.

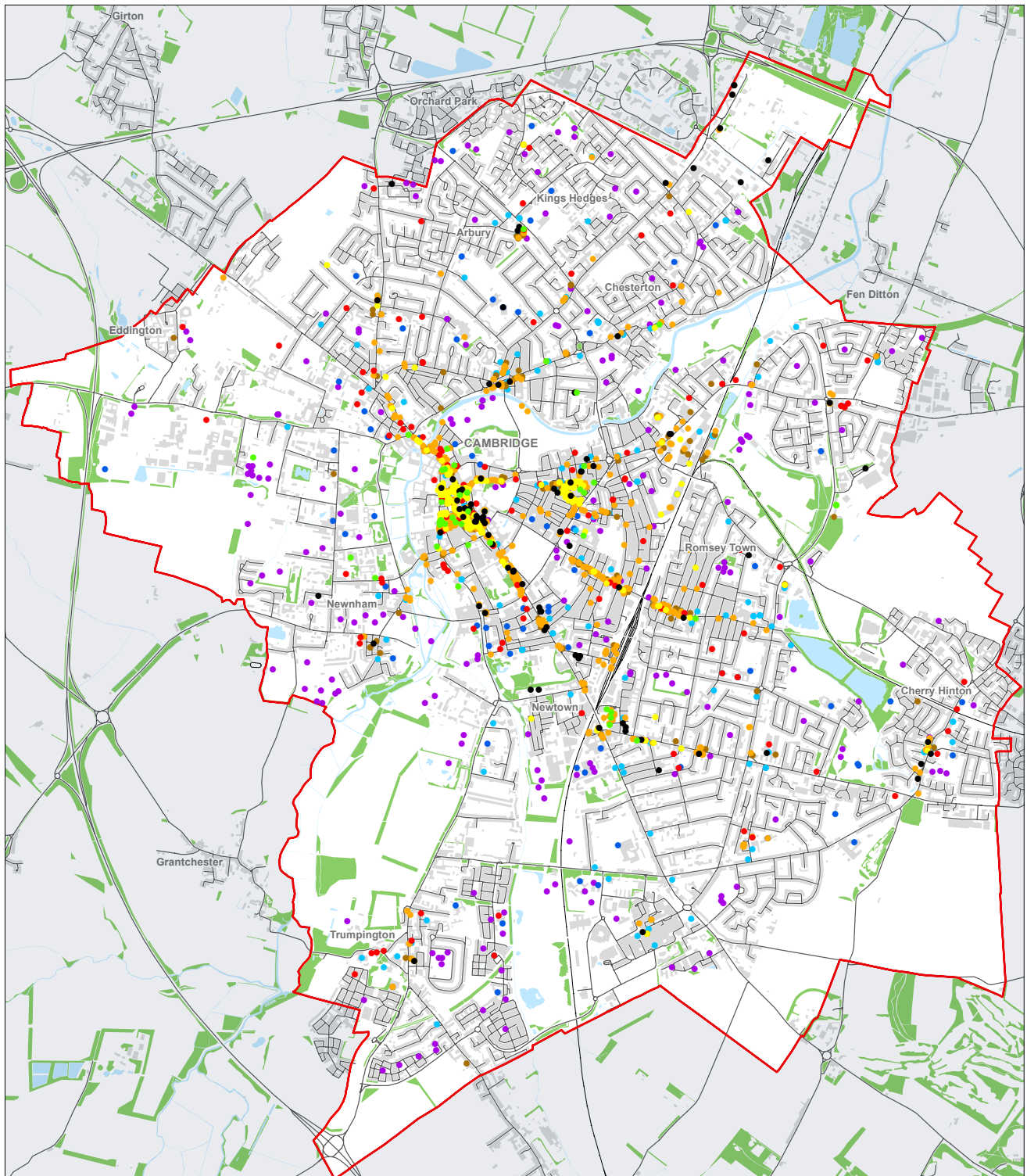
Urban planners believe that attaining a balance of these assets within permeable, human-friendly built environments makes areas attractive to both residents and visitors. A core component that generates a feeling of vitality is the creation of positive meaning for a place. This can be nurtured by having important meeting and gathering places within which shared meanings around a place's history and future can be generated.

In conversation with community

members and representatives, we heard about what supports neighbourhood cohesion and vitality. Emerging as most important was the availability of adequate, good quality community spaces. Community spaces are fundamental for enabling community engagement, and thus generating senses of place, community buy-in and grassroots led urban development. Connectivity, including social, physical, and digital, emerged regularly as critical components of creating empowered and resilient communities. The redistribution of cultural assets and public services into the city's wards was widely felt to be important in generating a sense of belonging to the city more widely and in producing a sense of pride in Cambridge. Of course, housing remains a key determinant of neighbourhood social and economic make-up and cohesion, and we heard that mixed tenure and housing types alongside density are crucial for creating diverse and resilient neighbourhoods. Relatedly, the need for climate resilient urban communities is increasingly important in a climate-altered world.

¹³ Ordnance Survey (2022) Points of Interest. Available from: <https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/business-government/tools-support/points-of-interest-support>

Points of Interest in Cambridge City



- Arts and culture
- Banks, post offices, libraries and employment services
- Clothing and fashion
- Community spaces/places of worship
- Food and drink
- Groceries and household goods
- Health and wellbeing
- Schools and educational centres
- Sports and playgrounds
- City boundary

↑ Produced by Bidwells GIS Mapping

Conditions for successful quarters

↓ Credit: 1: John Sutton, 2: Karen Cann, 3: Akash Banerjee



Activity and amenities

- Affordable, safe housing with mixed availability of tenures/housing types
- Inclusive for diverse demographics
- Good healthcare and core public services
- Fresh food and groceries
- Access to transport terminals and intra-city connectivity
- Digital connectivity and availability of public Wi-Fi
- Access to education and training providers
- Local employment opportunities
- Variety of community spaces such as cultural venues
- Evening and daytime economies which complement each other
- Restaurants, cafes, and bars
- Retail (e.g., pharmacies)
- Mixed small-firm and large-firm economies
- Festivals and events
- Workspaces for both high and low-income economic producers
- Sports and recreation facilities
- Community gardens
- Playgrounds and parks
- Youth centres



Built form and natural environment

- Fine-grained/compact/suitably dense urban design
- Human scale
- Variety and adaptability of building stock
- Permeable streetscapes that are walkable and cyclable
- Accessible streetscapes and public spaces
- Quality public spaces and streetscapes
- Active street frontages and ground floors of buildings
- Anchors
- Safe streets and spaces
- High air quality and natural environment including public parks
- Climate resilient infrastructure, homes, and community assets



Meaning

- Important meeting and gathering spaces
- Sense of history and progress
- Area identity and imagery
- Primacy of the public over the private

* Adapted from: Montgomery, J. 2003. Cultural Quarters as Mechanisms for Urban Regeneration. Part 1: Conceptualising Cultural Quarters. Planning, Practice & Research, Vol. 18, No. 4, pp. 293–306.



Credit: Kenny Eliason

COMMUNITY SPACES

With contributions
from Jessica
Tearney-Pearce,
St John's College

£3.2m

For every £1 million that is invested in social infrastructure, £3.2 million in fiscal, social, and economic benefits can be generated.

A major theme that emerged through our conversations across the city, and that we had not anticipated to encounter at the start of the project, is the widespread desire for high quality, accessible community spaces. Such spaces can be indoor or outdoor and are crucial for creating vibrancy, connection, and engagement in a neighbourhood. We explored the value of community spaces and how they can be an anchor for quarters in Cambridge.

We can understand the value of community spaces by thinking about them as 'social infrastructure'. Social infrastructure refers to the physical spaces and facilities in which people can congregate and build connections. These spaces range from public parks, to libraries, cafes, gyms, swimming pools, to town squares. They may be publicly or privately owned and accessible, for recreation, or for commerce. Cambridge City Council produced a 'Community Centres Strategy' in 2017, highlighting existing community-spaces, and opportunities for filling gaps in current provisioning.¹⁴

Social infrastructure provides spaces for people to meet and creates opportunities for people from different groups to interact, building sociality across differences.¹⁵ Tom Kelsey and Michael Kenny from the University of Cambridge's Bennett Institute highlighted the positive relationship between the number of community spaces/facilities a place had and the number of mutual aid groups operating in them during the pandemic.¹⁶ Community spaces are significant not only for affording connection, but also for creating social resilience which, as shown during the COVID-19 pandemic, can have implications on public health. Relatedly, active community spaces like parks and public gardens create value for people's mental and physical health. An example of this from Cambridge is the CoFarm which not only supports people's physical and mental health but also creates a community of 'growers' who in turn support healthier diets of low-income households in the city.

Social infrastructure is also of value to the British economy. In direct terms, community spaces employ approximately 2.3 million people, yet also generate knock-on effects of upskilling local populations by

providing engagement and training opportunities (e.g., in theatre production, sports coaching or other volunteering). Analysis by Frontier Economics showed that for every £1 million that is invested in social infrastructure, £3.2 million in fiscal, social, and economic benefits can be generated.¹⁷

For our city centres and high streets, community spaces can serve as anchors that help attract people to an area and retain them in a place. Not only does this increase footfall on places like high streets, it also means that people are incentivised to stay in a place because of the value of amenities available, fostering longevity of community connection. Evaluation of meanwhile space impacts on high street footfall through the MHCLG's 'Open Spaces' initiative found that where new community spaces were opened on high streets, 85% of users visited other shops on the high street, with 1/3 spending £20 or more.¹⁸

But for community spaces to fulfil their function, they need to be multiple, diverse, and reliable: a single community space cannot be expected to glue the 'whole' together. Rather a mosaic of offerings is required to generate interest and attraction in a place, as well as capture a broad audience of interest and buy-in. Researchers Adam Latham and Jack Layton discuss the importance of how "spaces and facilities are designed, maintained, and planned, but also how spaces are practised and come to be used", giving significance to the fact that spaces must be 'more-than-functional' and are reliant upon the 'human' element to be well-used and important places for communities.¹⁹ Therefore, responsiveness to the needs of local communities is crucial in providing community spaces with their longevity.

To function as effective social infrastructure, community spaces need to be...

