

# **BUSINESS GROWTH & CLUSTERS**

## **Cambridge City Region**

**2015-2024**

A report by the Centre for Business Research

### **Executive Summary**

- Cambridge has seen exceptional growth of employment over the past 15 years and has outperformed the nation by a considerable margin, driven by fast growth in its knowledge intensive (KI) sectors.
- Business parks and other clusters of employment have played a major role in Cambridge's growth.
- Clustering of businesses in the Cambridge City Region has intensified over the last decade, becoming an even more dominant force in how the local economy works.
- There has been a rise in KI intensity of business parks and clusters in this period, as KI firms are drawn to proven supportive environments.
- Several parks have shifted their focus from non-KI to KI, showing a geographical spread of the footprint of Cambridge parks and clusters – the Cambridge-Waterbeach-Ely corridor being one example.
- Mapping this growth in activity highlights the central role played by transport links and research institutions as key factors influencing the agglomeration of business activity.
- Sustainable transport provision, notably Cambridge North Station and the Guided Busway, drives the growth of business parks and clusters in connected places both in terms of number of companies and employment.
- The upgrade of the A14 does not seem to have dispersed businesses along the motorway, but there is some evidence that changes to the routing of the A14 have unlocked growth at Buckingway Business Park.
- There is a clear spatial distribution of KI employment concentrations. The Life Science concentrations tend to be located in the South / South East area of the city region, while the Other KI-intensive concentrations are mainly found in the city and around the Northern fringes.
- Less KI-intensive activity is more dispersed, but there are some notable less KI-intensive concentrations including Ermine Business Park, Stratton Business Park, Hills Road and E-Space North.
- One area for future research would be to survey park companies and their employees about what they see as the key advantages and disadvantages of being in a Cambridge cluster.

## The growth of the Cambridge economy

### Cambridge as an engine for growth

In 2025, Cambridge celebrates the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 'Cambridge Phenomenon', a term first coined in the 1980s to describe the explosion of knowledge-intensive (KI) businesses in and around the city of Cambridge since the 1960s. Cambridge is often regarded as an exemplar of a successful innovation ecosystem, from which to draw lessons about innovation, entrepreneurship and regional economic development.

Cambridge ranks amongst the fastest growing cities in the world. It is part of the 'golden triangle' with London and Oxford as well as the Eastern point of the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor, one of the most productive and prosperous regions of Europe. The contribution that Cambridge makes to the UK economy is significant. A 2023 study by policy and economics consultancy London Economics found that the University of Cambridge alone contributes nearly £30 billion to the UK economy and supports more than 86,000 jobs across the UK.

Cambridge is a hotspot for startups developing groundbreaking technologies, with a focus on deep tech fields such as biotechnology, quantum computing, clean energy and AI. The city, together with Oxford, tops tables on VC investment into tech companies outside of London. A recent fundraising example is Xampla, a materials science company that has secured a \$14 million new investment to replace 10 billion units of single-use plastic with natural, plant-based materials.

A staggering 26 billion-dollar companies were also created in Cambridge since the start of the Cambridge Phenomenon. The latest company to join the list of Cambridge unicorns is Wayve, a start-up founded by two Cambridge PhD students from the Department of Engineering in 2017 with the aim of accelerating autonomous mobility.

The region is home to a leading scientific and high-technology cluster, which generates a sizeable share of the total jobs in the local economy. Our latest data reveals that Cambridge hosts 26,000 businesses employing more than 220,000 people. KI intensity in Cambridge has increased over time from 22% a decade ago, partly reflecting AstraZeneca's decision to relocate its headquarters and global R&D centre to Cambridge in 2016. Today about one-third of Cambridge employment is in KI sectors.

Cambridge has a long and illustrious history of creating some of the most successful companies in the UK, particularly in the two sectors that have been at the heart of the Cambridge Phenomenon – Life Sciences and ICT. Key examples in the Life Sciences sector include: Illumina (formerly Solexa), a global leader in DNA sequencing and array-based technologies; CMR Surgical, a leading medical technology company producing the AI-driven robotic surgery system Versius; and Abcam, a global supplier of biological research tools to life scientists. Key examples from the ICT sector include: Arm, a world's leading semiconductor intellectual property supplier; Darktrace, a global leader in AI technology for cyber security; and Raspberry Pi, an award-winning developer of a credit-card sized computer.

Recent years have also seen Cambridge becoming, together with London, a hotspot for AI companies. Alongside CMR Surgical and Darktrace, key examples of AI companies based in Cambridge include: BenevolentAI, who pioneered a unique AI-based approach to drug discovery and development; Five AI, a leading developer of software for driverless vehicles; and Quantinuum, a global leader in quantum software and computing.

These companies are co-located with several international tech giants. Just outside the railway station, Amazon staff have been designing flying drones at Amazon Cambridge Development Centre. In 2012, Amazon also acquired Cambridge-based EVI Technologies as part of its effort to build the Alexa digital assistant. Some meters away from Amazon Cambridge Development Centre, Microsoft Research Cambridge has been developing computer chips for AI. In close proximity to Amazon and Microsoft, Apple has been advancing Siri, the talking digital assistant included in Apple's smartphones. In 2015, Apple also acquired Cambridge-based VocallQ, a voice recognition technology start-up founded by Professor Steve Young.

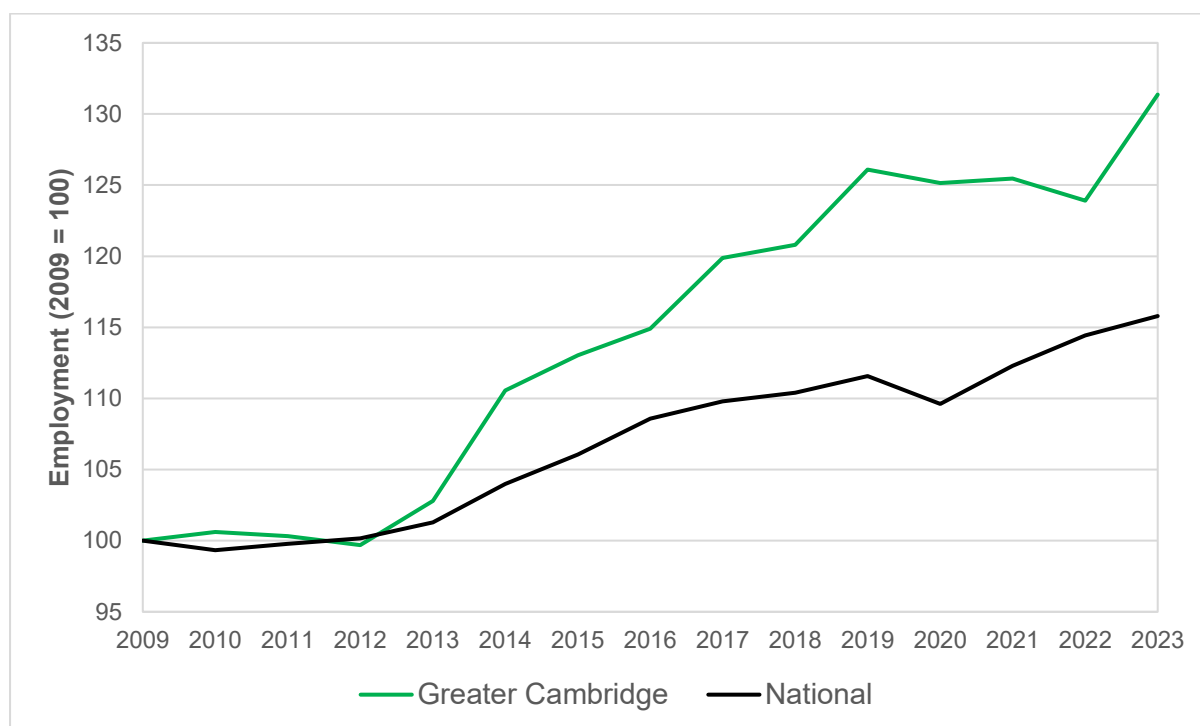
Non-corporate research institutions are a third, major part of the innovative milieu of the Cambridge region. Over 39,000 staff are employed at universities and other KI research organisations in the area, making the Cambridge cluster one of the largest and most dynamic concentrations of KI employment in Europe. Alongside the University of Cambridge, which has generated a remarkable 125 Nobel Prize laureates to date (second only to Harvard), key examples include: the Babraham Institute, a world-class research institution with an emphasis on healthy ageing through the human lifecycle; the MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology, a research institute dedicated to the understanding of important biological processes; and the Wellcome Sanger Institute, the place where Sir John Sulston and his colleagues made an instrumental contribution to sequencing the human genome.

The Cambridge area has seen exceptional growth in employment over the past 15 years. ONS data from the Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) analysed in Figure 1 shows that employment growth in Cambridge (2.0% pa) has outperformed employment growth across the nation as a whole (1.1% pa).

Figure 2 augments these findings by showing that the exceptional growth of employment in Cambridge was driven by KI sectors (3.7% pa, against a growth of 1.5% pa for non-KI sectors) – KI sectors nationally had a more modest growth of 1.7% pa (1.0% for non-KI sectors). Non-KI sectors in both areas slightly outperformed the national average, suggesting that the fast expansion of the Cambridge KI economy might have also benefited the performance of non-KI sectors.

Overall, these findings tell a story of exceptional growth and provide encouraging prospects for future economic growth. Cambridge has strong employment concentrations in fast-growing sectors (e.g. biotechnology R&D, software development, IT services), all of which have shown strong resilience through the pandemic and beyond. There are signs that entrepreneurial activity in Cambridge is still very high. The demand for office and lab space in Cambridge has rebounded in 2025, with 100k sq ft completed in January alone according to data from real estate adviser Bidwells.

