

November 2020

The city we want to inherit



Young Advisory Committee

Oli Worth, Event Chair

Harry Bullivant, Vice-Chair of the Young Advisory Committee

On the 24th November 2020 the Cambridge Ahead Young Advisory Committee (YAC) presented to around 100 guests, from across business, academia and local government on 'the city we want to inherit'.

We were thrilled to have this platform on which to present our vision and report on some key areas of work from our first two years as a committee. We exist to give younger members of the professional community in Cambridge, those aged under 35, a stronger voice. But the work detailed in this report isn't just about the kind of city we want to inherit. It is about a making a city that will be better for everyone and that future generations will want to live in as well.

One of our first tasks when we started back in 2018 was to identify where we wanted to focus. It was clear that **housing** was one of the committee's main concerns, as both a key driver of quality of life and an area where much of the committee were highly dissatisfied with present accommodation options. The importance of **nature** also emerged as a key theme, with young people simultaneously digital natives but also craving outdoors, green space and experiences. More recently, in the context of the current pandemic, we have turned our attention to the **future of flexible working** and a desire amongst young people for agile working patterns and local communities that enable this.

What connects these priorities is how they contribute to quality of life. With this work we aim to highlight a number of areas that will improve and enhance quality of life for our generation, ensuring that Cambridge remains a place that attracts and retains young people.

You'll read about each of these key areas within this summary of our event, and hope that you will find a topic that resonates with you and your organisation, perhaps one that surprises you, or an area you'd like to learn more about. If that is the case, please reach out to us.

As we look to our next two year term, we'll maintain our emphasis on the use of data and evidence to produce insight that is accessible and easy to implement in your organisations. We'll also reach further and engage more broadly outside the Cambridge Ahead employee community so that we can truly ensure we are pursuing an improved quality of life for young people across the region who all contribute to the success of our city.



Harry Bullivant



Oli Worth

"Serendipity has been a terrific organising principle of my life. Think about helping people first and a lot of good things happen."

David Cleevely, speaking to the Young Advisory Committee, March 2020

Supporting a future of Flexible Working

Jacqueline Platt & Henry Stark

This year COVID-19 has changed the landscape of life as we know it. Early on this prompted the YAC to consider the impact on the lives and wellbeing of the under-35 age group we represent in Cambridge.

Back in April 2020 we launched our first survey to capture the impact of COVID-19 on the priorities of the under 35s. As the situation locally, nationally and globally kept evolving we launched two follow up surveys, one in August and the most recent one in October.

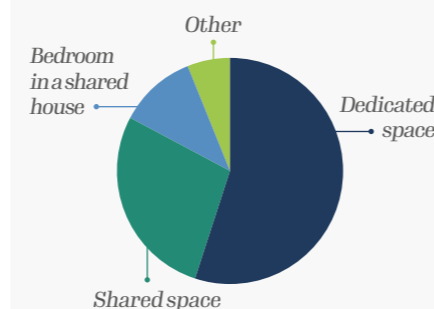
In the August survey it was noticeable that 67% of respondents had never worked from home prior to the pandemic. For this group, the need to adjust to being fully home working was a drastic change but one which many now want to be part of an agile approach to work moving forward.

Our October survey sought to explore this in further depth. We had 205 respondents who represented a balanced demographic mix: 46% male and 54% female, also equally spread in age from 21 through to 35. These respondents are young professionals working in Cambridge Ahead member organisations and we are acutely aware that they do not represent all under 35s in our city. However, they are the most immediately relevant group for the business community.

A resounding 92% answered the survey that they were able to work from home, highlighting that remote working was and is a feasible option. One major consideration for employers has been what the impact of working from home has been on productivity.

In our results a majority claimed that productivity had either not changed or had actually improved during the pandemic. We were also keen to identify specifically whether the work set up at home had an impact on productivity. Despite the availability of dedicated space, as shown in the graph below, 29% felt that their work set up at home was impacting negatively on their productivity levels. Conversely 35% said that their work set up had made a positive impact.

Survey respondents said:
Where do you work from home?