- Abundant and diverse in provision
- Well maintained and accessible spaces
- Responsive to need
- Enabling and embodying democratic living
- Reliably funded

14 Cambridge City Council, 2017. Community Centres Strategy. <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/7265/community-centres-strategy.pdf>

15 Latham, A., and Layton, J., 2019. Social infrastructure and the public life of cities: Studying urban sociality and public spaces. *Geography Compass*. 13:7.

16 Kelsey, T., Kenny M. 2021. Townscapes: The Value of Social Infrastructure. The Bennett Institute. Available from https://www.bennettinstitute.cam.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Townscapes_The_value_of_infrastructure.pdf

17 Frontier Economics. 2021. The Impacts of Social Infrastructure Investment. A report for Local Trust. https://localtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Frontier-Economics_the-impacts-of-social-infrastructure-investment.pdf

18 Meanwhile Foundation. 2020. Open Doors Pilot Programme Report https://hubble-live-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/meanwhile-foundation/redactor2_assets/files/207/Open_Doors_-_Pilot_Programme_Report.pdf

19 Latham A., Layton J. 2019. Ibid.



By making spaces more accessible it is possible to reduce inequality of access and create genuine community spaces where a mix of people interact.

Mixed-use spaces

We reflected on how mixed-use spaces can be used to meet some demands for accessible community services and spaces. The value of mixed-use is outlined in the Cambridge Ahead NECE report. The NECE report notes that “by making spaces more accessible it is possible to reduce inequality of access and create genuine community spaces where a mix of people interact. The approach also entails making better use of existing buildings – for example, a building that serves as a workspace in the day could serve as an adult education venue in the evenings, a school playground could be open to the wider community on weekends.”²⁰

Mixed-use spaces exist in Cambridge already (e.g., the West Cambridge/Eddington site), but we heard from the Cambridge United Community Foundation, alongside others, that more can be done to make clear that such spaces are accessible and welcoming of wider publics. Mixed-use buildings that have longer than 9-5 opening times are also important. The Perse School’s new sports facilities demonstrate how private infrastructure could be used by different communities to increase community cohesion and connection.²¹ In Autumn 2022, we surveyed Cambridge Ahead Member employees under 35 years old as part of our ‘Future of Work’ project, and asked respondents whether their offices provided spaces for members of the public. Only 27% of 232 respondents (some of whom are from the same organisations) responded that their offices provided amenities like WiFi, a cafe, or gyms for members of the public. This suggests there is scope for increasing the permeability of space in the city and considering the value and opportunity of building-in or retrofitting public use into private spaces.

20 Cambridge Ahead. 2022. A New Era for the Cambridge Economy. p. 34 <https://www.cambridgeahead.co.uk/news-insights/2022/a-new-era-for-the-cambridge-economy-nece/>

21 The Perse School. 2022. Cambridge to benefit from Perse swimming pool plan. <https://www.perse.co.uk/news/2022/10/cambridge-benefit-perse-swimming-pool-plan/>

22 Arup (2021), Meanwhile Use for London https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/meanwhile_use_for_london_final.pdf

Meanwhile space

Examples elsewhere, including London,²² have shown that adopting meanwhile spaces is one mechanism by which assets on e.g., high streets or redeveloped areas, can be used to create adaptive and spontaneous community spaces. They can be adaptive to local need (e.g., providing co-working space, games space – see Ping Parlour in the Grafton Centre, or warm banks), and by being ‘meanwhile’, can add a feeling of spontaneity and change to urban spaces. This latter ingredient is particularly attractive in a city such as Cambridge where so much of its assets’ use in the city is unchanging and belongs to the collegiate university. Meanwhile space isn’t just about buildings, it can also be used for thinking about new or interim uses for plots of land or existing spaces like markets. There is therefore overlap between the concepts of mixed-use spaces and meanwhile spaces. For example, in 2022, the Market Square in Ely was used for new monthly events that brought together people from all generations across the local area. Desire for improved mixed-use civic spaces (like the Cambridge Market Place) was discussed during our stakeholder engagement, especially by students who spend a lot of time in Cambridge city centre. We recognise and support Cambridge City Council’s proposed improvements to the Market Square, which recommends that Market facilities be enhanced whilst diversifying possible uses to include outdoor entertainment in the evening and fostering a place for people to gather and connect by improving accessibility and seating.



↑ Foody Friday held at Ely Market Square. Credit: Matilda Becker



↑ What could our streets look like if we created more space for people?

Credit: CamCycle

However, it is important to ensure that meanwhile use does not facilitate gentrification. Meanwhile space can be a useful mechanism by which organisations or initiatives can be supported in scaling their operations or reaching broader audiences (as demonstrated by the Cambridge Science Centre case study on the next page). Therefore, distinction needs to be made between those uses of meanwhile space that don't create long-term community assets and inflate the value of property in a place by attracting new, higher-income demographics to an area, and those that create steppingstones for community and organisational uplift.

Models exist in other cities to support such intentions, such as 'Meanwhile in Oxfordshire...'. There, the organisation Makespace teamed up with Oxfordshire County Council and have so far helped 143 organisations access space in 29 buildings (4,436m²) across the county. Makespace recorded that this has helped create 100 jobs locally. The model has supported Community Wealth Building initiatives like 'Owned by Oxford' and other charitable organisations to find footing across the city by making spaces available at discounted rates in parts of the city that would otherwise be unaffordable or where social infrastructure

investment has historically been low.²³ This would be important in Cambridge where we heard from some community organisations about how the precarity and cost of renting space had the risk of undermining or limiting the work they can do in their locality.

Streets for People

During our focus group of YAC members held in May 2022, and in conversation with other stakeholders, discussion was had as to how better use could be made of Cambridge's street scene to create human-centric environments. CamCycle has created some images that envision the social potential that Cambridge's streets could deliver, if pedestrianised or partially pedestrianised. The YAC believes that the potential exists for our high streets to be better brought to life through improved pedestrian access and outdoor seating. CamCycle has written about how a "people-first" mentality could transform streetscapes and how, by removing priority for cars and vehicles, streets can become places at the centre of people's community, constituting a key component of our social fabric.²⁴ Ambitions for creating more space for people on our streets were reflected in the Greater Cambridge Partnership's 2022 City Access proposals.

23 Oxfordshire County Council. 2021. Meanwhile in Oxfordshire https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20022/support_for_business/1434/meanwhile_in_oxfordshire; Makespace Oxford. 2022. Owned by Oxford. <https://makespaceoxford.org/owned-by-oxford>

24 Camcycle. 2022. Camcycle Autumn Magazine Issue 156. <https://www.camcycle.org.uk/magazine/magazine156/>

IDEAS FOR CHANGE

Create spaces for quarters to flourish

1

Convene Cambridge Ahead members, Local Authorities, and other partners to explore opportunities for meanwhile use which has social impact at its heart, to encourage vibrancy, entrepreneurialism, and community-focused activity in the city.

2

Create more community farming opportunities and biodiverse spaces across the city region, strengthening institutional support for CoFarm's flagship Coldham's Common site, and encouraging new developments to proactively plan for community farming spaces to establish their long-term viability. In doing so, support community interactions, food security, and nature recovery.

13,500

Over the summer holidays and October half term in 2022, the PopUp Science centre attracted over 13,500 visitors.

A meanwhile space in Cambridge

Cambridge Science Centre (CSC) is an educational charity based in Cambridge. Their mission is to inspire young learners' curiosity and knowledge of STEM subjects and to set them on a path of engaging with science throughout their lives. For the past 4 years they have been based on Clifton Road, Cambridge, behind the train station. Whilst CSC has attracted thousands of school and family visitors, the team felt that the location was a barrier to having a deeper impact on the communities that were in most need. CSC explored opportunities to take the Centre into the heart of people's everyday lives – removing the barrier of having to seek it out. CSC found like-minded people in the management team at the Grand Arcade Shopping Centre in central Cambridge and an agreement was made to pop-up the centre in one of the vacant units. Over the summer holidays and October half term in 2022, the PopUp Science centre attracted over 13,500 visitors.

Rebecca Porter (Head of Development) explained how being in a busy shopping centre allowed CSC to have greater exposure to different people in the city. While the Clifton Road site

allows them to host school groups and interested visitors, the shopping centre allows more happenstance visits, enabling a greater diversity of people to be engaged.

But the benefits haven't just been for CSC and the young people being exposed to STEM. When CSC surveyed its visitors, 47% said they were drawn to the Grand Arcade to visit the PopUp centre, increasing precious footfall in a retail area. Rebecca commented that this partnership with the Grand Arcade is possible because the landlord realises the value of STEM outreach, and the opportunity to attract custom to the shopping centre.

Overall, the opportunity to make use of Meanwhile Space in the Grand Arcade has helped CSC widen participation in STEM and allowed proof of concept of a pop-up model. Moving forward, CSC is looking to establish a presence in the Grafton Centre and will be 'On the Road' in other parts of Cambridgeshire like Ramsey and Peterborough. These new pop-ups will explore diverse ways that CSC can support community needs such as skill building, facilitating family learning and linking people to STEM employers in their area.



↑ A volunteer helping a visitor at one of the half-term sessions. Credit: Cambridge Science Centre

17

Since 2020, CoFarm donated nearly 17 tonnes of fresh produce to eight food hubs.

An outdoor community space

The CoFarm on Coldhams Lane demonstrates the value of outdoor community spaces for creating social connection, developing skills, and sharing outdoor activity. The community farm is reliant upon volunteers and brings people together from across east Cambridge. Since 2020, CoFarm donated nearly 17 tonnes of fresh produce (worth £85,569) to eight food hubs across the city, creating a connection between those participating in CoFarm's activities and those able to benefit from improved access to quality food. Gavin Shelton, CEO, whilst speaking at a YAC meeting in November

2022, explained how activities that facilitate social connection like co-farming are crucial for developing people's skills (with some volunteers going on to pursue new careers in horticulture), fostering individuals' personal development, and improving mental health. The CoFarm also grows produce in a way that increases biodiversity on the site, resulting in benefits for the local ecosystem. The CoFarm is an exciting opportunity for Cambridge to increase its food security (especially amongst lower-income households) as well as build connections between people and land.