**Figure 1 Employment growth in Cambridge vs national: all sectors**



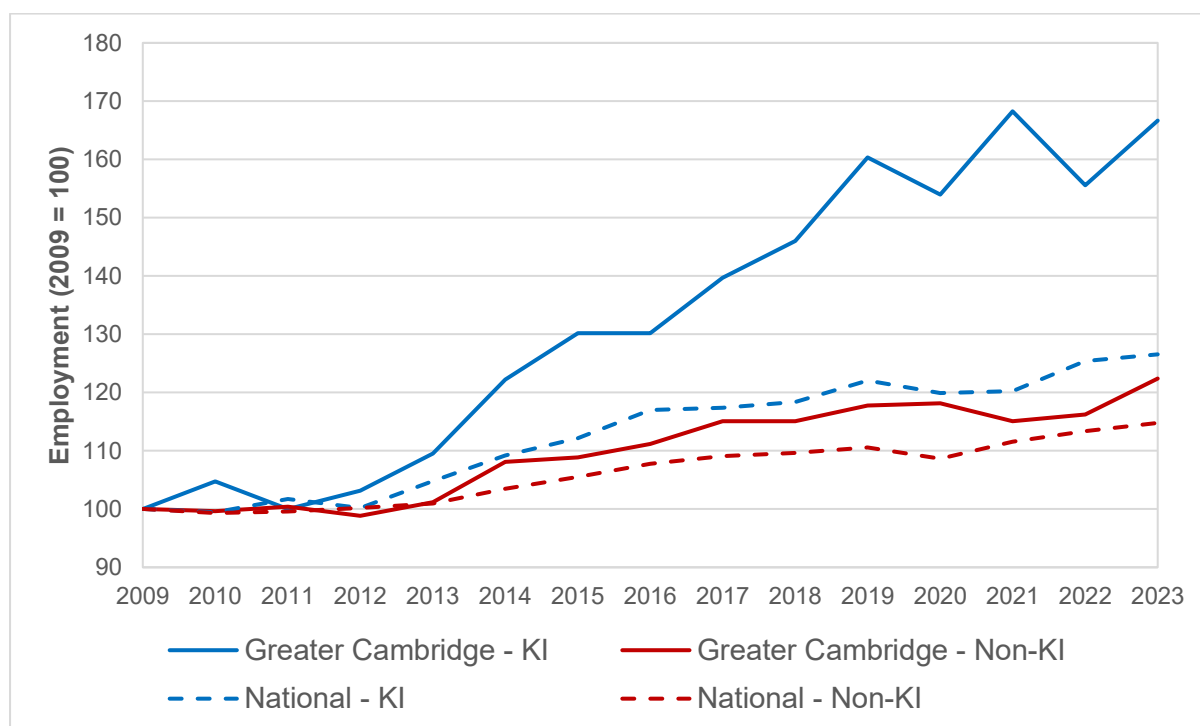
Source: CBR's calculations based on data from BRES (Nomis).

The Cambridge region has been a particular focus for the government's devolution agenda, as exemplified by the £500 million Greater Cambridge City Deal that brings investment to vital improvements in infrastructure, housing and skills to support the future growth of the city. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority was created in an early wave of devolution in 2017 and in 2023 the government also established the Cambridge Delivery Group (CDG), chaired by Peter Freeman (Homes England), to drive forward the vision for Cambridge in collaboration with local partners.

## Objectives of the project

Science and technology clusters have played a key role in the exceptional growth in the Cambridge region over the last decade. Since the launch of Cambridge Science Park in 1970, business parks and clusters have increased in number and have become an important part of the innovative milieu of the Cambridge region. There has been growing interest in understanding how these parks and clusters, whose role extends far beyond the provision of floor space to enable business growth, have evolved over time.

**Figure 2 Employment growth in Cambridge vs national: KI and non-KI sectors**



Source: CBR's calculations based on data from BRES (Nomis).

We have undertaken a deep dive into the evolution of the Cambridge innovation economy over the last decade, in particular examining the way in which clusters have spread spatially in key parks and locations.<sup>1</sup> The research questions addressed in this project respond to strategic policy priorities for the future growth of the Cambridge economy, namely:

- Where growth of the KI clusters is happening spatially, and what might have influenced this – to support policymakers in understanding the levers that will help spread high-value economic activity across a wider footprint in new locations.
- How and where sectoral specialisms and characters have emerged – to support policymakers to understand in more depth the sectoral specialisms within Cambridge's knowledge economy, and what has facilitated their emergence in particular locations.
- Examining where evidence can be seen of the impact of infrastructure provision on cluster growth – to support policy makers in development of long-range infrastructure plans.

The objectives of this project are:

- Identify key business agglomerations in the Cambridge City Region;
- Original purpose, ownership and management of the business and science parks;
- Annual look at the occupation of these clusters of activity and their evolution;
- Examine the scale of these business agglomerations over time;

<sup>1</sup> The work was sponsored by Cambridge Ahead, Brockton Everlast, JLL, The Crown Estate, Cambridge Biomedical Campus and Cambridge University Health Partners.

- Measure the changing sectoral composition of park businesses and identify growing specialisms and its possible causation;
- Examine the evidence of whether transport and other infrastructure provision has influenced the location of the clusters;
- Some speculation about the future development of the parks.

### The CBR corporate database: an overview

The project is based upon an examination of the CBR corporate database, which is the result of an innovative method developed by the Centre for Business Research (CBR) at the University of Cambridge to assess the current scale, make-up and growth rate of economic activity in the Cambridge region. This method, which draws on an annual census of audited companies' accounts, overcomes some of the weaknesses associated with survey-based methods and enables stakeholders to speak with confidence about what is happening in the local economy. It allows for a detailed picture of the businesses located across the Cambridge region, along with information on their industry sector, employment and turnover (among others).

The companies covered in this work are only those based in the Cambridge City Region (a 20-mile radius of Great St Mary's). It therefore excludes national chains such as Tesco and Lloyds Bank. Large companies based in the region such as AstraZeneca, Arm and Abcam have supplied on request the number of their employees working in the Cambridge area.

Companies are allocated to their principal activity and to their main trading address. Our work takes self-reported SICs as the point of departure but reclassifies companies into purpose-built sectors that are relevant to the local economy.

The companies covered are at the heart of the generation of economic activity in the Cambridge City Region.

We begin with an analysis of the scale and location of business parks and other clusters of economic activity in 2023-24.

### The scale and location of business parks and other business clusters

This section examines the scale of activity on business parks and other employment clusters in the Cambridge region in 2023-24; and where they are located. We should first define what is meant by these various employment clusters:

- **Business park:** a designated area of land that is intended to house multiple businesses in one location (even if it has a single tenant currently). A business park provides a range of facilities and amenities to its occupants, e.g. conference space,

security services and parking. It encompasses science and technology parks, office parks and industrial parks. While offering an attractive working environment and a range of support services, parks tend to facilitate interactions among the businesses located on them.

- **Cluster:** a geographic agglomeration of business activity with more than 350 employees that is not a business park.
- **Large company:** a Cambridge-based company with more than 350 employees which is not located on a business park or cluster.

In some of the analysis that follows we will classify these clusters into four groups, distinguishing between knowledge intense (KI) and non-knowledge intensive (non-KI) clusters:

- **Group A (large Life Sciences employment concentrations):** Emp > 350 and Life Science Emp  $\geq$  50%. 'Life sciences' captures all activities involved with life sciences, including the manufacture of robotics for surgery and other applications.
- **Group B (other large KI employment concentrations):** Emp > 350 and KI Emp  $\geq$  50% but not in group A.
- **Group C (other large employment concentrations):** Emp > 350 and KI Emp < 50%.
- **Group D (smaller employment concentrations):** Emp  $\geq$  50.

In the first instance, we report on all forms of cluster in 2023-24 in the four groups above. Together they account for 151 clusters, 4,126 companies and a total employment of 103,549. Table 1 shows the proportions accounted for by each type of cluster, highlighting the dominant role played by business parks – 69% of employment and 79% of number of companies.

**Table 1 Overview of all forms of cluster in 2023-24**

Types of cluster	Number of clusters	%	Number of companies	%	Total cluster employment	%
Business parks	106	70%	3,278	79%	71,423	69%
Other employment clusters	15	10%	818	20%	13,602	13%
Single large companies	30	20%	30	1%	18,524	18%
<b>All clusters</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,126</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>103,549</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2 examines business parks, clusters and large companies in the Cambridge City Region in 2023-24. It separates them into four groups: A large life sciences clusters; B other large KI clusters; C other large clusters; and D smaller clusters. It shows that together these 151 parks, clusters and large companies account for 47% of the total corporate employment in the region – a very significant figure.

The nine parks, clusters and large companies in Group A represent 17% of total employment across these business agglomerations. The twenty-eight parks, clusters and large companies in Group B have 38% of total employment across these business agglomerations. In turn, Group C has 36% of employment, while Group D makes a more limited contribution of 9% of employment.

Table 3 shows the seven parks, one cluster and one large company that make up Group A and the sectoral composition of these employment agglomerations. The total employment of parks ranges from 483 staff (Iconix Park / Unity Campus) to 5,350 staff (Granta Park). Two parks have all of their employment in life sciences (Cambridge Biomedical Campus and Wellcome Genome Campus), while the others have a lower share (e.g. Iconix Park / Unity Campus).

Table 4 provides a selection of the agglomerations that make up Group B, vividly illustrating the diversity in scale and sectoral focus of these major other KI agglomerations.