There have been both positive and negative points to draw from remote working. The survey confirmed that 62% of our respondents found that less connectivity and collaboration was the worst part of remote working. The opportunity to bounce ideas off one another and build relationships – something particularly necessary for young workers – far outweighs the independent, technology connected life that we have become accustomed to in this period of the pandemic. There are of course positives that can be drawn from remote working though. The flexibility of working from home and time gained from not making the everyday commute contributed to almost 70% of the votes on the positive outcomes of working from home.

The pandemic has caused a seismic shift in the day-to-day priorities of those represented by our survey - **88% of respondents now want to work remotely 2-3 days a week.** They want to work with their employers to establish new agile working arrangements that provide greater flexibility and reduce the need for the daily commute but maintain connectivity and collaboration, which they value from an office environment and regard as important for creativity, also helping with mental wellbeing.

It was encouraging to see our audience closely in tune with the desires of younger workers for a more flexible style of working. We hope that these shared desires will help shape the workplace over the next few years.

Breakout session on the future of flexible working – key points

- We need to find a way to take consideration of the desire for more agile working but still support collaboration and connectivity, create organisational culture and support new starters through an onboarding process and ongoing development.
- Office space need has been, and will continue to change, including more collaborative areas and a desire for green space within or around offices.
- We must not forget in this conversation those that can't work from home, which broadly fall into two groups (a) those who value coming into the office because of their home working configurations (often those on the lowest salaries) and (b) because they are customer facing / their role requires it.
- Moving forward it was felt that it would be useful to capture the voices of others in the city by collecting data which reflected other demographics and communities.

Survey respondents said:

The best part of working from home?

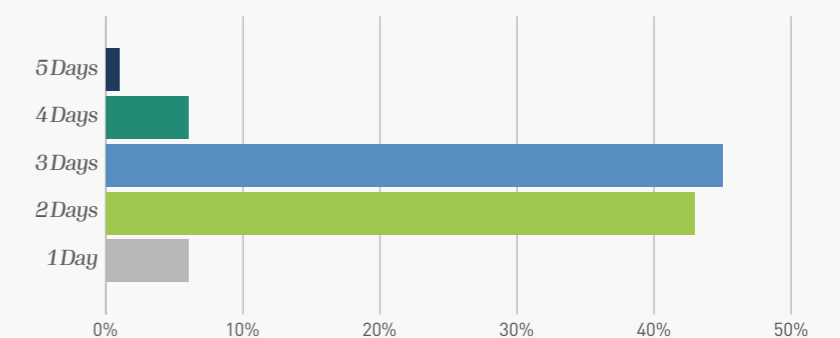


The worst part of working from home?



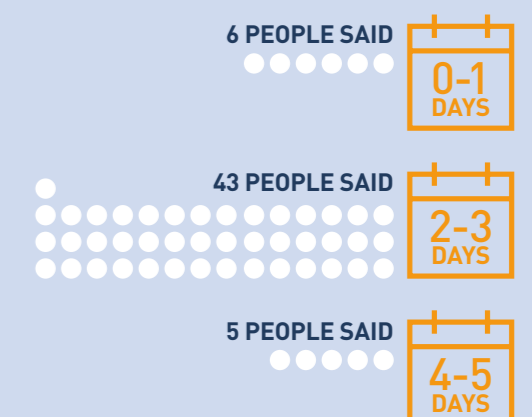
Survey respondents said:

How many weekdays would you like to work remotely?



Attendees of the November event said:

How many days a week do you think people want to work remotely going forward?



Jacqueline Platt



Henry Stark

Meeting the housing needs of Young People

David Jefferies & Abigail Jones

Regardless of age, where you call home matters to everyone and their quality of life. Over this past year almost all of us have spent a lot more time at home, at times, all day, every day.