↑ Volunteer co-farmers at CoFarm Cambridge helping with everything from sowing seeds to tackling thistles on the community farm. Credit: CoFarm Foundation

Making space to connect, to care, to create, and to citizen

HEATHER THOMAS

Founder, Together Culture CIC

How do you decide what you make space for in your life? I suspect you prioritise space for whatever helps you to care for yourself and connect with others. Do you make space for activities (like exercise or meditation) that keep you healthy and happy? Do you make space for activities (like gardening or volunteering) that keep others healthy and happy? And how do your priorities inform how you use the space in your home? Maybe you installed a space in your kitchen where people gather and make memories as meals are being prepared. Maybe you've turned a spare room into a guest room so loved ones from far away can live under your roof, if only for a few days each year. Or, maybe you've installed solar panels because you want to do something about climate change and peace.

Our decisions about what we make space for reflects what we value and how we try to live our values. It is intimately connected to our identity and easy to understand on an individual level. Widening our lens a bit, how do decisions about how our public space is used reflect our values as a community? And how many of us are involved in making the decisions about the use of the space we share to reflect our values?

One cold Saturday in January, I found myself standing on the corner of Burleigh and Fitzroy Street with my Together Culture friends, a giant blackboard in the shape of a kite, and a conversation menu. With the Grafton Centre up for sale, we set out to discover what values our neighbours shared and how they

would redevelop the space with those values in mind. We asked folks, 'What would have changed in 10 years to make you so proud of The Kite that you believed it was the best place in the world to live?' We were there to draw out people's imagination through intentional conversation and doodles on a blackboard.

We spoke to about 75 people that day and what linked all their ideas was making space for connection, creativity, caring for others - for truly becoming a community. In their words they want a place that lets us be creative because creativity makes us feel alive. A place where life is growing. A place where music hangs in the air. A place where children are cared for. A place where grandparents,



↑ Together Culture's Vox Pop on Burleigh Street in January 2022. Credit: Together Culture

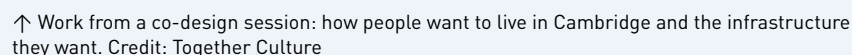
What I heard from my neighbours (literally, I live around the corner) is that they want public space to be designed for people to make meaningful contributions. Space that enables us to use our time today in a way that matters for how others experience tomorrow. My neighbours were talking about space to 'citizen'. Not to be a citizen (noun), but to actively, creatively, and with compassion, citizen (verb). We're building Together Culture to address the desire of our neighbours to create public spaces where they can be more fully human.

Together Culture (a registered Community Interest Company) will be a cultural hub, co-designed with the community, that exists to develop a more vibrant creative scene, a more inclusive creative economy, and to encourage more active citizenship by giving people space to care and be cared for. Afterall, the word citizen stems from the Latin for 'together people'.

studios for artists and entrepreneurs. If we prioritise reshaping how we organise ourselves, it is acting on our values to put people who are hard wired to create at our centre. To inclusively recreate for collective wellbeing, Together Culture space will invite everyone to contribute. We're designing community kitchens, community gardens, community energy projects, and spaces for movement, performance, talk and play. We're delighted to be working with Ab Rogers' Design to develop space for the art of care.

One story I cannot shake from that January afternoon is Tom's. Tom is a strapping bloke in his late thirties and when I walked up to him, I wasn't sure he'd stop as he looked in a rush. Yet, Tom slowed when I asked, 'Is there a story behind why you're in The Kite today?' I mean, why are you running errands here and not elsewhere?' Tom was quiet for a few moments and then said, 'the Charity Shops on Burleigh Street make me feel my mum is still with me. She passed away six months ago. She loved those shops. She thought every dress, every jacket had a story to tell of a life lived and provided a chance for the next owner to give a new story a whirl. Mum was a bright spark in my life - you can imagine with an attitude like that.' Yes, Tom. I can. Then he shared a photo of his mum and her magnetic smile. Afterwards, he shyly asked, 'Could I have a hug?' And there, in the middle of the street, a stranger shared a bit of his grief and a bit of his love with another stranger.

If you would like to be part of shaping Together Culture, you are welcome. Please register your interest at **www.togetherculture.com**.





Credit: Kevin Curtis

CONNECTIVITY

With contributions
from Alastair
Currie, University
of Cambridge



↑ Cambridge rooftops. Credit: Dorin Seremet

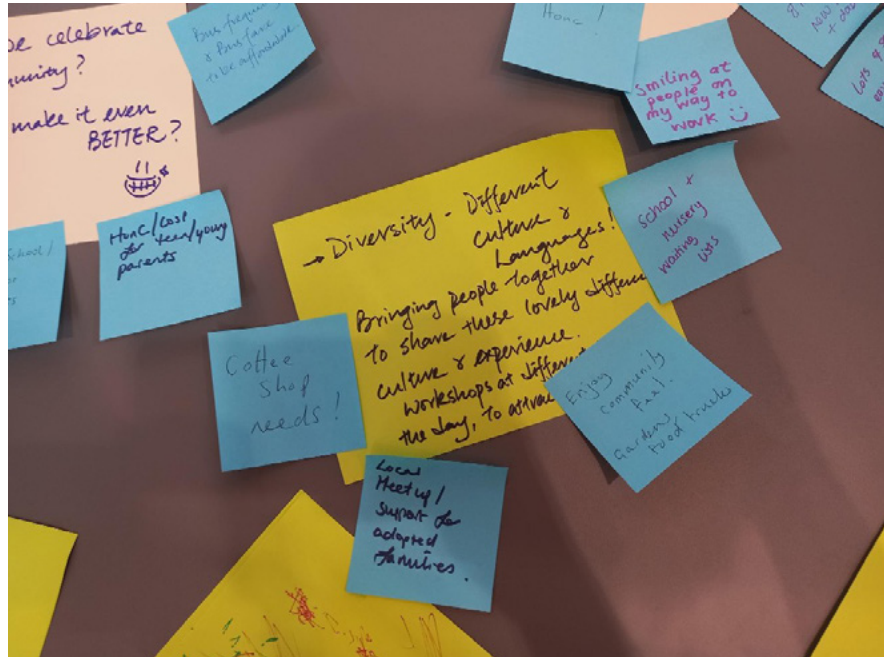


Social connectivity is the magic ingredient that creates vibrancy and identity in place.

We understand connectivity to mean both the physical and social links we have with each other. Physically, it's how we get between different parts of the city and come together in spaces with other people, as described in the previous chapter. In this chapter however, we have explored what social connectivity means. This was prompted by discussions about feelings of fragmentation in the city – many residents felt connected to their immediate community, but not the city as a whole or surrounding wards. Others noted that generating engagement and sense of community within wards can be difficult. Of course, transport access is an important component of making sure people can connect – both in terms of moving between different parts of the city creating broader cohesion/integration, but also by way of attending activities or services that may not be found in their own quarters. Social connectivity is the 'magic ingredient' that creates vibrancy and identity in place. Social connectivity is therefore important for place-making, building relationships between people and place and activating local engagement.

Activities to bring together different communities

Spaces are one way of fostering connectivity, but the activities that happen within them are also important. The Connected Lives Cambridgeshire's parent/caregiver-toddler group at the Clay Farm community centre in Trumpington demonstrated this. Trumpington's residents are culturally diverse and have mixed incomes. The weekly group creates a space for people of different backgrounds to meet, socialise with their children whilst also accessing services provided by Connected Lives leaders. Parents and caregivers that we spoke to valued that the activity brought them together with others in the community whom they might not otherwise have cause to speak to. We also heard from the North Cambridge Community Partnership that a crucial way to connect different social groups who might not typically interact because of language or cultural barriers is to have regular points of engagement for people in communities rather than one-off events.



↑ Parents and Caregivers at Connected Lives' session in Trumpington shared their ideas about what makes them feel connected to other people in their neighbourhood, what they celebrate about where they live and opportunities afforded by Connected Lives. Credit: Matilda Becker



Charitable activities build social capital in the form of increased trust and cooperation, and promote social inclusion.

Advertising what's on in the city

We know that Cambridge is abound with activities, groups, and things to do, but we heard from many that it can be hard to discover when and where things are happening. Some residents at the Cambridge YMCA and community facilitators at The Junction noted that this was the case for the arts and music scene. They recommended that Cambridge should have a go-to online and physical hub where information about 'what's on' in the city can more readily be accessed. A participant from the YMCA recommended that a 'Youth Booth' could serve as a pseudo-tourist information booth for young people in Cambridge, where information about events can be accessed, as well as information on skills, training, accommodation, catered to young people.

Creating connections between our quarters

In a focus group with Queen Edith's Community Forum (QECF), Abbey People and Trumpington Residents Association (TRA), we discussed examples of successful social connectivity in Cambridge. The organisations agreed that regular communications are crucial for developing trusted social connections. The increase in voluntary and community participation during the pandemic demonstrated the importance of online spaces for creating connection and community engagement. This opened questions about how to maintain strong levels of connectivity outside of periods where people are brought together by a common 'threat'.

The focus group emphasised the importance of volunteers. Whilst QECF and Abbey People felt confident that they could draw on a pool of volunteers

throughout the year to lead their community activity, TRA had more difficulties. However, coordination of volunteers can be challenging, and Abbey People described the difficulty involved in securing the funding for paid volunteer coordinator roles. TRA demonstrated the paradox of having sufficient, high quality community spaces, but insufficient volunteers to run events such as Christmas Fairs. It was suggested that the influx of mainly working-age adults into Trumpington might mean that fewer older/retired people are available who would typically support volunteering efforts in the area with their time.

Our focus group highlighted the evident social and financial benefits for both residents and local authorities of having successful voluntary organisations at the heart of communities. Social connectivity will benefit from having voluntary organisations taking a leadership role in developing social infrastructure. This is supported by Frontier Economics's evaluation of the value of the charitable sector: "The charity sector contributes to fostering economic and social cohesion at the community level... Involvement in voluntary activities is an expression of participatory democracy. Charitable activities build social capital in the form of increased trust and cooperation, and promote social inclusion, potentially bringing divided communities together. The activities generally contribute to individual and wider wellbeing."²⁵ Generating financial or economic metrics about charitable value to society is a significant challenge yet is crucial in establishing recognition of the services many deliver to their communities. The focus group agreed that generating assessments of their organisations' value would help highlight the risk of their loss to society more widely should funding and support dwindle.