**Table 2 Business parks, clusters and large local companies**

ALL	2023/24					
	No. of Parks & Clusters & Large Cos	No. of Cos	Total Emp	% of All grouping Emp	Weighted average Emp per Company	Weighted average Emp of Parks & Clusters & Large Cos
A) Emp > 350 and Life Science Emp >= 50%	9	237	17,817	17%	75	1,980
B) Emp > 350 and KI Emp >= 50% but not in group A)	28	1,388	39,384	38%	28	1,407
C) Emp > 350 and KI Emp < 50%	48	1,649	36,875	36%	22	768
D) Rest: Emp >= 50, other than Res Inst.	66	852	9,473	9%	11	144
<b>Business Parks, Clusters &amp; Large Companies A, B, C &amp; D</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>4,126</b>	<b>103,549</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>686</b>
CBR Corporate Database Total		25,912	220,279			
Business Parks, Clusters & Large Cos as % of CBR Corporate Database Total		16%	<b>47%</b>			

**Table 3 Largest life science business parks, clusters and large companies in 2023-24**

<b>Business Parks 2023/24</b>	<b>Number of companies</b>	<b>Total employment 2023-24</b>	<b>% Life sci employment 2023-24</b>	<b>% ICT employment 2023-24</b>	<b>% Other KI employment 2023-24</b>	<b>% Non-KI employment 2023-24</b>
Babraham Research Campus	158	2,226	86%	2%	1%	10%
Cambridge Biomedical Campus	3	5,094	100%	0%	0%	0%
Chesterford Research Park	24	1,364	95%	0%	4%	1%
Evolution Business Park	9	1,034	84%	0%	12%	4%
Granta Park	21	5,350	83%	1%	15%	1%
Iconix Park / Unity Campus	9	483	56%	25%	10%	9%
Rockwood Way, Haverhill	6	412	54%	0%	6%	40%
SDI Group PLC	1	489	100%	0%	0%	0%
Wellcome Genome Campus	6	1,365	100%	0%	0%	0%

**Table 4 Largest other KI business parks, clusters and large companies in 2023-24**

Business Parks 2023/24	Number of companies	Total employment	% Life sci emp	% ICT emp	% Other KI emp	% Non- KI emp
Allia Future Business Centre (Cambridge)	105	585	14%	31%	12%	43%
Aveva Solutions (Cambridge estimate) Limited	1	502	0%	100%	0%	0%
Barclays Eagle Labs	49	736	1%	54%	27%	18%
Bosch Rexroth Limited	1	782	0%	0%	100%	0%
Buckingway Business Park	25	1,064	3%	11%	47%	39%
Cambourne Business Park	43	1,926	15%	29%	40%	16%
Cambridge Business Park	85	1,166	0%	13%	69%	17%
Cambridge Research Park	71	1,901	29%	10%	50%	11%
Cambridge Science Park	193	7,835	26%	41%	25%	8%
Cambridge Station	223	2,619	21%	30%	2%	47%
Cambridgeshire Business Park, Ely	45	823	8%	22%	24%	46%
Domino UK Limited	1	957	0%	0%	100%	0%
Enterprise Park, Royston	10	365	0%	0%	62%	38%
Harston Mill	6	968	1%	24%	75%	0%
Hexcel Composites Limited	1	472	0%	0%	100%	0%
International Flavours & Fragrances I.F.F.(Great Britain)Limited	1	416	0%	0%	100%	0%
Journey Campus (was Castle Park)	27	1,052	0%	96%	0%	4%
Knowledge Centre	24	608	0%	72%	0%	28%
Lancaster Way Business Park	82	2,762	2%	4%	47%	47%
Logan's Meadow	7	732	0%	16%	72%	12%
Marshall of Cambridge (Holdings) Limited (Cambridge estimate)	1	1,908	0%	0%	100%	0%
Melbourn	49	1,217	14%	0%	39%	46%
Niab.	1	369	0%	0%	100%	0%
Peterhouse Technology Park	1	2,663	0%	100%	0%	0%
RED Gate Software Group Limited	1	499	0%	100%	0%	0%
St John's Innovation Park	229	2,981	10%	57%	11%	23%
Vision Park	98	968	34%	23%	4%	39%
West Cambridge	8	508	38%	35%	0%	27%

Figure 3 shows the spatial distribution of business parks (green bubbles), clusters (blue bubbles) and large companies (red bubbles) in 2023-24 by placing them on a map. Each bubble identifies a business park, cluster or large company and is sized by total employment in 2023-24. The map also shows the three railway stations in the city (🚉), the major stops of the guided busway (🚏) as well as the motorways and trunk roads (—).

The map vividly illustrates the scale of these business agglomerations – all of the top 20 largest agglomerations have more than a thousand employees.

The dominant role of business parks in the Cambridge City Region is apparent when examined alongside clusters and large companies – business parks far exceed in number and size the other types of employment concentration. Some of the largest parks including Cambridge Science Park and the Cambridge Biomedical Campus are located in, or around, the city. Several other parks are situated farther away from the city but along key transport corridors. Examples are Granta Park and the Babraham Research Campus off the A11; Cambourne Park off the A428; and Buckingway Business Park off the A14.

Nevertheless, clusters of companies not on a park, particularly near Cambridge railway station and to the South of the city, are also a major part of the local economy. Cambridge Station, Cambridge North and Cambridge South are major hubs of economic activity in their own right.

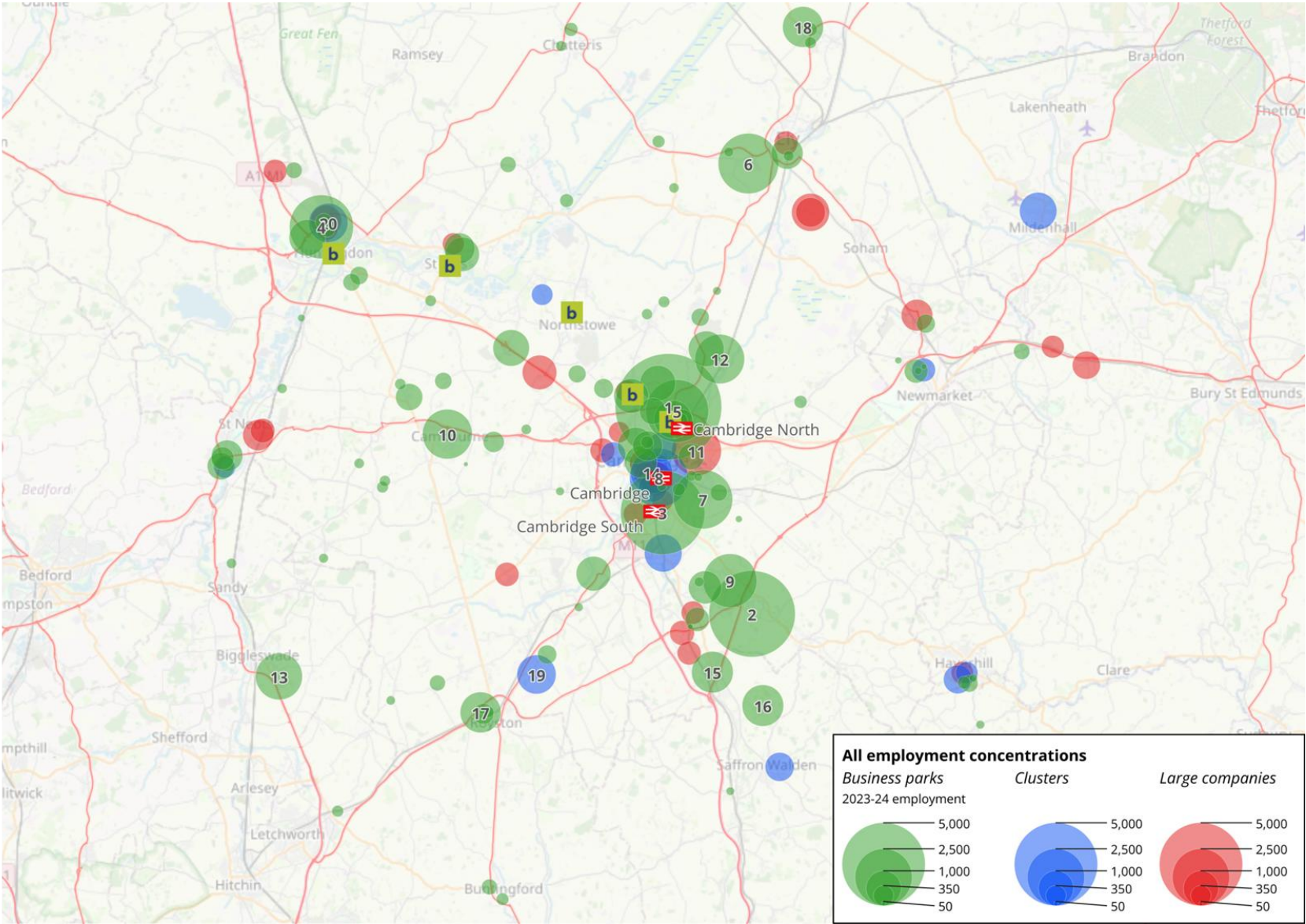
Large employers not on a park or cluster include Marshall off Newmarket Road; Domino in Bar Hill off the A14; and AVEVA off Maddingley Road.