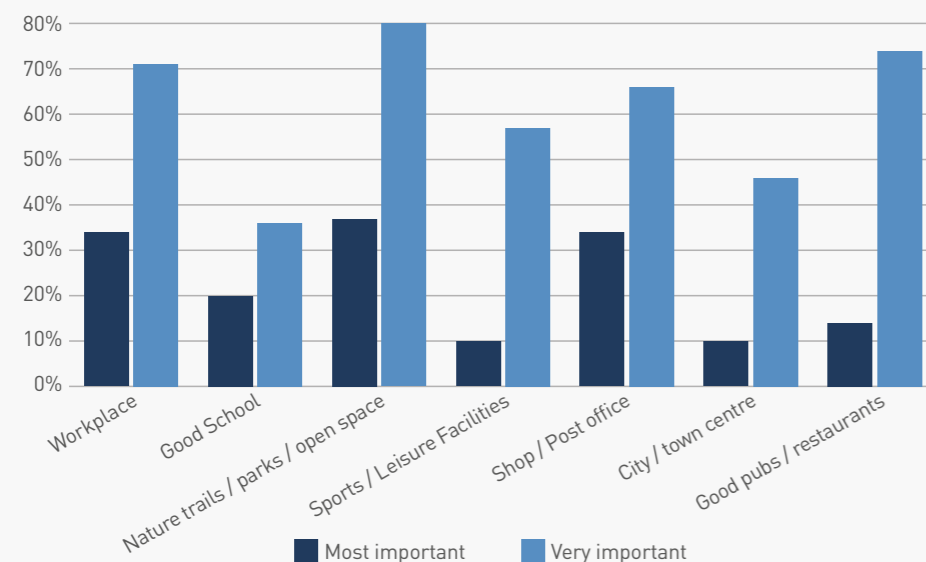
This has forced us to consider whether the space and place is fit for purpose for a whole range of our requirements; living, working, teaching, exercising, baking sourdoughs, virtual calling, to name a few.

Even before COVID-19, the YAC spent a great deal of time discussing the housing options and affordability in Cambridge and whether it was fit for the young population's purpose. We decided it was not. Housing costs for homeowners and renters in Cambridge are high and this impacts Cambridge's ability to attract and retain young people within the city.

We developed two 'housing tribes' that highlight the needs and priorities of two prevalent cohorts who currently work and live in Cambridge. These two tribes – the worker bees and the space cadets – capture key needs and aspirations of each cohort. Survey data and existing research was used to develop these tribes and establish key drivers for housing choices. In particular, we posed the question, 'what is the most important consideration in choosing where to live?' The key finding from this survey was that nature trails and public open space scored the highest 'most important' ranking. This was closely followed by shops and then the workplace.

Survey respondents said:

Please rank the places you would like to be closest to where we live, from most important to least important?



Attendees of the November event said:

What is your most important consideration in choosing where to live?

27 PEOPLE SAID
Nature trails / parks / open space

12 PEOPLE SAID
City / town centre

11 PEOPLE SAID
Workplace

8 PEOPLE SAID
Good school

5 PEOPLE SAID
Good restaurants / pubs

3 PEOPLE SAID
Sports leisure facilities

0 PEOPLE SAID
Shop / post office



Abigail Jones



David Jefferies





Housing tribes articulate bundles of needs and preferences that drive the choices members of that tribe make when choosing where they will live. In order to conceptualise the tribes and better understand the issues they face; each is represented by an imaginary person that embodies the tribe's characteristics.

Key considerations for Rajan our 'worker bee'

- Primarily came to Cambridge for work
- Wants to live close to the buzz of the city centre
- Is social – he values connectivity over private space
- Is mobile and his social network extends outside the city - he values connectivity to other places.

Key considerations for Lorna our 'space cadet'

- Quantity and quality of space is important
- Proximity to nature, convenient access to shops for essentials, local sports and leisure
- Kept in orbit of Cambridge, restricted by affordability, but nonetheless committed to her work, friends and lifestyle which are now rooted in the city. She is planning a longer term future here.

'Tribes' help us think about policy from the perspective of younger people living in the city. We should use them to invest in what matters to attract and retain people like Rajan and Lorna.

What changes or improvements could we make to improve Rajan and Lorna's quality of life? What are the housing types and tenures that best meet the needs of our young people? How do we create suitable and sustainable housing sites with the right connectivity for our tribes and ensure Cambridge remains a special place to live?



After graduating 'Rajan' came to Cambridge for work.



Rajan needed somewhere central, lively and bikeable to his new office on the science park.

Outside of work, he likes to be out meeting new people and socialising with friends in pubs, coffee shops and the beautiful green spaces surrounding the city. This is also because his shared house doesn't have communal space since the living room has been converted into a downstairs bedroom.



Cambridge is expensive, but he found a houseshare on SpareRoom. He doesn't know his three new housemates but they seem all right.



Rajan still has lots of friends from university in other cities. He spent last weekend with a friend in London, and Cambridge's good rail links are super convenient.