Relatedly, focus group participants felt that there is lots of money in the city, yet community groups are languishing with little to no grant funding available. They also felt that putting in applications for grants is far harder than crowdfunding, therefore their fundraising activity is more focused on the private sector. They also reflected that efficiencies could be created within the private sector to streamline donations, volunteer hours or other Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) interventions.

25 Frontier Economics. 2017. The Value of the Charitable Sector: and overview. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/835686/Value_of_Charity_-_Oct_19_-_published.pdf

IDEAS FOR CHANGE

Create engaged and strengthened communities at the heart of every quarter

3

Commission research to evidence and understand the risk of loss of voluntary and community support roles to the civic system in Cambridge. Support community organisations to facilitate local volunteering by making dedicated volunteer coordinator funding more readily available.

4

Create 'bumping spaces' across the city by providing equitably accessible spaces where people from all communities can enjoy themselves and interact.

Bumping spaces was the name given to those spaces that enable people to come together.

Bumping spaces



↑ Credit: Kelly Sikkema

OWEN GARLING

Bennett Institute for Public Policy

Bumping spaces. This was the name given to those spaces that enable people to come together by an attendee of one of the workshops that I attended that fed into this piece of work.

It is an expression that has stuck with me and one that captures several key elements that are at the heart of the Young Advisory Committee's report. First, the importance of the informality of different spaces. You don't need to make an appointment or be referred to a bumping space. There is (or should) be no need to pay to get into a bumping space. Second, there's no presupposition about who you will bump into in a bumping space. They are open and egalitarian, and you are as likely to have a random encounter as you are to meet with someone you know. Finally, they are a space, either physical or digital, where things can happen, and people can come together. But they don't have to be a particular

kind of space. It is their informality and ease of access that is at their heart.

'Bumping spaces' also captures some of the essence of what in the worlds of academia and policymaking has come to be called 'social infrastructure,' and in particular some of the work that we have done at the Bennett Institute for Public Policy at the University of Cambridge. In 2021, we published a report on the value of social infrastructure.²⁶ This report looked beyond the purely economic value of these spaces to also consider their social and civic value. We have also written recently on the importance of pride in place, both to local communities and places, but also to policymakers interested in notions of 'place.'²⁷

So, what are some of the points from our work on social infrastructure that resonate with this work on Cambridge as a City of Quarters?

Humans, as Aristotle is claimed to have said, are social animals. Bumping places provide the spaces where

²⁶ Kenny, M., Kelsey, T. 2021. Townscapes: The Value of Social Infrastructure. <https://www.bennettinstitute.cam.ac.uk/publications/social-infrastructure/>

²⁷ Shaw, J., Garling, O., Kenny, M. 2022. Townscapes: Pride in Place <https://www.bennettinstitute.cam.ac.uk/publications/pride-in-place>



Bumping places provide the spaces where people can lead the common life – what is now often called social capital – or more prosaically the glue that holds us together.

people can lead the common life – what is now often called social capital – or more prosaically the “glue that holds us together.” And importantly, they provide a space where we can bump into people we know and who are like us so that we can renew and strengthen bonds of friendship (“Bonding Capital”), as well as people we don’t yet know but with whom we can share ideas and come up with new solutions to existing problems (“Bridging Capital”).

People like local. The ability to easily access things that are important for their lives is important for people. Look, for example, of the example of 15-minute neighbourhoods in Paris, where the objective is for citizens have access to all the facilities that they need within a 15-minute journey. Can we say the same thing about Cambridge? Different communities may have different access to facilities. Are the needs of young people considered as much as people of working age? Do communities from the more impoverished areas of Cambridge have as much access as those from more affluent communities? What about those new communities that are developing around the city?

Related to this, people have a sense of attachment and belonging to where they come from. Whilst this is often considered at a national scale, people are also as likely to be attached to their street, neighbourhood, village, town, or city. This sense of attachment was seen particularly keenly with mutual aid groups springing up at the hyper-local level to enable community members to support each other through the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. In our report on pride in place, we also draw attention to the negative impact that regeneration or growth strategies can have on existing communities. Managed poorly this can lead to feelings of ostracism and a sense of ‘them and us.’ The ever-continuing growth of Cambridge makes this a particularly pertinent point for the city.

Whilst people like local, that does not mean that each place needs to be its own self-contained microcosm of the world. Rather, there is an appropriate scale for everything. For example, people wouldn’t expect that larger bumping spaces such as concert halls, swimming pools and cinemas should be duplicated in each community.

Rather, people from all communities should be able to access these facilities easily, perhaps at a central location. This brings into question one of the key issues that we see emerging around social infrastructure: connectivity. It is all well and good to have a set of world class facilities, but there need to be easy ways for people to be able to reach them. The need for an effective transport system goes hand-in-hand with the need for social infrastructure.

Connectivity also needs to go beyond the physical. People need to be able to feel that spaces are for them. Places can have the best social infrastructure, but if people feel excluded from making use of it, then it will never have the impact that it could have. Whilst the framing of Cambridge as a City of Quarters is an admirable one, these quarters need to permeable and open to everyone. No longer should there be newspaper headlines about children in the city not even knowing that it has a river running through it. It is only in this way that we will see everyone benefit from all the assets of the city.

In many ways, the economic success story of Cambridge is dependent on a long history of bumping spaces. The colleges that make up the university could all be seen as bumping spaces in the way that they bring together people from around the globe from different disciplines in a shared environment where ideas can be born and nourished. University departments and institutes are similar with their ability to convene people and support innovation. And no more can this be seen than in the science parks that encircle the city. They are deliberately more than just places of work and include elements such as cafes, restaurants and childcare providers that can encourage the informal interactions and conversations that have contributed to the success of the Cambridge Phenomenon. I remember talking to someone at the height of the pandemic who was concerned that the closure of these spaces would lead to a reduction in the innovation seen in Cambridge.

The question therefore now needs to be, how can bumping spaces – or social infrastructure – be developed in such a way as to support and maintain the social and civic success of all of Cambridge’s communities?



Credit: Heather Mount

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

With contributions from
Liam Ronan-Chlond, Socius
and Sam Davies, Queen
Edith's Community Forum



We believe that an engaged community is empowered to affect change in the place they live, ensuring that the city is a place able to evolve and adapt to changing needs and politics.

Community engagement speaks to both engagement of people in activities or social networks in their neighbourhoods, and the engagement of people in the politics and decision making in their areas. Community engagement and consultation is a core component of how our local authorities work. Engagement is important for generating social licence and buy-in for plans, as well as ensuring that any schemes are appropriate and relevant to the geography and demographic they are meant to serve. Community engagement is also about residents feeling part of the Cambridge success story. Industry and academia contribute significant employment opportunity and revenue generation here and across the UK, but many in the city do not feel like they are able to benefit from and meaningfully contribute to the Cambridge phenomenon.

Broadening the voice of the engaged

We heard from community members and local councillors about the challenge of making sure that community engagement isn't unduly dominated by more vocal, but not necessarily wide-held, views. We were told that it can also be difficult to engage people particularly of working age or who don't speak English as a first language. Our conversations highlighted that community engagement isn't just about responding to proposals put forward by or through local authorities. It also involves communities being given platforms and spaces to generate ideas or solutions for their local areas, enabling innovation and support for community projects. We believe that an engaged community is empowered to affect change in the place they live, ensuring that the city is a place able to evolve and adapt to changing needs and politics. We heard that by supporting the development and protection of community spaces where people can meet and gather, opportunities exist to engage a broader audience in local decision- and place-making.

Novel approaches have already been used to engage communities in making or informing political or planning decisions in our city. Together Culture CIC, a home-grown organisation established to develop and secure arts spaces in the city,

used co-design methods to plan their place-based work. This has resulted in their aspirations for the Kite area, Grafton Centre and Papworth being grounded in local knowledge and experience. The Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) trialled a Citizens' Assembly in 2019 to work through knotty issues around transport in the city. The comments generated from the Assembly were then used to influence the GCP's City Access plans.

We learned from Collusion, an arts organisation working in Cambridge and King's Lynn, about alternative digital surveying tools that can be used to generate diversity in discussion, particularly around thorny issues. They had previously explored using 'Pol.is' software which has been used elsewhere including Taiwan and the USA to unpack and add nuance to conversations around e.g., transport or city development. The Pol.is platform enables users to develop an argument themselves through posting statements, to which other users respond. The result is that overlapping views helps create new political communities, joined by shared beliefs rather than political orientation. A drawback of Pol.is is that although it increases the diversity of discussion, it still requires a diversity of respondents to be reached through novel means.

Community wealth building

Whilst asking stakeholders how we can foster inclusive and sustainable communities, we learned that engaged communities that feel like they have a say and influence local decision-making and project delivery are crucial. Being involved in locally based organisations can help encourage this. One model through which local people have a direct impact on the places they live is through organisations/networks encouraging Community Wealth Building (CWB). CWB which is an economic model that prioritises harnessing and bolstering the assets of the local economy and population by recirculating rather than externalising wealth. The principle of CWB is to support and foster greater grassroots organisations that deliver services or goods. In Cambridge, this could mean greater opportunity for local communities to benefit from and engage with the means of wealth production in the city. CWB understands wealth in its broadest sense, as articulated by the Bennett Institute's 'Six Capitals/Wealth

Economy' framework, including social, natural, financial, human, intellectual and manufactured capital.²⁸

The Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES), who lead CWB efforts in the UK, argue that this model is crucial in places where economic disparity drives social and economic divides within communities. There are five aspects to CWB – plural ownership of the economy, finance, labour, land and property, and goods and services. The general principle is to ensure that as much value generated by activities in a city are funnelled back into the local area. Importantly, for CWB to be successful requires the work of more than one institution – it requires whole community engagement and a “shared understanding of civic responsibility to produce a good local economy.”²⁹ There are significant overlaps between CWB, community spaces and the potential to build community engagement and investment in place.