Figure 3 Map of business parks, clusters and large companies in 2023-24

Business parks, clusters and large companies  
2023-24  
[Groups a, b, c and d]

Top 20 largest concentrations

Concentration number	Concentration name	2023-24 employment
1	Cambridge Science Park	7,835
2	Granta Park	5,350
3	Cambridge Biomedical Campus	5,094
4	Ermine Business Park	3,069
5	St John's Innovation Park	2,981
6	Lancaster Way Business Park	2,762
7	Peterhouse Technology Park	2,663
8	Cambridge Station	2,619
9	Babraham Research Campus	2,226
10	Cambourne Business Park	1,926
11	Marshall of Cambridge (Cambridge estimate)	1,908
12	Cambridge Research Park	1,901
13	Stratton Business Park	1,707
14	Hill's Road, Cambridge	1,399
15	Wellcome Genome Campus	1,365
16	Chesterford Research Park	1,364
17	Royston Business Estate	1,321
18	E-Space North	1,319
19	Melbourn	1,217
20	The Bridge Centre, Huntingdon	1,210



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## **The growth of business parks and other business clusters since 2015**

This section turns to the changes in business parks and other forms of employment concentration since 2015.

Table 5 examines business parks, clusters and large companies in the Cambridge City Region in 2023-24 and 2015-16. In each year the parks, clusters and large companies are grouped, according to their characteristics in that year, into four groups: A large life sciences clusters; B other large KI clusters; C other large clusters; and D smaller clusters.

The table shows 130 parks, clusters and large companies in 2015-16 and 151 in 2023-24. The total number of companies is 3,466 in 2015-16 and 4,126 in 2023-24. Their total employment is 69,129 in 2015-16 and 103,549 in 2023-24.

These employment concentrations represent 42% of the CBR's total corporate employment in the region in 2015-16 and this rises to 47% by 2023-24.

We should note the rise in KI intensity in these different forms of employment clusters over this period. The percentage of cluster employment taken by the life sciences clusters (Group A) rises from 10% to 17%. At the same time, the proportion of employment in other KI intensive clusters (Group B) rises from 30% to 38%.

Total employment on these business agglomerations has grown by 5% pa since 2015-16. The table highlights the role of the life sciences clusters (Group A) and the other KI intensive clusters (Group B) as key drivers of this growth – total employment grew by 13% pa for the life sciences clusters and by 9% pa for the other KI intensive clusters. The less KI intensive clusters saw a more modest growth of 2% pa.

**Table 5 Business parks, clusters and large local companies in 2023-24 and 2015-16**

ALL	2023/24				2015/16				Growth % pa
	No. of Parks & Clusters & Large Cos	No. of Cos	Total Emp	% of All grouping Emp	No. of Parks & Clusters & Large Cos	No. of Cos	Total Emp	% of All grouping Emp	Total Emp
A) Emp > 350 and Life Science Emp >= 50%	9	237	17,817	<b>17%</b>	5	230	6,901	<b>10%</b>	13%
B) Emp > 350 and KI Emp >= 50% but not in group A)	28	1,388	39,384	<b>38%</b>	19	725	20,486	<b>30%</b>	9%
C) Emp > 350 and KI Emp < 50%	48	1,649	36,875	36%	39	1,543	31,909	46%	2%
D) Rest: Emp >= 50	66	852	9,473	9%	67	968	9,833	14%	0%
<b>Business Parks, Clusters &amp; Large Companies A, B, C &amp; D</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>4,126</b>	<b>103,549</b>		<b>130</b>	<b>3,466</b>	<b>69,129</b>		<b>5%</b>
CBR Corporate Database Total		25,912	220,279			25,194	166,070		
Business Parks, Clusters & Large Cos as % of CBR Corporate Database Total		16%	<b>47%</b>			14%	<b>42%</b>		

It is worth pulling out a key finding of this research which is of great importance for public policy. Table 6 summarises this finding, which concerns the super concentration of KI employment on business parks and other agglomerations. It shows that business parks now have 61% of KI employment in the Cambridge City Region. This percentage rises to 77% when other agglomerations are included.

It is apparent that KI businesses favour such locations for various reasons such as: potential collaborations, recruitment of employees, enhanced reputation, improved transport links and common facilities. Since KI businesses have exhibited faster growth, then regional growth is associated with the growth of successful business parks and other clusters.

**Table 6 The rising importance of employment on business parks and clusters in the Cambridge City Region**

	2015-16		2023-24	
	Number of companies	Total employment	Number of companies	Total employment
<b>ALL COMPANIES</b>				
CBR Corporate database	25,194	166,070	25,912	220,279
Business parks	2,740	47,599	3,278	71,423
% of CBR corporate database	11%	29%	13%	32%
Business parks, clusters & large cos	3,466	69,129	4,126	103,549
% of CBR corporate database	14%	<b>42%</b>	16%	<b>47%</b>
<b>KI COMPANIES</b>				
CBR Corporate database	4,884	48,990	4,741	75,189
Business parks	832	25,559	1,046	46,136
% of CBR corporate database	17%	<b>52%</b>	22%	<b>61%</b>
Business parks, clusters & large cos	980	32,921	1,277	58,004
% of CBR corporate database	20%	<b>67%</b>	27%	<b>77%</b>

The next two figures further explore the sectoral specialisms of the business parks, clusters and large companies by providing a snapshot in 2015-16 and 2023-24. We distinguish between Life Science clusters (group A: Emp > 350 and Life Science Emp >= 50%), Other KI-



intensive clusters (group B: Emp > 350 and KI Emp >= 50% but not in group A) and Less KI-intensive clusters (Group C: Emp > 350 and KI Emp < 50%). The evolution of these employment agglomerations can be assessed by quickly moving between the two maps.

The maps display where the growth of KI clusters has been happening spatially. Life Science concentrations tend to be located to the South of the city; Other KI concentrations can be found in the city and around the Northern fringes; and Non-KI concentrations are more dispersed.

The growing specialisation in Life Science and Other KI sectors of these employment concentrations is also apparent from the maps. These concentrations have expanded much faster than Less KI-intensive ones and appear to have benefited from improvements in transport infrastructure (e.g. Cambridge North and guided busway).

The sectoral specialism of some of these agglomerations has also changed over time. For example, Cambridge Research Park and Lancaster Way Business Park have shifted from Less KI-intensive to Other KI-intensive. Similarly, the Cambridge Station cluster went from being a Non-KI cluster to being a major Other KI cluster.

The growing dominance of the knowledge intensive parks has been helped by the emergence of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus as a major corporate employment location. The Campus transitioned from being almost exclusively a non-corporate employment concentration to hosting a mixture of world's leading corporate and non-corporate organisations in biomedical research, healthcare and education. The scale of the Campus has increased substantially over time with the decision of major Life Science employers such as AstraZeneca and Abcam to move there, highlighting the value of co-location and collaboration with existing occupiers (e.g. Addenbrooke's Hospital).

Evolution Business Park off the A10, where CMR Surgical has its headquarter, has become one of the largest Life Science parks in the city region.

Some noticeable Non-KI clusters have also emerged (e.g. Hill's Road cluster, located in close proximity to the Cambridge Station cluster).

The opening of Cambridge North Station in 2017 has further supported the growth of the employment concentrations north of Cambridge city centre. In turn, the addition of Cambridge South Station is set to further contribute to the expansion of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus.

The guided busway has enabled the growth of employment concentrations in and around Cambridge, particularly on the North West edge of the city, by providing an alternative mode of transport for people living in St Ives, Huntingdon and, more recently, Northstowe.

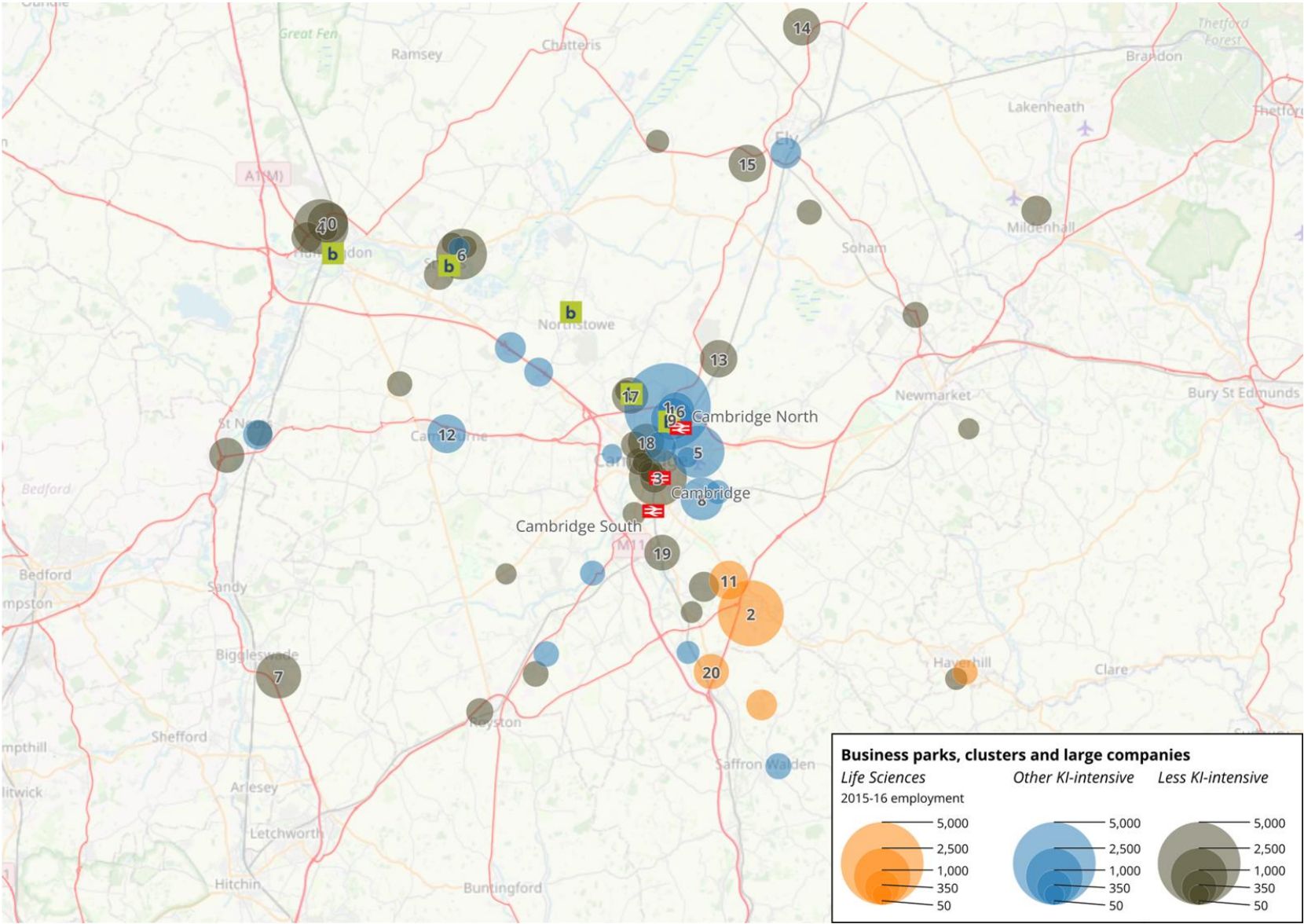
The A14 does not seem to have dispersed businesses along the motorway. However, there is some evidence that the £1.5bn A14 improvement scheme, including the 12-mile bypass between Huntingdon and Swavesey opened in 2020, has unlocked growth at Buckingham Business Park.