Rajan's Story



Lorna has got a job she loves in one of the offices on Station Road.



Lorna and her partner had been renting in the city, saving for a number of years and have now bought their first home together.

Cambridge was too expensive, but they found a place 20 minutes away on the train. Lorna liked living in Cambridge but it was worth moving out of the city to get a bigger property with space to potentially start a family in a few years' time.



After years of renting, she has enjoyed putting her own stamp on things, decorating, getting a cat (or dog) and making it feel like her own. Lorna started working from home two days a week, again now more relevant than ever, and she enjoys going for run in her lunchbreak.

Lorna's Story



Breakout session on the housing tribes – key points

- Tribes move the discussion beyond price per square metre and help us interrogate our thinking about housing planning and options. Housing in Cambridge often fails to meet the needs of the tribes - there is a lack of 'build to rent' property that meets young people's priorities.
- The group discussed a growing need to focus on community spaces, especially as the pandemic has highlighted the importance of community groups and green spaces. Could more be done with existing space, for example turning rooftops into community gardens? This focus on 'community' in housing planning is particularly the case to help tackle loneliness in smaller units, studios and 1 bed apartments. There is an increased role for employers, not just in supplying housing, but in helping people who move into the city to find their feet in the community.
- The group discussed how people might transition between tribes, and what factors might lead to a transition period, particularly where people's housing situation became more unsettled. COVID-19, for example, has led to growing demand outside of Cambridge and for green space.
- Which cohorts might be missing from the two tribes – particularly young people from Cambridge who might live at home or with their families, rather than those who have moved into the city. 11% of respondents to the most recent YAC survey currently live with parents. This was also identified as an area for future research.

An Update from the Cambridge Nature Network

Jackie
Sharpe

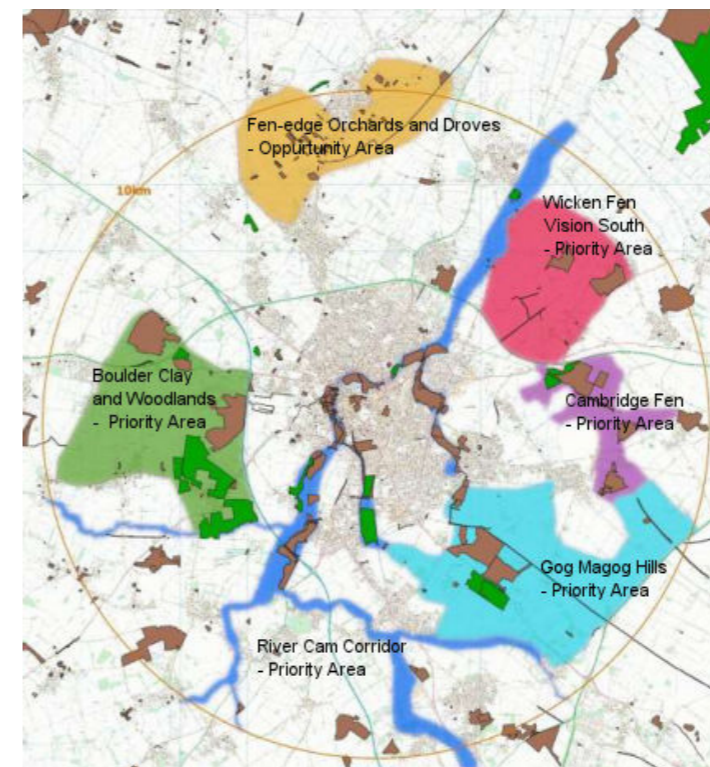
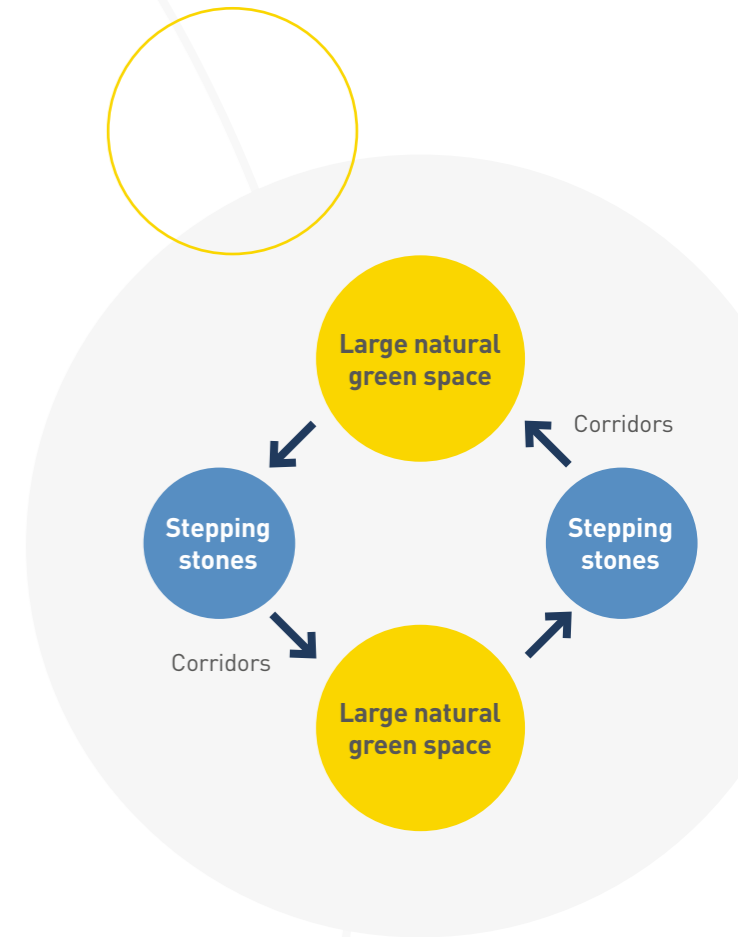