An important first step in understanding the potential for CWB is to evaluate the spending of a city's anchor institutions on the local economy. For example, in 2013, Preston City Council established that

only 5% of their annual spending was going into the local area. By 2017 (after assessing where external spending could be brought back to Lancashire), the annual local spending nearly trebled from £38 million to £112 million.³⁰ In Preston, evaluation and reorganisation of procurement processes also allowed institutions to identify the types of businesses to buy goods/services from, prioritising those delivering significant social good (e.g., by being worker-led cooperatives).

Another important step identified by the CLES is anchor institutions committing to paying workers the Real Living Wage for their city. Brighton and Hove, Preston and Cambridge have seen success doing this. In Cambridge, the City Council has worked on the campaign since 2014 and is the only council to have a dedicated Real Living Wage officer post.³¹ In Brighton and Hove, 576 organisations in the city have signed up to this commitment, helping to deliver financial benefits to residents. In Preston, this has resulted in 4000 extra employees receiving the Living Wage, helping the city move out of 20% most deprived local authorities in the UK.

28 Bennett Institute for Public Policy. 2019. Measuring Wealth, Delivering Prosperity. <https://www.bennettinstitute.cam.ac.uk/publications/measuring-wealth-delivering-prosperity/>

29 CLES and Preston City Council. 2019. How we built community wealth in Preston. https://cles.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/CLES_Preston-Documnt_WEB-AW.pdf

30 CLES and Preston City Council. 2019. Ibid.

31 Cambridge City Council, 2023. Living Wage. <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/living-wage>



↑ A shop front encouraging residents to support their local economy.

Credit: Arthur Franklin

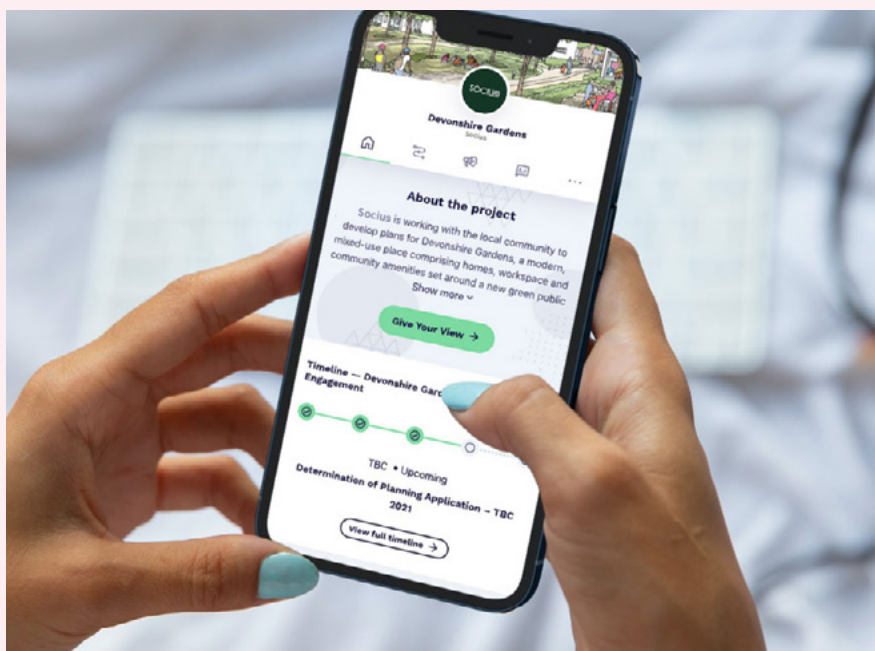
IDEAS FOR CHANGE

Engage communities in local decision making and interventions through innovative means

5

Engage with people in our city by using innovative, inclusive, and accessible methods like Citizens' Juries or other deliberative democratic models, Community Wealth Building, and online platforms like Pol.is and Citizen Lab, to move beyond polarising discourse and top-down interventions towards more nuanced conversations and constructive participation.

Credit: Socius Developments



Case study: Socius Developments use 'Give my View' to generate higher feedback to consultations.

Ensuring feedback is clearer and more relevant

Socius, a mixed-use developer and member of Cambridge Ahead, developed a new digital consultation tool called 'Give My View', with Tech start-up, Built-ID. Before using 'Give My View', Socius relied almost solely on face-to-face consultation events. These are important, work well and have their place, but tended not be the most diverse in attendance. Give My View pushes out surveys across social

media to reach a wider audience, more diverse in age, class, and ethnic background. Subsequently, Socius's consultation feedback rate rocketed, from 50-200 responses to 500-5,000 responses per consultation. This allows the developer to hear more from the 'silent majority', ensuring that feedback is clearer, more relevant and holds more of a 'mandate'.

It's natural to want to have a sense of pride about the place you live in. People want to feel a sense of attachment to their place and to identify with it.

How to bring a community together



↑ Greener Queen Edith's Day enables residents to recycle and swap everything from toys and books to furniture. Hundreds of people attend. Credit: QECF

SAM DAVIES (CHAIR) AND CHRIS RAND (COMMUNICATIONS)

Queen Edith's Community Forum

As volunteers for the Queen Edith's Community Forum (QECF), we look for ways of fostering those feelings in what had previously been regarded as a bland dormitory suburb. When I describe where Queen Edith's is, sometimes it's easiest to define it by what it isn't – "the area in the south of the city in between Trumpington and Cherry Hinton!"

And when it comes to building a shared sense of place and community, there are some interesting challenges to resolve. Queen Edith's:

- contains Cambridge Biomedical Campus (which functions as a small city in its own right) but has barely any other businesses or amenities
- has c.4000 residential properties which include detached family homes in large plots, selling for £2m+, a sizeable 1960s council housing estate and many new build flats
- has the greatest concentration of older residents in the city but also a constant turnover of new arrivals from all over the world to work in the local tech sector.

So, when Chris and I first got involved with QECF in 2015, we decided it made sense to prioritise developing really good communications channels which reached as many local people as possible. We set up a weekly email which has 1700 subscribers; a self-funded 24-page colour magazine four times a year delivered to every home in the area; and a well-developed website (www.queen-ediths.info).

We run a programme of our own events and activities which are always free to residents and make a big effort to find out about and publicise those run by other individuals and groups. We look for practical ways of seeding new initiatives, e.g. holding small grants for fledgling groups or signposting residents to relevant resources. If you've never done it before, applying for funding or a Temporary Events Notice can be daunting, so putting applicants in touch with others who've got useful knowledge or experience can reduce the barriers to action.

We also think it's important to promote residents' understanding of, and active participation in, local democracy so we hold an annual open hustings event for candidates standing in local elections which is recorded and posted on our website. We also make space available for candidates' profiles in the April magazine. Year round, we highlight local government consultations and meetings, so residents know what's going on and how they can get involved.

Alongside this, we're very keen to build our own and others' understanding of 'how the place works' using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. In early 2020 we ran a design workshop to look at how the local centre on Wulfstan Way could be improved and used the Place Standard survey tool to look at quality of life in different parts of the area. We've invited guest speakers from the Biomedical Campus and the Greater Cambridge Partnership to present their proposals at public meetings. More recently, volunteers have also dug into the data on 'windfall' planning applications on two streets experiencing rapid change.

Frustratingly, many of these activities had to be put on hold during the Covid pandemic but that was also when we really saw the fruits of all our previous efforts, as the community came together in an extraordinarily powerful display of neighbourly support. 240 residents signed up to our mutual aid support group and we recruited volunteers to provide over 2000 hours effort at the local vaccination clinic. In May 2020 we also started a free food hub for those facing financial hardship, which is still running and has received over £50,000 in donations from local residents over that period.



↑ Volunteers at the annual Greener Queen Edith's Day in Wulfstan Way encourage residents of all ages to write down ideas how to improve their area on a large poster. Credit: QECF

This pandemic 'pivot' was possible, we believe, because two complementary factors came together:

- QECF was trusted as an effective and competent local actor, by residents and local government
- residents had developed a deeper commitment to Queen Edith's as a place with an identity and a community where we were 'all in it together'.

But despite that amazing blossoming of engagement, two years later we still face significant obstacles. As previously mentioned, Queen Edith's is short on small businesses and physical community spaces, so lacks the resources necessary to create a truly liveable neighbourhood. We'd like it to be possible for more residents to live more of their lives locally and know that many would choose to do so if they had the choice. It would especially help our older residents avoid the risk of social isolation and make it easier for our many new arrivals to build community connections. Access to physical space would also enable QECF to expand the range of support we can offer to residents to counter the cost-of-living crisis and live more sustainably, by hosting events such as a repair café, bike maintenance training or a Library of Things.

And then there's the issue of how we can make sure that residents' voices get heard. Queen Edith's proximity to Cambridge Biomedical Campus leaves us particularly exposed to residential and commercial development pressures, and major infrastructure interventions. It can feel hard to achieve a fair representation of local interests in the face of highly motivated organisations, some of which have deep pockets and a platoon of consultants, but for residents to feel like this is 'their' place, they have to believe they are equal partners in shaping its future.

The famous urban commentator Jane Jacobs said "The best cities are actually federations of great neighbourhoods". We've often heard the ambition stated that Cambridge should aim to be the best small city in the world; but if that ambition is ever to become a reality, we will have to look beyond the honeypots of the historic city centre and the science parks and put political effort and financial investment into building great neighbourhoods – and great communities – that work for all our residents.

We don't pretend to have all the answers in Queen Edith's, but we're very happy to continue the conversation.



Credit: Joe Green

HOUSING

With contributions from Abigail Jones, Savills; Sebastian Corke, Bidwells; Isabelle Pickett, Aviva Investors; Lawrence Morris, University of Cambridge and James Curtis, Morgan Sindall.