Figure 4 Map of business parks, clusters and large companies by sectoral specialism in 2015-16

Business parks, clusters and large companies  
2015-16  
[Groups a, b and c]

Top 20 largest concentrations

Concentration number	Concentration name	2015-16 employment
1	Cambridge Science Park	5,471
2	Granta Park	3,300
3	Cambridge Station	2,593
4	Ermine Business Park	2,361
5	Marshall of Cambridge (Cambridge estimate)	2,174
6	St. Ives Business Park	2,031
7	Stratton Business Park	1,637
8	Peterhouse Technology Park	1,472
9	Cambridge Business Park	1,431
10	The Bridge Centre, Huntingdon	1,342
11	Babraham Research Campus	1,244
12	Cambourne Business Park	1,224
13	Cambridge Research Park	1,147
14	E-Space North	1,140
15	Lancaster Way Business Park	1,135
16	St John's Innovation Park	1,120
17	Vision Park	1,087
18	Westbrook Centre	1,078
19	Shelford	1,054
20	Wellcome Genome Campus	1,027



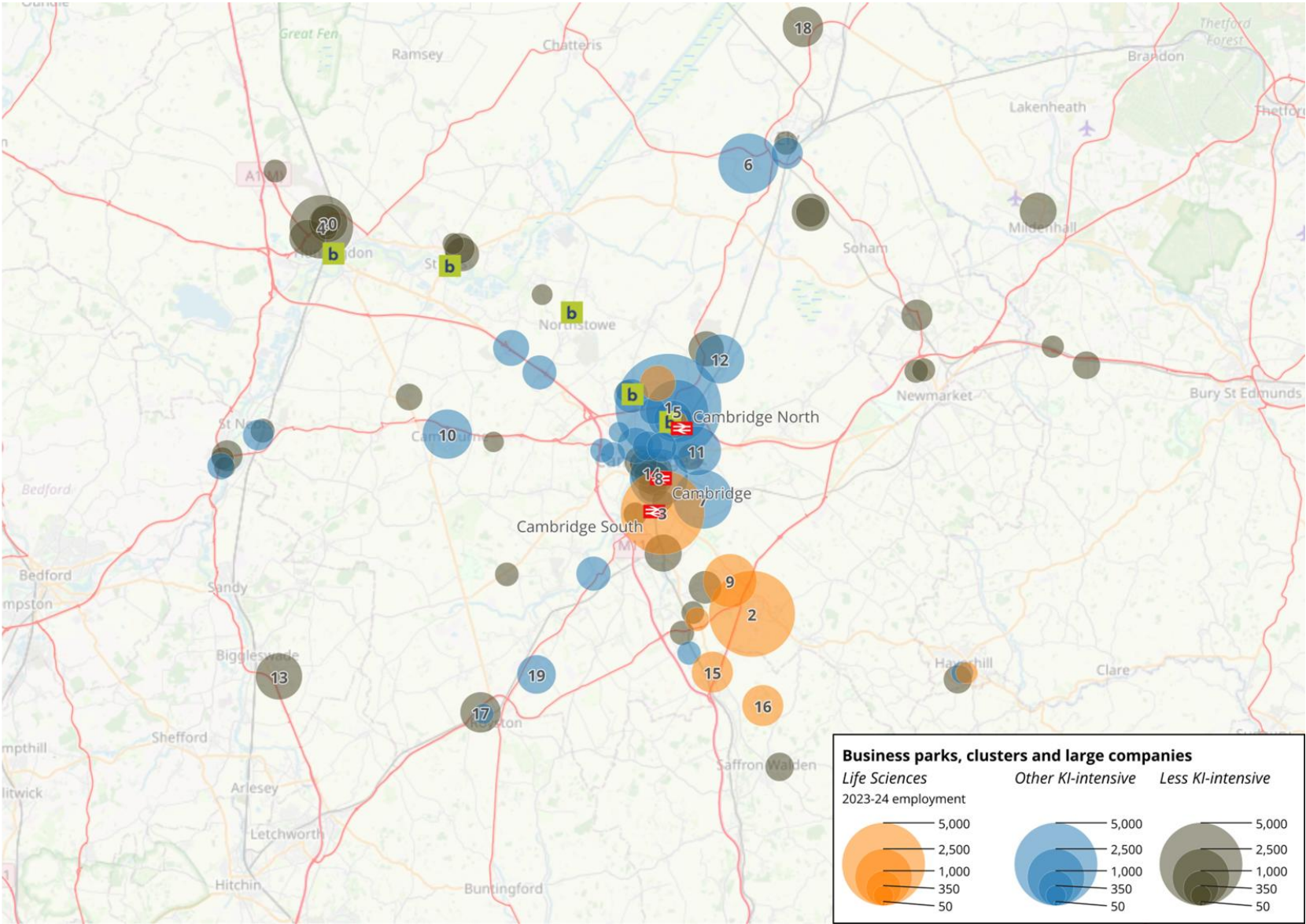
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Figure 5 Map of business parks, clusters and large companies by sectoral specialism in 2023-24

Business parks, clusters and large companies  
2023-24  
[Groups a, b and c]

Top 20 largest concentrations

Concentration number	Concentration name	2023-24 employment
1	Cambridge Science Park	7,835
2	Granta Park	5,350
3	Cambridge Biomedical Campus	5,094
4	Ermine Business Park	3,069
5	St John's Innovation Park	2,981
6	Lancaster Way Business Park	2,762
7	Peterhouse Technology Park	2,663
8	Cambridge Station	2,619
9	Babraham Research Campus	2,226
10	Cambourne Business Park	1,926
11	Marshall of Cambridge (Cambridge estimate)	1,908
12	Cambridge Research Park	1,901
13	Stratton Business Park	1,707
14	Hill's Road, Cambridge	1,399
15	Wellcome Genome Campus	1,365
16	Chesterford Research Park	1,364
17	Royston Business Estate	1,321
18	E-Space North	1,319
19	Melbourn	1,217
20	The Bridge Centre, Huntingdon	1,210



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## The evolution of business parks and clusters in Cambridge

We have shown above that the growth of the Cambridge economy over the last decade or so has been intimately associated with the growth of employment on business parks and clusters and the growth of knowledge intensity. We now turn to explore the role played by individual business clusters in that process by examining the employment change between 2015-16 and 2023-24 in the business clusters with more than 350 employees.

Table 7 shows that these business clusters together accounted for a growth of 28,238 employees between 2015-16 and 2023-24. This growth is dominated by an increase of 23,246 in KI employment as we have shown above. If we look at the largest 24 clusters that are shown individually in the table below, we can see that they account for an employment growth of 24,709 (88%) and a growth in KI employment of 22,996 (99%). It is clearly this group that dominates the changes in business clusters in the region.

The growth of KI employment on these business parks and clusters can result from a variety of factors:

- The growth of existing KI businesses on the parks / clusters;
- Additional KI businesses moving on to the park / cluster (in excess of those leaving);
- The addition of new KI parks / clusters (most notably the Cambridge Biomedical Campus).

We examined in depth a sample of 12 business parks and found that between 2015-16 and 2023-24 their employment had grown by 10,678 and that, within this figure, KI employment had grown by 10,121. Over this period 324 companies left the park losing employment of 5,624 (KI employment lost was 3,937), but 454 companies moved in bringing an employment gain of 8,724 (of which 7,241 was KI employment). These figures show that KI employment growth has come both from the growth of existing business and the attraction of new business to the parks.