Jackie Sharpe

The Cambridge Nature Network has three main aims: to increase biodiversity, to enhance public access to public open space, and to tackle climate change.

These are long term strategic aims but they are higher now in terms of people's priorities and in the public consciousness than ever before.

Nature networks have a very specific criteria as outlined in by eminent ecologist Sir John Lawton. They consist of several different areas to make up a landscape in which nature can thrive. First, large natural spaces; areas high in biodiversity which in time need to be bigger and more plentiful. Second, stepping stones; smaller dedicated natural spaces which allow different spaces to shelter or forage. Third, corridors; the intervening landscape which is primarily made up of farmland.



We are lucky to live in a place which is close to nature, but it needs to be more connected and integrated into the city, richer in its diversity, and more plentiful. The proposed network focusses on a 10km radius around Cambridge. Five priority areas have been identified and one 'opportunity area', which is not particularly rich with wildlife habitats but could be considered as a 'stepping stone'.

Within the priority areas there are lots of different types of landowners. Some allow access to existing natural green spaces, including Wandlebury and Magog Trust, Milton Country Park, the City Council, Botanical Gardens, the Wildlife Trusts and the National Trust. There are nature reserves which prioritise conservation and are not generally promoted to visitors. And finally, much of the network and the intervening corridors are made up of farmland.

There are lots of work strands in train to help make the network a reality:

- Farming clusters - we have engaged with local nature friendly farmers to better understand the arguments for nature friendly farming, rather than intensive farming. It is hoped that in time 'farming clusters' will be formed, where farmers are encouraged to work together and learn from one another on these issues and develop the network in a way that works for them as landowners.

- Encouraging collaboration – Cambridgeshire Past Present and Future recently held an extremely positive meeting which brought together all those who allow public access to natural green space locally. The objectives of the network align well with the objectives of these organisations and there are further meetings planned next year to take this forward.

- Feeding into council led projects, including current Local Plan discussions, and using the Nature Network Vision in conversations with developers.

- Identifying sustainable financial models – visitor footfall across natural spaces has been increasing at around 7-10% per annum for the last 10 years – a highly sustainable level of growth. High levels of income are seen on sites that charge for access or parking or which offer other facilities such as cafés. This generates income to sustain the parks and is something that might be used to further develop existing or new sites.

- Membership - the network could be established as a brand which people and companies could support. The details of this are still being developed.

At the event we asked those attending whether in principle they would support the network by paying for access membership for employees. It was fantastic to see so many that would consider this – either partially or in full.

Attendees of the November event said:

Would your organisation consider supporting the Network, by paying for access membership for employees?