We began this project with the objective that our quarters should be vibrant, inclusive, and accessible to different communities. Housing, and how different communities of people live together, is a significant enabler or hindrance of that. Housing comprises a crucial part of how people live in and relate to their neighbourhoods. How people live together influences the atmosphere and identity of a place. We heard that in some parts of the city where housing types are largely the same, ‘mono-tenure/mono-product’ estates can emerge. This can result in socio-economically uniform communities. It is widely understood that non-diverse systems are more vulnerable to shocks than diverse ones. There is risk in encouraging or maintaining communities whose (income/social) demographics are largely the same. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) advises that mixed tenure housing works as a proxy for mixing income groups, thus reducing social stratification in urban areas.³²

In a city like Cambridge where divides are often perceived or felt along socio-economic lines, creating convivial urban spaces for mixed-income groups is one way to overcome this challenge. However, this is necessary more in existing communities, rather than new developments where this thinking has already been adopted into planning (e.g., Trumpington). An example of where this may be done well is the mixed use, high-density development at Devonshire Gardens, which is infilling a brownfield site in central Cambridge. However, the challenge of creating diverse, mixed communities in urban spaces through housing is captured by geographers Gary Bridge, Tim Butler and Loretta Lees.³³ They argue that promises of mixed spaces and mixed communities in planning policies are not always realised, and rather than bring people together, divides remain because people do not always integrate between communities. From review of international housing policies, they note that the mixed community planning model is more often applied to low-income groups (with the intention of creating uplift through increasing proportion of wealthy residents) than is proposed for already wealthy but also homogeneous communities.

This is to say that whilst housing is a crucial first step to diverse and vibrant communities we want in quarters, it

is not the only step in creating mixed and resilient communities. Instead, the effectiveness of housing interventions needs to be considered alongside the context of community building principles outlined in earlier chapters of this report.

Housing Tribes

The Young Advisory Committee conducted extensive research into the housing needs of under-35s in the Cambridge city region. ‘Housing Tribes’, the output of that research, captures the housing ‘personalities’ of four different groups.³⁴

The four tribes are:

1. **Worker Bee** — Rajan is a recent graduate and has moved to Cambridge to start a new job.
2. **Space Cadet** — Lorna has been in Cambridge for a while, and is starting to commit to staying longer term.
3. **Cambridge Cog** — Heidi has been working in Cambridge for a few years as a healthcare worker
4. **Limbo Lander** — Simon grew up in Cambridge and wants to base his future here.

The Housing Tribes highlight the benefits that diverse tenure types and housing products could bring to Cambridge. By understanding the needs of these groups, the report advocates the need for diverse mix of types and tenures to create more mixed communities. The research identified built-to-rent, employer-backed housing, co-living schemes and compact accommodation as offering opportunity to fill a gap in demand for young professionals wanting to live in Cambridge in good-quality, affordable housing. For young adults who grew up in Cambridge but are on lower incomes, co-living (akin to university halls of residence) was proposed to support independent living away from the parental home.

Our research noted the risk of rising unaffordability in the city for essential workers who deliver key services like teaching, healthcare, public transport, or retail/hospitality. Those working in healthcare or education have especially ‘footloose’ skills, and we heard that Cambridge is threatened with losing workers to more affordable cities due to the cost

³² Joseph Rowntree Foundation [2008] Developing and sustaining mixed tenure housing developments <https://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/default/files/jrf/migrated/files/2295.pdf>

³³ Bridge, G. and Butler, T., Lees, L. 2011. Mixed communities: Gentrification by stealth? Policy Press.

³⁴ Cambridge Ahead. 2022. Housing Tribes <https://www.cambridgeahead.co.uk/media/2110/ca-housing-tribes-report.pdf>

of living. Therefore, creating housing products (such as employer backed housing or low-cost 2/3 bed homes to buy and rent in central locations) that are convenient and affordable to these workers is crucial for their retention.

However, it will be important to understand how well the different housing products mentioned above support affordable living in the city, and whether ensuring affordability makes their development feasible in Cambridge. Evaluation of existing co-living and compact living schemes in the UK will be crucial in honing their applicability to the Cambridge context.

Provision of housing on the private market alone cannot address the housing availability and affordability challenge in the Cambridge city region. Social rent plays an essential role serving the needs of low-income households, who may not have access to the private housing market. The Cambridge Investment Partnership between Hill and Cambridge City Council has established plans for 2000 homes to be built on council and privately owned land across the city.³⁵ The innovative partnership has allowed the city council to deliver 500 affordable homes one year ahead of schedule, with plans to deliver more. Employer-backed housing, such as at the University of Cambridge's Eddington site, supports key workers find discounted accommodation in the city. Meanwhile, It Takes a City are using a Community Land Trust to find spaces for modular homes to help provide accommodation for homeless people.³⁶ For our quarters to truly be inclusive, the full diversity of housing products should be considered to meet the needs of our communities.

Community housing initiatives

The previous chapter outlined how Community Wealth Building can create local social and economic value. CWB can also be applied to housing as it seeks to redefine relations to land and property within the city. In cities like Cambridge where housing is arguably defined by its unaffordability and relative scarcity, this may be appropriate. In Cambridge, average house price is 10 times the average annual income, increasing to 12.3 times higher for the lowest quartile of incomes and house prices.³⁷ Alternative ownership models are an

opportunity to explore different tenure types

In Cambridge, there is sometimes consternation about the dominance of some institutions owning significant areas of the city's land and assets, and this may create perceived or actual divides amongst our communities. One remedy to this, which can help generate a feeling of community owned spaces is community-led housing (CLH). CLH is 'bottom up', where people identify a housing need in their neighbourhood or community and work with the support of local authorities or other delivery agencies. Done well, this model can secure the long-term affordability of community-focused accommodation for local people. Marmalade Lane is an example of this in Cambridge, where communality sits at the heart of the development's ethos.³⁸ Other examples also include Lancaster's 'Forgebank Housing Coop', home to nearly 100 residents.³⁹ In Great Shelford, the Great Shelford Parochial Alms Charity is constructing 21 homes at 50% the cost of other privately rented accommodation in the village.⁴⁰ The CPCA provides start-up grants to groups who want to explore this model for their community, and recently committed to further funding to progress CLH projects.⁴¹ However, this model seems not to have gained good traction in Cambridge City – this may owe to the high land costs and demand in the city, making low-cost community models more challenging to achieve. Further research into the viability of such schemes in Cambridge is necessary to understand their role in communities moving forward.

Improving urban density

How neighbourhoods serve their communities is not just dependent upon the range of services available, it clearly also requires a reliable pool of people to use those services to make them viable. We therefore explored the value of densification in helping make quarters vibrant, well served places. The Urban Transport Group (UTG) and Danish Ministry for the Environment⁴² recommend that to enable well-served communities, a minimum of 25 dwellings per hectare (DPH) in suburban areas and 40 DPH in the urban core is necessary. This approach has been favoured by the Greater Cambridge Planning Service whilst discussing the action plan for North East Cambridge's redevelopment⁴³

35 Hill. 2022. Cambridge City. <https://www.hill.co.uk/cambridge-city>

36 It Takes a City. 2022. Community Land Trust <https://www.ittakesacity.org.uk/community-land-trust/>

37 Housing Board for Cambridgeshire, Peterborough & West Suffolk, 2022. Housing Market Bulletin, Edition 54. <https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/hmb-ed-54.pdf>

38 Architectural Review, 2020. Common sense: Marmalade Lane in Cambridge, UK by Mole Architects <https://www.architectural-review.com/awards/w-awards/common-sense-marmalade-lane-in-cambridge-uk-by-mole-architects>

39 Lancaster Cohousing. 2022. <https://www.lancastercohousing.org.uk>

40 <https://gspc.org.uk/its-all-happening-at-mores-meadow/>

41 Cambridgeshire Acre. 2022. Combined Authority Board Approves £100,000 For Community-Led Housing <https://www.cambsacre.org.uk/funding-approved-for-community-led-housing>

42 Danish Ministry for the Environment (2015). The Finger Plan. https://danishbusinessauthority.dk/sites/default/files/fp-eng_31_13052015.pdf

43 Greater Cambridge Planning Service. 2020. North East Cambridge Typologies Study and Development Capacity Assessment <https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/media/1252/typologies-and-development-capacity-assessment-2020.pdf>

The UTG highlights that, conversely, low density urban areas leads to poor or absent public transport, as well as poorer public services.⁴⁴

In Cambridge, density varies: along Victorian terraces in central Cambridge, density is up to 90 DPH, and in parts of Eddington 261 DPH. However, the density of existing communities can be low in some parts of the city, increasing the challenge of providing services to those areas. The Greater Cambridge Planning Service's evaluation of density delivery in the UK shows that density can be achieved through innovative design to fit into existing communities without disrupting the 'feel' of an area.⁴⁵ An award-winning example of how this can be delivered is Vaudeville Court in Islington, London. There, a 13-unit, 4-storey terraced, 100% social housing development designed by architects Levitt Bernstein was completed in 2015.⁴⁶ This development delivered a density of 100DPH on a 0.13 ha site.

However, one barrier to achieving densification is public image, with many automatically thinking of high-rise buildings with poor architecture or safety. Another barrier is the affordability of high-density schemes for developers, and the need to evaluate trade-offs within the planning approval stage to increase their viability to deliver high-quality, high-volume developments that also achieve net zero ambitions and affordability needs. We therefore feel that information campaigns alongside adaptability within the planning system are necessary to enable high quality densification to take place in our city. Additionally, the construction cost of high-density developments should be weighed against the cost-saved and value generated by having communities able to support local service delivery and the significance of this both for existing communities and local environment.

44 Urban Transport Group (2022). The Good Life, The Role of Transport in Shaping a New and Sustainable Era for Suburbs. <https://www.urbantransportgroup.org/system/files?file=general-docs/UTG%20The%20Good%20Life%20FINAL.pdf>

45 Greater Cambridge Planning Service. 2020. Ibid.

46 Levitt Bernstein. 2022. Vaudeville Court, Islington. <https://www.levittbernstein.co.uk/project-stories/vaudeville-court-islington>

IDEAS FOR CHANGE

Affordable housing and urban design to enhance quarters

6

Introduce a more diverse mix of housing types in Cambridge such as build-to-rent, co-living, compact living, employer backed housing, and social housing whilst making the case to Government for further affordable housing funding to help overcome viability barriers in providing housing that meets the need of essential workers.

7

Think boldly about high-quality densification opportunities in new/re-developments in Cambridge and consider the positive implications for viability of local public services, public transport, carbon reduction, and other issues that can come from high-quality denser development.