**Table 7 Employment change between 2015-16 and 2023-24 across business parks and clusters**

Business Parks	Number of companies	Total employment (2023-24)	Total KI employment (2023-24)	Number of companies 2015-16	Total employment 2015-16	Total KI employment 2015-16	Change in total empl 15-16 to 23-24	Change in KI empl 15-16 to 23-24	Change in non-KI empl 15-16 to 23-24
Cambridge Biomedical Campus	3	5,094	5,094				5,094	5,094	0
Granta Park	21	5,350	5,321	18	3,300	3,285	2,050	2,036	14
Cambridge Science Park	193	7,835	7,195	150	5,471	5,173	2,364	2,022	342
St John's Innovation Park	229	2,981	2,309	247	1,120	804	1,861	1,505	356
Peterhouse Technology Park	1	2,663	2,663	2	1,472	1,472	1,191	1,191	0
Cambridge Research Park	71	1,901	1,696	12	1,147	563	754	1,133	-379
Lancaster Way Business Park	82	2,762	1,466	35	1,135	340	1,627	1,126	501
Babraham Research Campus	158	2,226	2,003	183	1,244	988	982	1,015	-33
Cambridge Station	223	2,619	1,394	199	2,593	388	26	1,006	-980
Evolution Business Park	9	1,034	993	4	57	22	977	971	6
Journey Campus (was Castle Park)	27	1,052	1,012	39	631	205	421	807	-386
Cambourne Business Park	43	1,926	1,627	33	1,224	1,006	702	621	81
Barclays Eagle Labs	49	736	605	9	28	18	708	587	121
Hill's Road, Cambridge	118	1,399	605	113	374	24	1,025	581	444
Chesterford Research Park	24	1,364	1,350	15	793	778	571	572	-1
Melbourn	49	1,217	653	28	567	151	650	502	148
Harston Mill	6	968	968	6	537	537	431	431	0
Knowledge Centre	24	608	439	16	169	58	439	381	58
Wellcome Genome Campus	6	1,365	1,365	4	1,027	1,027	338	338	0
Iconix Park / Unity Campus	9	483	440	6	150	150	333	290	43
Mildenhall	34	1,115	383	31	767	162	348	221	127
Allia Future Business Centre (Cambridge)	105	585	335	56	177	126	408	209	199
Eastbrook, Cambridge	7	679	181				679	181	498
Cambridge Innovation Park	189	1,020	263	54	290	87	730	176	554
All 55 clusters with empl > 350 (Groups A,B & C)	3,244	75,552	48,438	2,616	47,314	25,192	28,238	23,246	4,992
<b>24 parks and clusters with largest KI change</b>	<b>1,680</b>	<b>48,982</b>	<b>40,360</b>	<b>1,260</b>	<b>24,273</b>	<b>17,364</b>	<b>24,709</b>	<b>22,996</b>	<b>1,713</b>

We examine the 24 leading parks and clusters further in Table 8, which shows how the KI intensity of these agglomerations has changed as a result of the forces discussed above. There is a general drift towards a higher KI intensity as some parks and clusters become more attractive for such businesses.

We have highlighted those parks and clusters that have made significant changes to their KI intensity over the past few years. Journey Campus, formerly known as Castle Park and currently undergoing a phased refurbishment to drive innovation in a key Cambridge location, had the largest increase in KI intensity – from 32% in 2015-16 to 96% in 2023-24. This was helped by the fast growth in staff numbers at Amazon's EVI Technologies and the relocation of vehicle tracking system developer Quartix Technologies to the park in 2021. Evolution Business Park off the A10 has made a similar shift, largely reflecting the arrival to the park of fast-growing, innovative businesses such as medical robotic system manufacturer CMR Surgical in 2018 and battery technology company Nyobolt in 2023. Other parks and clusters including Cambridge Research Park and the Cambridge Station cluster have changed their focus from Less KI-intensive to Other KI-intensive.

The possible reasons for these changes will be discussed in the next section.

**Table 8 The change in KI intensity between 2015-16 and 2023-24 in the business parks and clusters with large employment growth**

<b>Business Parks</b>	<b>% KI employment 2023-24</b>	<b>% KI employment 2015-16</b>	<b>Change in % KI employment</b>
Peterhouse Technology Park	100%	100%	0%
Harston Mill	100%	100%	0%
Cambridge Biomedical campus	100%	n.a.	
Wellcome Genome Campus	100%	100%	0%
Granta Park	99%	100%	0%
Chesterford Research Park	99%	98%	1%
Journey Campus (was Castle Park)	96%	32%	64%
Evolution Business Park	96%	39%	57%
Cambridge Science Park	92%	95%	-3%
Iconix Park / Unity Campus	91%	100%	-9%
Babraham Research Campus	90%	79%	11%
Cambridge Research Park	89%	49%	40%
Cambourne Business Park	84%	82%	2%
Barclays Eagle Labs	82%	64%	18%
St John's Innovation Park	77%	72%	6%
Knowledge Centre	72%	34%	38%
Allia Future Business Centre (Cambridge)	57%	71%	-14%
Melbourn cluster	54%	27%	27%
Cambridge Station cluster	53%	15%	38%
Lancaster Way Business Park	53%	30%	23%
Hill's Road, Cambridge cluster	43%	6%	37%
Mildenhall cluster	34%	21%	13%
Eastbrook, Cambridge	27%	n.a.	
Cambridge Innovation Park	26%	30%	-4%

We now turn to the question of what the main factors underlying the location of business parks are, particularly those with high KI intensity. It is these parks that are associated with the exceptional growth in the Cambridge economy.

## **Factors influencing the location of business parks**

We have shown above that the growth of the Cambridge economy over the last decade or so has been intimately associated with the growth of employment on business parks and their growth of knowledge intensity. We now turn to explore the various factors that are associated with the growth of these parks.

There are many factors that have influenced the growth of KI businesses on these parks. The companies will want suitable and affordable premises along with the possibility of future nearby expansion. Good transport links are important for the cluster. Communal facilities such as meeting rooms, restaurants, cafeteria and recreational facilities are also important for attracting and retaining employees. The proximity to key facilities (e.g. the Biological Support Unit, BSU, and Flow Cytometry facilities provided by the Babraham Institute); organisations (e.g. Cambridge University Hospitals); and other companies will have a significant effect on the success of a park, or cluster. The image and reputation of the park benefit greatly from being part of the Cambridge cluster but can also grow over time due to the success of the existing companies on the site. Employees are attracted to the Cambridge ecosystem partly by the cutting-edge science but also due to future job opportunities within the cluster.

Some of these factors are beyond the scope of this report. For example, the planning issues, land values and associated rent differentials that influence the location of new parks and clusters and the expansion of existing ones are not examined here. Similarly, without further evidence we cannot evaluate the relative importance of the reasons why companies and their employees chose their location. However, we can examine further the association between the location of parks and clusters and: (1) transport links; and (2) key research institutions.

## Transport links

In Figure 3 above we looked at the scale of business agglomerations in 2023-24 on a map that showed the key transport corridors. It shows the major cluster around Cambridge North station, a cluster first formed by the creation of the Cambridge Science Park, but substantially augmented since that time. The redevelopment of Cambridge Station has also been associated with an increase in the KI businesses operating in that cluster. Cambridge South station will open at the start of 2026 and will improve the transport links of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus and the hospitals. The three stations show that the development of these stations both responds to business needs and creates new opportunities for business. The guided busway links Huntingdon and St Ives with Cambridge and its stations providing better commuting options. Several other parks are situated farther away from the city but along key transport corridors. Examples are Granta Park and the Babraham Research Campus off the A11; Cambourne Park off the A428; and Buckingway Business Park off the A14.

We can examine the location of **changes** in KI employment since 2015 for the parks and clusters highlighted in Tables 7 and 8. It shows that the improved transport links are associated with bringing employees into the city centre in a more acceptable manner. The growth in KI employment around the two existing railway stations is very obvious, with the guided bus offering further commuter options. The need for Cambridge South Station is immediately apparent from the growth in employment around the Cambridge Biomedical Campus. Indeed, total employment on that site including all forms of employment has doubled in the last decade from 12,000 to 24,000, partly benefiting from improved infrastructure provision including the Park and Ride offer in south Cambridge at Trumpington and Babraham Road. The Campus is currently Cambridge's largest employment site when measured in terms of both corporate and non-corporate employment.