12 PEOPLE SAID

Yes - we would consider paying for membership in full



19 PEOPLE SAID

Yes - we would consider subsidising / partially paying for membership

0 PEOPLE SAID

No - we would not consider making any contribution

Breakout session on the Cambridge Nature Network – key points

- The County Council discussed their corporate trees and woodland strategy covering the full woodland estate, plus nature reserves. This would look at biodiversity, carbon capture and storage, and flood risk management. These plans could feed into the Nature Network project.

- A hurdle in involvement of farmers revolves around the need to ensure profitability of land, any change requires a big capital investment at the beginning for equipment and to implement new practices. Post-2024, with changes in government policy and environmental subsidies, the benefits of nature friendly farming should become clearer to farmers.

- The importance of accessibility was discussed as being key, since a major point of the Nature Network is not just that outdoor places exist but that they are accessible and able to be used. Thus needs to be balanced against the need to ensure that access is not damaging to the environment or overly disruptive to local landowners, tenants or communities

- Car parks and facilities can be an important part of the business model for running natural areas for visitors. These can raise planning issues but ultimately can ensure sustainability. But how does this juxtapose against our desire to discourage travel by car? Alternative solutions would be in ensuring the spaces are connected to the community, accessible by bike or electric bus.

“It was fantastic to see your survey results show the importance people associate with living close to nature. Society has had a tendency in the past to think about distinct ‘areas’, for housing, work and nature. But we are now moving toward a position where people see these as much more integrated, recognising the importance of nature close to where people live, in and around our everyday environments so that we don’t have to travel to nature – it’s just outside our front door”

Craig Bennett, CEO The Wildlife Trusts, speaking at the ‘city we want to inherit’ event



Concluding Comments



Rob Carter, Chair of the Young Advisory Committee

The YAC has given voice to younger people from across the city and it was fantastic to conclude our first two years with this event, where committee members presented some of the work they have been doing.

I have been consistently impressed by the passion, commitment and creativity that comes from the committee members and I believe that this was reflected as they spoke about 'the city they want to inherit'.

The committee has been privileged to have received a number of highly engaging presentations which have all assisted in shaping its agenda. Most recently we heard from the Bishop Graham James, who highlighted the importance of reaching out to those who can feel left behind and the role the wider Cambridge

community can play to be more inclusive, thoughts we will take with us into the next phase of our work.

As you reflect on this report and the work of the YAC I would like to leave you with

the three clear messages that our Vice-Chair, Harry Bullivant, concluded the event with.

USE US - we are here to help with our data and ideas to shape your actions and decision making going forward.

DO SOMETHING - support the nature network as we grow this initiative with partners.

BRACE YOURSELVES - we look forward to interacting with you all a lot more to address these and further opportunities the YAC have highlighted over the next couple of years, both through Cambridge Ahead and directly as employees of your organisations.

The energy and invigoration I have seen within this committee is just a small part of that which exists in the wider community of Cambridge. It fills me with optimism that our city will continue to lead the way in promoting quality of life for all its residents and acting upon the issues highlighted here and many more.



"I am delighted that the idea we had back in 2018 to create the Young Advisory Committee has been so successful and well received. Hearing from the committee themselves at this event brought home just how passionate and professional these young people are and how important it is to give them a platform to be heard in Cambridge. The future is in safe and capable hands."

Jane Paterson-Todd, CEO, Cambridge Ahead

"This event was a real milestone for the Young Advisory Committee. Over the last two years the committee has thought deeply about these issues and worked hard to understand them. Their work is embedded in the work of Cambridge Ahead, through Rob Carter's position on our board and YAC representation across our project groups, with this event the YAC agenda is now brought right to the forefront of Cambridge Ahead.

The Committee sees 2021 as the year when these issues should be acted upon and want to be active participants working with the community of Cambridge to achieve this. We hope that you will support them."

Dan Thorp, Director of Policy and Programmes, Cambridge Ahead



Cambridge has been identified as the most unequal city in the UK... there is a large body of evidence to suggest that inequality leads to worse outcomes for many, a lack of opportunities as division becomes entrenched, and a negative impact on overall economic output.

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review

"What I love about what you are doing is attending to your context, your place, its future and the future of all its people and the region around you"

Bishop Graham James, speaking to the Young Advisory Committee, November 2020