Credit: Ben Wicks

CLIMATE RESILIENCE

With contributions from Rachel Morwood from Rapleys, Gabi Everett from RG Carter and Bonnie Leung from Mott Macdonald.



Credit: Ronan Furuta

A sustainable City of Quarters is one where communities are resilient to the impacts of climate change whilst simultaneously reducing their impacts on climate and the natural environment. When we think about climate change, it is important we consider the differential impacts that climate change or mitigation strategies have on different communities.⁴⁷ Climate justice is therefore at the crux of the report's thinking about how we can make communities resilient to the changes an altered climate will bring to our quarters. For this report, we consider climate justice, sustainability, and climate resilience through needs around access to open spaces, housing, and water.

First, community physical and mental health is strongly determined by access to good quality open spaces and air quality amongst other factors, and therefore equitable distribution and access to quality outdoor space is crucial for the health of quarters.⁴⁸ Second, housing is a key determinant of wellbeing and health, and decarbonising our housing stock intersects with issues around e.g., fuel poverty, overheating in summer and exposure to flood risk. Third, sustainable water provisioning needs to be achieved to ensure that the pressures of new communities and population growth do not occur to the

detriment of existing communities and the city region's ecosystems.

What does climate change look like in our city region?

Cities and urban areas are especially vulnerable to the effects of a warming climate. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) 6th Assessment Report projects with very high confidence that "compared to present day, large implications are expected from the combination of future urban development and more frequent occurrence of extreme climate events, such as heatwaves, with more hot days and warm nights adding to heat stress in cities."⁴⁹ The report recommends that "resilience to extreme weather for urban dwellers is strongly influenced by ... the quality of buildings, the effectiveness of land use planning, and the quality and coverage of key infrastructure and services. It is also influenced by the effectiveness of early warning systems and public response measures and by the proportion of households with savings and insurance and able to afford safe, healthy homes."⁵⁰

Meanwhile, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Commission on Climate (CPICC) report outlines that the main threats to the city region include drought, flooding, and extreme summer temperatures.

47 Climate Just. No Date. What is climate justice? <https://www.climatejust.org.uk/what-climate-justice>

48 The Open University. 2020. The benefits of outdoor green and blue spaces. <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/mental-health/the-benefits-outdoor-green-and-blue-spaces>

49 IPCC. 2021. Regional Fact Sheet – Urban Areas https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/factsheets/IPCC_AR6_WGI_Regional_Fact_Sheet_Urban_areas.pdf

50 IPCC. 2021. Chapter 8 - Urban Areas https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/02/WGIIAR5-Chap8_FINAL.pdf

The main sources of carbon emissions in our region are transport, housing, and peat degradation in the Fens. The report also highlights that the impacts of climate change will affect our communities differently, especially lower-income households. It notes that 6.4% of new-build homes are in areas of flood risk, whilst 8% of these new-build homes intended for lower-income households are in flood risk areas. Meanwhile, fuel poverty affects 13.7% of the population in Cambridgeshire.⁵¹ Poorly insulated homes therefore not only contribute to social issues, but also increase local emissions. We have therefore considered how Cambridge can reduce its climate impact and vulnerability by reducing carbon emissions from housing through district heating and reducing drought risk by adopting 'water neutrality' to lower domestic water consumption.

District heating and home insulation

Around 18% of the UK's heat supply will need to come from heat networks to be net zero by 2050.⁵² Cambridge City Council's Climate Change Strategy claims district heating, along with other alternatives to gas heating, could help reduce emissions associated with homes by 15%.⁵³ The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) reports that natural gas accounts for 90% of energy supplying heat networks in the UK.⁵⁴ However, a centralised heat source means converting to low carbon renewable energy is much easier than replacing individual boilers in every home. It also allows the benefits of new technological advancements to be felt more equitably across the city. Heating networks can also offer greater efficiency and their scale



↑ District heating pipes being installed in Leeds, as part of the PIPES scheme, serving civic buildings in the city centre. Credit: Stephen Craven.

51 Hunts Post. 2021. Cambridgeshire has worst region for fuel poverty over 'eating or heating'. <https://www.huntspost.co.uk/news/22956218.cambridgeshire-worst-region-fuel-poverty-eating-heating/>

52 The Climate Change Committee. 2020. Sixth Carbon Budget: Buildings. <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Sector-summary-Buildings.pdf>

53 Cambridge City Council. 2021. Climate Change Strategy 2021-2026 www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/9581/climate-change-strategy-2021-2026.pdf

54 Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy. 2021. Opportunity Areas for District Heating Networks in the UK https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1015585/oppo_for_dhnnca_hc.pdf

15%

District heating, along with other alternatives to gas heating, could help reduce emissions associated with homes by 15%.



↑ Lagoon constructed at the Eddington site, as part of the nature-based solutions to flood attenuation and rainwater harvesting scheme, which contribute to achieving water neutrality. Credit: Hugh Venables.

can unlock opportunities to utilise waste heat from industry and other unexpected sources. For example, Bristol's extensive new heat network will be powered by lower carbon energy sources including ground and water source heat pumps and waste heat from the university campus.⁵⁵

Yet the key to district heating efficiency is using lower temperatures, which in turn requires well insulated homes. Yet, with almost 50% of dwellings in Cambridge having an EPC rating of C or lower, demanding a joined-up approach of retrofitting existing building stock and building new developments to high energy performance standards such as Passivhaus is needed to ensure the success of heat networks. While Cambridge City Council has published a retrofit guide for different housing types in Cambridge, a major challenge exists around financing.⁵⁶ Carbon offsetting for decarbonisation of existing housing stock may be part of the solution to this. For example, Milton Keynes has developed an innovative local carbon offsetting fund through their Local Plan, using carbon taxes gathered from new developments to support existing households to lower their energy

expenditure through financial support towards e.g., loft insulation, cavity wall insulation, and boiler upgrades.⁵⁷

Improvements to local electricity grid capacity will also be needed to enable decarbonisation through e.g. degasification and the installation of photovoltaic cells which feed into the grid for domestic and commercial properties.

Utilising waste heat, captured from sources such as office blocks or other large buildings, can provide low or even zero cost heating to social housing developments. When new residential and commercial developments are being planned in our city, the viability of capturing excess heat should be evaluated. Proposals for new science parks in the city present such opportunities.

Water neutrality

In Summer 2022, the UK was hit by extreme heat waves with mercury crossing 40.0°C for the first time. Accompanying concerns about a lack of water resources following prolonged periods without rainfall in East Anglia have grown, and drought was declared by the Environment Agency in August 2022.⁵⁸

- 55 Triple Point Heat Networks. 2022. Reducing Bristol's Carbon Footprint: Heat Pump Technology Supported by Heat Networks Investment Project <https://tp-heatnetworks.org/bristol>
- 56 Cambridge City Council, 2022. Retrofitting your home. <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/11677/retrofitting-your-home-report-non-accessible-version.pdf>
- 57 Energy Manager Magazine, 2022. Milton Keynes's Pioneering Carbon Offset Fund Six Years On. <https://www.energymanagermagazine.co.uk/milton-keynes-pioneering-carbon-offset-fund-six-years-on>
- 58 Environment Agency. 2022. Environment Agency chairs National Drought Group as parts of country move into drought, August 2022. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/environment-agency-chairs-national-drought-group-as-parts-of-country-move-into-drought>

Cambridge abstracts most of its water from chalk aquifers to the south and east of the city.⁵⁹ The Cambridge city region is also characterised by low annual rainfall. This rainfall should recharge groundwater during the winter, but recently, lower than average annual rainfall means that aquifers are not recharging as fast as water is abstracted. In combination with higher water demands due to growing populations in the city, the supply and quality of local water resources in aquifers and streams is declining, affecting the health of local waterbodies. This makes abstraction a key limiting factor for achieving good ecological status.

In a region with increasing water scarcity, reducing demand in growing urban centres could be achieved through aims for “water neutrality”. Water neutrality means that new developments “will not add to the overall water demand of an area and will have a net zero impact on the mains water supply.”⁶⁰ We include this within the City of Quarters report because the sustainability of water supply in our city region is crucial not only for ensuring resilience of communities to lower water resource availability, but also because sustainable water abstraction and treatment is important for conserving rare ecosystems in our region like chalk streams which comprise a valuable part of Cambridge’s green spaces.

It is a crucial accompaniment to increased water supply from the South Lincolnshire and Fens reservoirs planned by Anglian Water and Cambridge Water, which will only become functional in 10-15 years. Demand reduction interventions are necessary building blocks to ensuring the operability of water neutrality as

a water management framework. Operability of water neutrality lies in planning. Where local planning authorities may want to demand high water reuse and demand-reduced developments, challenges exist against the context of the National Planning Policy Framework, where per capita consumption limits are higher (125L) than the volume needed to ensure water neutrality (80-90L).⁶¹

However, developers and landowners can still choose to design water neutral communities. The University of Cambridge’s Eddington development demonstrates that developments with high levels of reuse are possible, if required by development permits and with willingness from landowners/developers. In Eddington and Clay Farm, development permits demanded that water consumption should be capped at 80L per capita per day, significantly lower than the average UK consumption of 142L per person per day.

However, work remains to be done about the post-occupancy efficiency of water demand reduction interventions. Data on this is limited, meaning that the efficacy of this intervention type is not well understood. Early data from Eddington indicates that with construction for 80L per person per day, consumption can be significantly reduced from the 142L average down to 78-90L. Despite this, there are still important considerations about how behavioural change interventions can help ensure that structural/built demand reduction methods are not made obsolete by post-occupancy changes or wasteful water consumption. This will require joined-up, cross-agency working to ensure targeted and effective interventions are achieved.

59 Cambridge Water. 2022. Where our water comes from <https://www.cambridge-water.co.uk/environment/managing-water-resources/where-our-water-comes-from>

60 Waterwise. 2021. Water Neutrality: Practical Guidance. <https://www.waterwise.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/WESSG-2021-Water-Neutrality-Practical-Guidance-2.pdf>

61 The National Planning Policy Framework replaced the more ambitious demands contained within the Code for Sustainable Homes, under which Eddington and Clay Farm were given planning permission.

How can we achieve water neutrality?