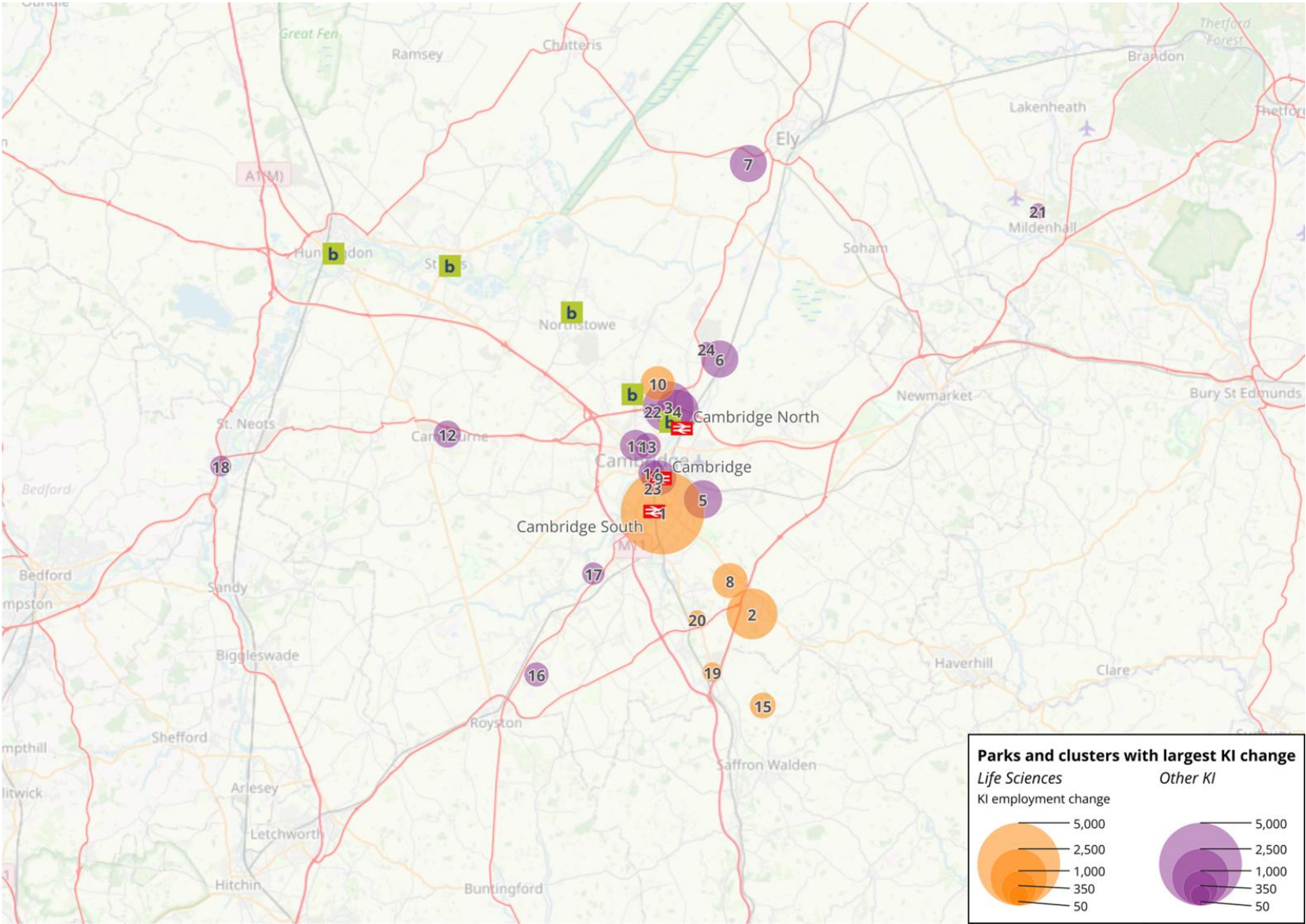


The map also indicates areas of employment growth where transport changes have not yet been made. The link between Cambridge and the centres of growth at Babraham and Granta Park still has difficulties, but could be tackled by the adoption of the Cambridge South East Transport (CSET) plan. The growth at Cambourne has not yet been supported by improved transport links, but the C2C busway is planned in the short term and possibly East West Rail in the longer term. Another area of growth of KI employment has been on the A10 to Ely with Cambridge Research Park, Cambridge Innovation Park and Lancaster Way Business Park. The latter is becoming a key centre for high-tech manufacturing in the area with tenants such as: CMR Surgical's manufacturing plant; Porotech; and Nyobolt. We see that growth can happen without transport improvements, but arguably requires such improvements to continue to flourish.

Figure 6 Parks and clusters with largest KI employment change between 2015-16 and 2023-24 – 24 clusters showing transport links

Parks and clusters with largest  
KI employment change  
between 2015-16 and 2023-24

Concentration number	Concentration name	KI empl change
1	Cambridge Biomedical Campus	5,094
2	Granta Park	2,036
3	Cambridge Science Park	2,022
4	St John's Innovation Park	1,505
5	Peterhouse Technology Park	1,191
6	Cambridge Research Park	1,133
7	Lancaster Way Business Park	1,126
8	Babraham Research Campus	1,015
9	Cambridge Station	1,006
10	Evolution Business Park	971
11	Journey Campus (was Castle Park)	807
12	Cambourne Business Park	621
13	Barclays Eagle Labs	587
14	Hill's Road, Cambridge	581
15	Chesterford Research Park	572
16	Melbourn	502
17	Harston Mill	431
18	Knowledge Centre	381
19	Wellcome Genome Campus	338
20	Iconix Park / Unity Campus	290
21	Mildenhall	221
22	Allia Future Business Centre (Cambridge)	209
23	Eastbrook, Cambridge	181
24	Cambridge Innovation Park	176



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## Research institutions

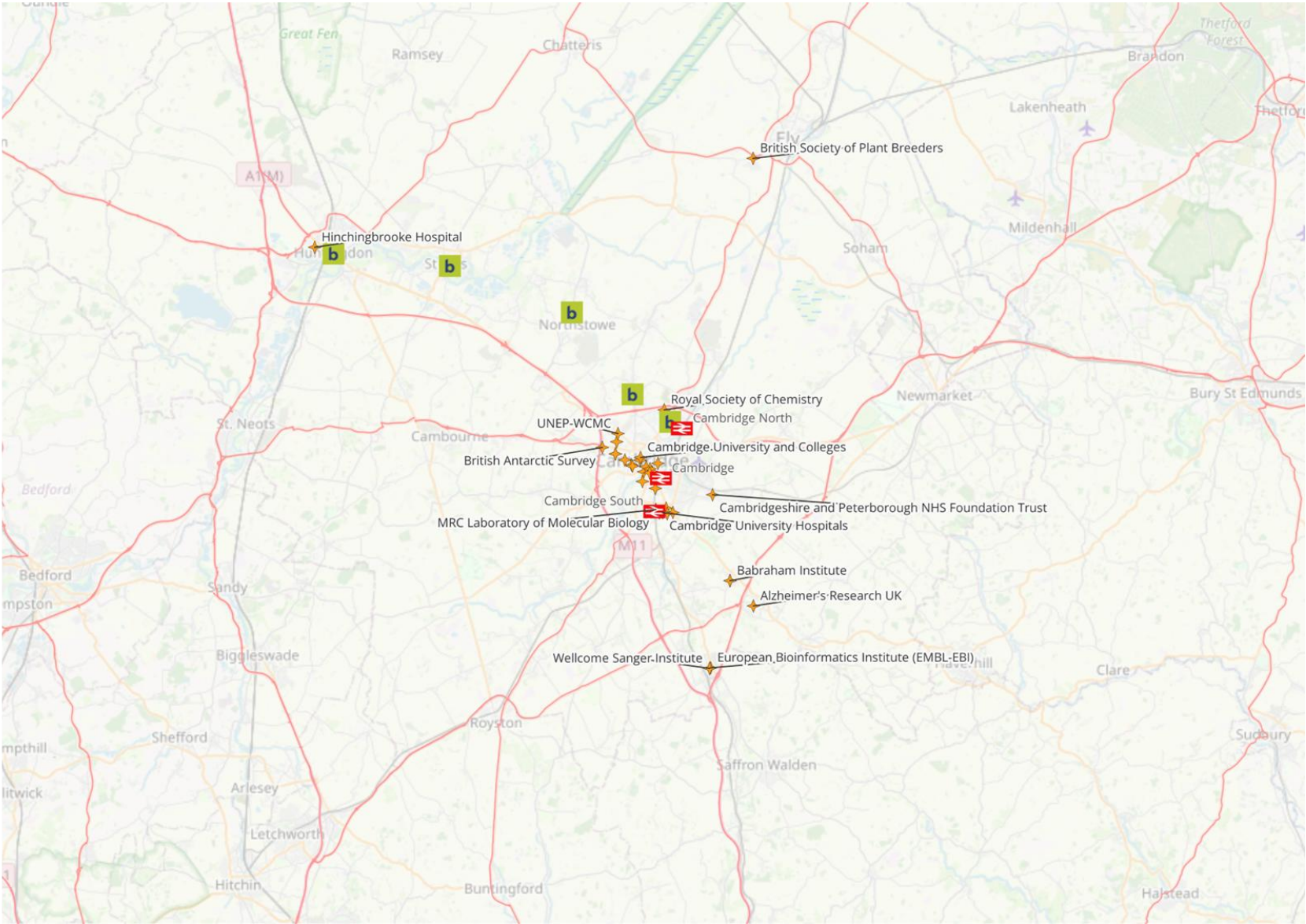
Our work over the years has enabled us to track the growth of non-corporate KI research organisations in the Cambridge area such as Addenbrooke's Hospital, the MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology and the Royal Papworth Hospital. The key research institutions in the Cambridge area are shown in Figure 7. Within the life sciences sector the key institutions are in the southern arc from the Cambridge Biomedical Campus to Fulbourn, the Babraham Research Campus and the Wellcome Genome Campus. Many other major research institutions, including the University and its Colleges, are concentrated in the city centre.

Figure 8 populates this map with the Cambridge business parks. It is immediately apparent that the southern life sciences cluster is intimately associated with the life sciences institutions. This is partly because these institutions are stimulating and fostering new company formation and partly because companies choose to locate near the research base, facilities and operations of these key research institutions.

The direct association between the other research institutions is less clear and whilst the strong clustering of KI companies near the city centre is related to the intellectual ambience and culture they create, the specific geography is less clear.