- Reducing water use by fitting efficient products in homes and smart meters. Anglian Water has committed to ensuring all homes and businesses have smart metres by 2035.
- Reusing water, such as rainwater and surface water harvesting, greywater recycling and wastewater/blackwater recycling.
- Offsetting water use, such as retrofitting existing buildings to improve existing water efficiency, finding and fixing leaks.
- Offsetting abstractions from one source by reductions from another source, with consideration of environmental damage that may still occur local to the increased abstraction.
- Catchment management measures upstream to increase recharge and restore rivers and reduce flood risk.
- Catchment management measures downstream to reduce agricultural runoff and pollution and reduce flood risk.
- Behavioural and educational interventions to reduce water demand at a household level.



↑ Micro-thunderstorm. Credit: NOAA

IDEAS FOR CHANGE

Embedding Climate Resilience

8
Prioritise the decarbonisation of our buildings by: supporting the City Council's scoping of a district heating network, introducing high standards for new buildings through the next Local Plan, and examining the carbon offsetting / social investment case to leverage investment into the costly retrofitting of existing building stock.

9
Convene industry partners, planners, water companies and other key stakeholders to introduce the concept of water neutrality in Cambridge. In doing so, support ambitions to introduce an 80L per person/day benchmark in the Local Plan and contribute to behavioural change to reduce customer usage levels.

10
Support equitable access to quality open spaces by supporting e.g., the work of the Cambridge Nature Network and Natural Cambridgeshire's pledge to 'double nature', thus increasing the environmental sustainability and natural capital of the city.



Credit: Maxime Bhm

BRINGING THE CITY OF QUARTERS TO LIFE

To bring the City of Quarters to life requires collective action. Our Ideas for Change are intended to offer a direction of travel for stakeholders across the city region, across a variety of large, medium, and smaller scale activities which are in various stages of implementation. We suggest that collective action, including direct engagement from Cambridge Ahead Members, should be prioritised in these areas.

By implementing the City of Quarters vision, we want to build momentum with a range of actors playing their part over the coming years. As such, funding to support implementation would come through a variety of public, private, and charitable/ community sources. We have though given thought to some measures which could create a core pillar of resource.

Generating the financial resources to implement some of our ideas

A Cambridge Tourist Tax Other international tourist destinations across the world utilise varieties of tourist tax to help manage the pressures created by tourism, and to ensure that the visitor appeal of the city contributes to the quality of life of residents and environmental sustainability. The Centre for Cities has undertaken research⁶² demonstrating

that a £2 per night occupancy tax would generate around £2 million revenue per year from domestic tourists alone with Cambridge City. Including international visitors, it could be as high as £8.2 million annually (which could potentially be higher if considering implementation in some suburbs of the city that fall within South Cambridgeshire District Council area).⁶³ Primary Legislation is required to enable Local Authorities in the Cambridge City Region to implement a Tourist Tax. We add our voice to the call to the Government to pass this legislation in order that cities such as Cambridge are better able to maintain their visitor and resident offering.⁶⁴

Social Impact Investing This refers to the “repayable transfer of money with the aim of creating positive social impact.”⁶⁵ Cambridge City Council alongside It Takes a City and AchieveGood published a report into the opportunities for Social Impact Investing in Cambridge in 2022. They identify this to address key local challenges including housing affordability, homelessness and inequality in social outcomes, through some of the 400 social enterprises operating in Cambridgeshire. In the southwest, Bristol and Bath Regional Capital (BBRC) CIC have demonstrated the value that Social Impact Investing can have. There, through BBRC, investments into community centres, renewable energy generation and discounted accommodation have

62 Centre for Cities, 2022. What could a tourism tax do for city budgets? <https://www.centreforcities.org/blog/what-could-a-tourism-tax-do-for-city-budgets>

63 Using data from: Visit England. 2017. Discover England: summary insights on overseas visitors to Cambridge. https://www.visitbritain.org/sites/default/files/vb-corporate/Documents-Library/documents/England-documents/def_cambridge_summary_06.11.17.pdf

64 Manchester will be implementing a £1 tourist tax on accommodation to fund the ‘Manchester Accommodation Business Improvement District’ from April 2023. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-63915985>

65 Cambridge City Council, 2022. Coming Together: The Role That Social Impact Investing Can Play in Cambridge <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/11725/coming-together-report.pdf>



↑ The Park Centre in Bristol - a community centre whose rebuild was supported by the Social Impact Investing.

Credit: The Park.

been enabled. Meanwhile, in London, Camden Climate Investment has raised over £1 million from residents to support local projects such as electric vehicle charging point and solar panel installation.⁶⁶

Carbon Offsetting Fund Imagine if we could funnel carbon offset funding into local decarbonisation projects, having environmental, social, and economic impact? Many different offset fund models exist in the UK.⁶⁷ Milton Keynes for example has since 2008 through its Local Plan a requirement for developers of new housing to pay £200 per tonne of carbon emitted into a ringfenced local Carbon Offset Fund managed by the council.⁶⁸ This funding has allowed the council to invest in carbon saving initiatives like refurbishing buildings or installing energy-saving and generating devices on city buildings. It has also provided households with grants to upgrade boilers or install insulation. The scheme has so far generated more than £1 million and made carbon savings of over 6,600 tonnes.⁶⁹ In 2021, Cambridgeshire County Council evaluated the possible benefits and revenue that a Cambridgeshire Carbon Offsetting fund could have for specific decarbonisation projects, based on a 'Fairtrade Model'.^{70, 71}

Setting an agenda moving forward

We know that many of Cambridge's organisations will already be working towards some of the priorities the research has pulled together in this report. To consolidate efforts, we recommend that:

- Cambridge Ahead will create an ESG network of Cambridge Ahead Members to consolidate and amplify the impact that collective

giving, corporate support, and volunteering can have in our city.

- Cambridge Ahead will encourage institutions to collectively call for the passing of government legislation to enable Cambridge, and other UK cities, to introduce a tourist tax to strengthen place-management in a way that balances visitor and resident pressures and needs.
- Cambridge Ahead will encourage institutions to evaluate the extent to which they and their supply chains use local procurement – learning from those (including CA Members) who are doing so.

Key success measures

- Cambridge has supported non-governmental organisations to assess the value of services they provide to their communities.
- Cambridge has evaluated spending from key anchor institutions in the local area and set targets to increase local procurement by 2024.
- Cambridge achieves Gold Sustainable Food Status by 2025.
- Cambridge Nature Network's Nature Festival is the best public festival in the UK and attracts engagement from across the city's communities.
- Cambridge has developed a clear pathway for achieving water neutrality by 2024.
- Cambridge has created a roadmap for decarbonising existing housing stock in the city by 2024.
- Cambridge has established a Social Impact Investment pathway, and a mechanism to capture carbon offset funding to support local decarbonisation initiatives.

66 Ibid, 2022. Page 26-28.

67 See this report by Winchester City Council summarising different structures in UK to capture offset revenue. <https://democracy.winchester.gov.uk/documents/s18724/HEP021%20-%20Carbon%20Neutrality%20Programme%20-%20Carbon%20Offsetting.pdf>

68 Interreg Europe, 2022. Milton Keynes Presents the 'Carbon Offset Fund'. <https://projects2014-2020.interregeurope.eu/potent/news/news-article/14181/milton-keynes-presents-the-carbon-offset-fund/>

69 National Energy Foundation, 2021. NEF Impact Report 2019-2020. <https://nef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/NEF-Impact-Report-19-20.pdf>

70 Cambridgeshire County Council and CUSPE, 2021. Proposal for a Cambridgeshire Decarbonisation Fund to Support the Achievement of Net-Zero Cambridgeshire by 2050. <https://data.cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020%20CUSPE%20Policy%20Challenge%20-%20Proposal%20for%20a%20Cambridgeshire%20Decarbonisation%20Fund%20to%20Support%20the%20Achievement%20of%20Net-Zero%20Cambridgeshire%20by%202050.pdf>

71 A Fairtrade Model would mean that the cost of a carbon credit would be calculated by "subtracting the project revenues from the total project costs which include investment, carbon cost and business margin. The cost of 1 tonne of CO2 saved is calculated by dividing the net cost of the project by the number of tonnes of CO2 saved by the project." (Ibid. p. 19).

WHAT THE YOUNG ADVISORY COMMITTEE WILL COMMIT TO DOING

1

Play an active role in developing networks of empowered young people across the city, both within the Cambridge Ahead network and beyond (for example by offering mentoring and support to young people from diverse demographics and widening the inclusion of different voices in our sub-groups).

2

Support the ESG Network to understand and respond to priority issues in Cambridge, based upon evidence and data from across Cambridge Ahead's research and wider stakeholders.

3

Examine the carbon offsetting / social value case for decarbonising existing building stock – by first engaging with CA Members and other industry experts.

4

Offer support to water companies and other stakeholders investigating how behavioural change can reduce customer usage of water in our city region.

5

Work with Local Authorities to trial new community engagement tools and techniques, particularly supporting efforts to engage younger people in local decision-making.

6

Continue to support the work of the Cambridge Nature Network by both contributing to their steering group and supporting events at the annual Nature Festival.

THANK YOU



MATILDA BECKER

Policy and Research Officer,
Cambridge Ahead

I am delighted that the YAC have been able to speak with such a breadth of people across Cambridge's communities, and I have been inspired by the conversations, innovation and ethos of care that we encountered.

It is apparent that much unifies us in our city like the ambition to leave a positive legacy in one's community or uplift the people around us. Opportunity abounds to make a difference - and with that motivation and inspiration too.

I would like to say a huge 'thank you' to all those who helped us produce this research, and hope that this contributes to a longer story of collaboration for the good of Cambridge.

Abbey People
 Aled Jones
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 Cllr Alex Bulat/The 3 Million
 Interview
 Anglian Water
 Brockton Everlast
 Cambridge City Council
 Cambridge Junction
 Cambridge United Community Trust
 Cambridge Water
 CamCycle
 Cllr Cameron Holloway
 CamTrust
 Cofarm
 Collusion Cambridge
 Connected Lives - Trumpington
 Cambridge Indie
 Dr Jack Layton
 (Researcher, UCL)
 Jimmy's Cambridge
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 North Cambridge Community
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 (Researcher, The Bennett Institute)
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