Figure 7 Map of key research institutions in 2023-24

Key research institutions  
2023-24



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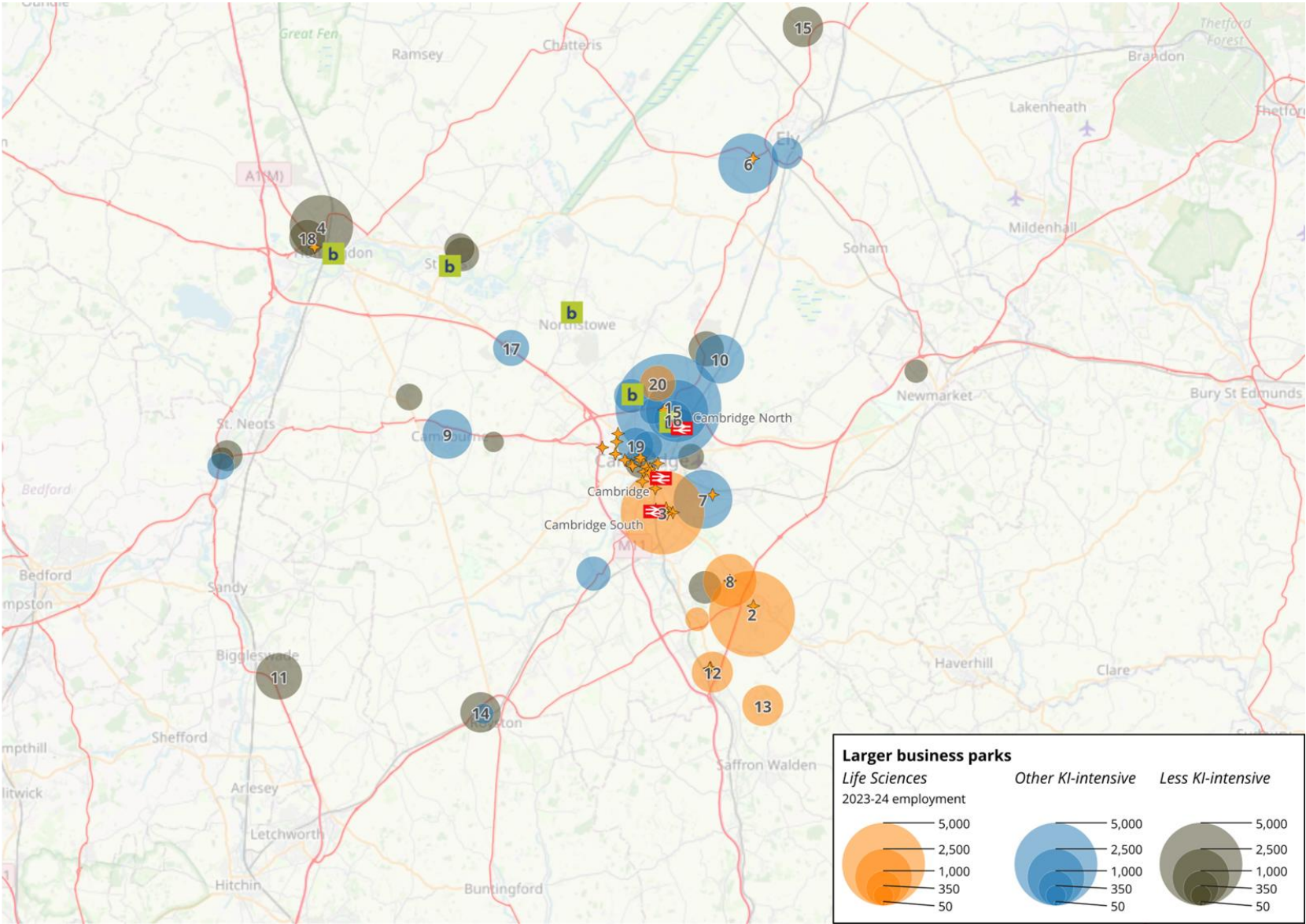


Figure 8 Map of business parks and key research institutions in 2023-24

Business parks and key research institutions  
2023-24  
[Groups a, b and c]

Top 20 largest business parks

Business park number	Business park name	2023-24 employment
1	Cambridge Science Park	7,835
2	Granta Park	5,350
3	Cambridge Biomedical Campus	5,094
4	Ermine Business Park	3,069
5	St John's Innovation Park	2,981
6	Lancaster Way Business Park	2,762
7	Peterhouse Technology Park	2,663
8	Babraham Research Campus	2,226
9	Cambourne Business Park	1,926
10	Cambridge Research Park	1,901
11	Stratton Business Park	1,707
12	Wellcome Genome Campus	1,365
13	Chesterford Research Park	1,364
14	Royston Business Estate	1,321
15	E-Space North	1,319
16	Cambridge Business Park	1,166
17	Buckingway Business Park	1,064
18	Hinchingbroke Business Park	1,063
19	Journey Park (Castle Park)	1,052
20	Evolution Business Park	1,034



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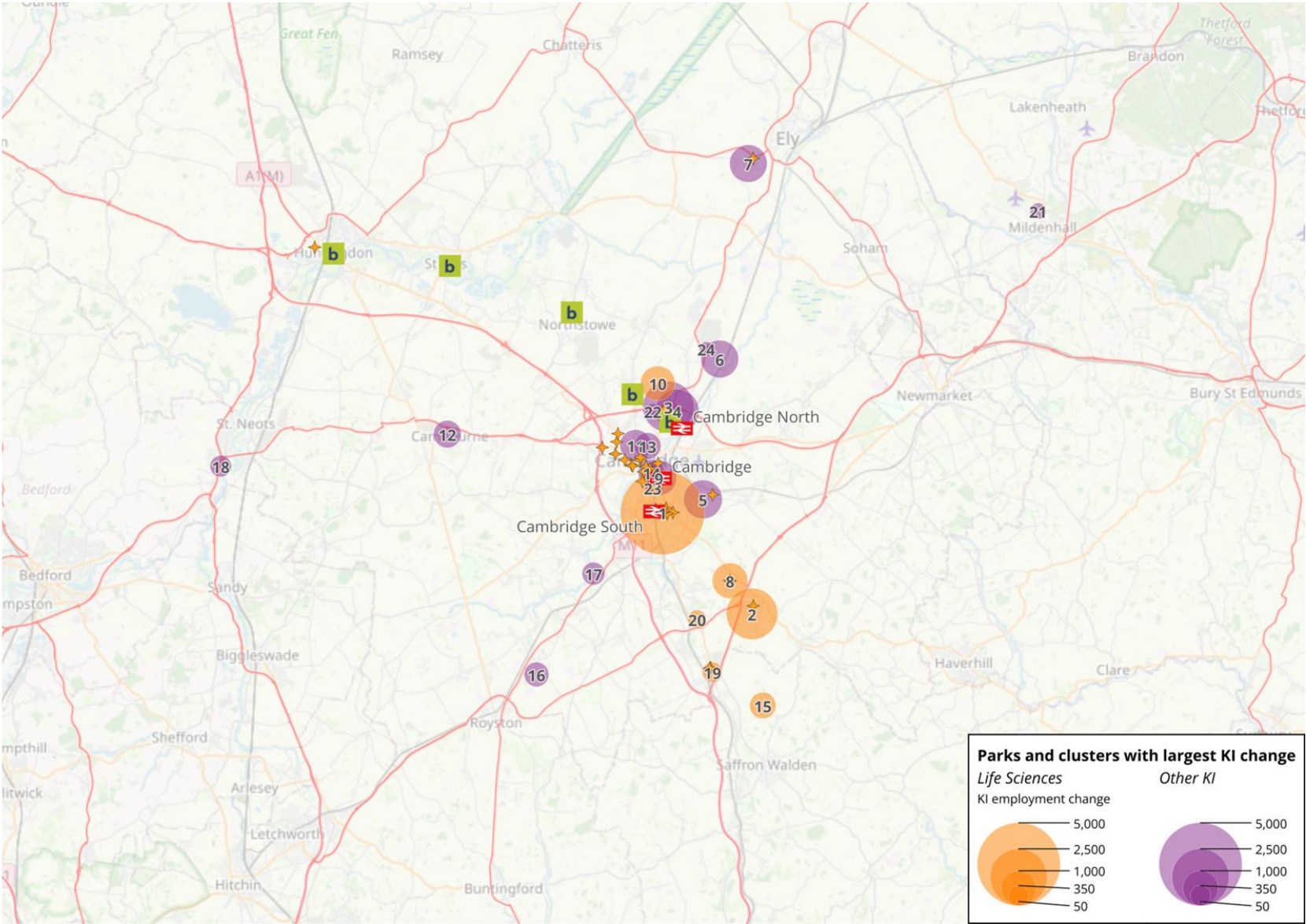
We can examine the location of **changes** in KI employment since 2015 for the parks and clusters highlighted in Tables 7 and 8 in relation to the location of key research institutions. This is shown in Figure 9, which demonstrates very well the association of growth in the life sciences sector and the key life sciences research organisations.

Other KI employment growth is less obviously related to specific research institutions but is clustered around the centre of the city, where much of the research activity is based.

Figure 9 Parks and clusters with largest KI employment change between 2015-16 and 2023-24 – 24 clusters showing key research institutions

Parks and clusters with largest KI employment change between 2015-16 and 2023-24

Concentration number	Concentration name	KI empl change
1	Cambridge Biomedical Campus	5,094
2	Granta Park	2,036
3	Cambridge Science Park	2,022
4	St John's Innovation Park	1,505
5	Peterhouse Technology Park	1,191
6	Cambridge Research Park	1,133
7	Lancaster Way Business Park	1,126
8	Babraham Research Campus	1,015
9	Cambridge Station	1,006
10	Evolution Business Park	971
11	Journey Campus (was Castle Park)	807
12	Cambourne Business Park	621
13	Barclays Eagle Labs	587
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19	Wellcome Genome Campus	338
20	Iconix Park / Unity Campus	290
21	Mildenhall	221
22	Allia Future Business Centre (Cambridge)	209
23	Eastbrook, Cambridge	181
24	Cambridge Innovation Park	176



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## Conclusions and suggestions for future work

This report shows that business parks and other employment clusters have played an increasingly central role in the rapid growth of the Cambridge economy. The KI intensity of business parks has increased over the recent decade as some parks transition between a commercial park towards an innovation park.

There are clear advantages for companies and their employees of being gathered together. Part of this benefit comes from the improvement to transport links for these parks, particularly in a place with limited housing availability in the centre. These links permit the location of employment and housing to be separated so that businesses can draw from a wider employment pool. Our research also shows the importance of Cambridge research institutions in the growth of the cluster, particularly in life sciences.

One area for future research would be to survey park companies and their employees about what they see as the key advantages and disadvantages of being in a Cambridge cluster.

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September 2025