

Help us guide the Greater Cambridge's Green Infrastructure Network....

Workshop 1: Landscape, cultural heritage and sense of place & Agriculture and community food growing

Local plan process focuses on development, but need to extend thinking beyond this into the vast areas of open space in Greater Cambridge. Develop a viable framework to allow landscape to evolve over time considering all aspects e.g. accessibility, ecological connectivity, climate change.

Recognisation of the future. Must understand background / history of planning in the area. Necklace village approach on main road routes from centre. Needs holistic, forward-thinking vision and clear framework.

How do we ensure important views are retained and enhanced? e.g. Cotton corridor (W), Gag Mogogs (SE), chalk downlands.

Ely Cathedral, King's College Chapel

Develop hierarchy of the key views across to the City / rural Cambridge. Need to truly understand what are the important views in and out of Cambridge City and where they can be viewed from to then be able to preserve and enhance.

A view changes in close proximity, but need layered approach e.g. to planning in the foreground to mitigate pressures on important views.

Managing shared but sometimes competing demands on space e.g. informal recreation (biking) vs biodiversity.

Need to alleviate pressure on National Trust properties.

Cambridge Sustainable Food / CoFarm have discussions underway with National Trust for a community food growing scheme from Wicken Fen area across a patchwork of sites that extend down towards the City. They are also in discussions with RSPB too about opportunities.

Recognise all existing heritage assets (inclusive of those non-designated). Understand evolution of their setting and value.

3 chalk pits (in area by Cherry Hinton, Coleridge). Privately owned but possibility to develop into a publicly accessible landscape scheme? It would enable inclusivity of water features which are limited across Greater Cambridge at present).

Requires carefully planned design.

Is there potential to enhance post-industrial and mineral excavation sites to alleviate pressures elsewhere? How and where?

How can GI improve the condition and setting of heritage assets?

Wicken Fen Nature Reserve - 100 year vision to re-establish open spaces for both nature and public by rewetting the fens. Buffer the SSSI within the nature reserve and enhance setting / value of this natural heritage asset.

Consider: Wicken Fen itself is beyond Greater Cambs boundary although vision covers study area.

Good example of habitat restoration. Future site where the existing buffer areas here could be expanded and strengthened into the study area.

Determine locations to complement existing sites e.g. buffers or new sites to alleviate recreational pressures.

Convert parts of holding into community-based farming (less industrialised and supports communities).

NFU - document due to be published.

Case studies of successful integration of ELMS and planning policy?

ELMS: biodiversity focus. Carbon sequestration etc into farming. Relates back to industrial nature of farming and the landscape in Greater Cambs and how things can change for the better e.g. agro-ecological methods (see FFC).

Nature based options to achieve Net Zero. How this will be linked to ELMS. Moving farming community into the conversation to ensure there is a feeling of inclusion.

Multi-purpose land management. Not necessarily 'conversion' rather multiple objectives within a land holding.

Heavy water use - Opportunities to retain water in landscape but these tend to be high cost e.g. capturing rainwater.

Retire first these areas that are served purely by irrigation as opposed to natural water sources.

Scale question and productivity. Think about what needs to be grown and where to support people rather than commodity crops e.g. sugar.

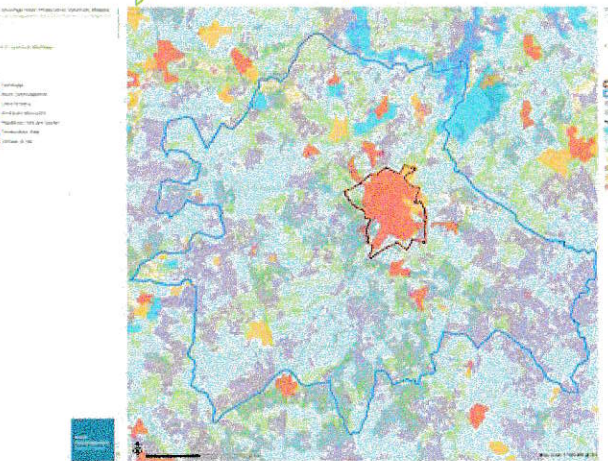
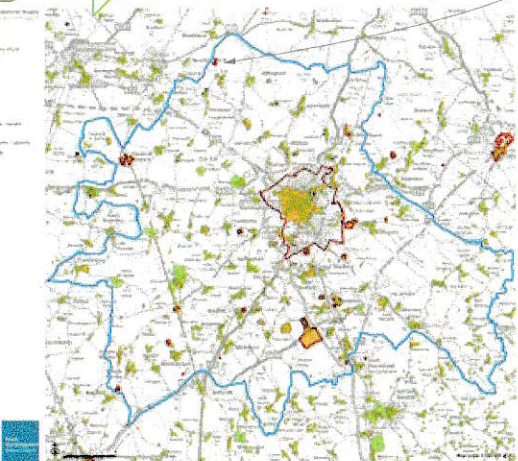
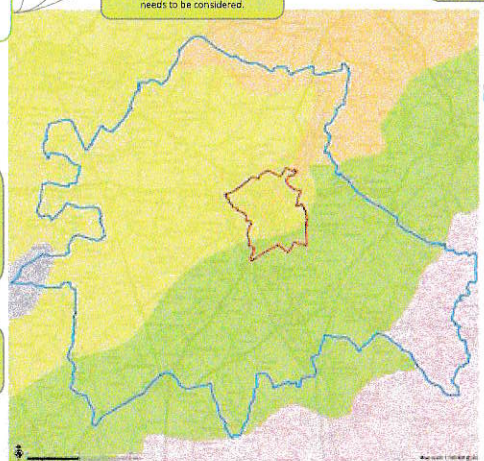
Modelling done for Cambridge City only to date (could extend beyond into S Cambs).

Potential to convert agricultural land into green space / biodiversity assets? How and where?

Vertical farming.

Maximise land capability, which will include all of these values.

Potential to improve intensive agricultural land e.g. hedgerows, habitat connectivity, historic assets and views?



Post Covid short window of opportunity. People more aware of fragility of complex global supply chains and where food comes from. Opportunity to systematically address health inequalities, biodiversity loss, health & wellbeing - a moment in time to enhance the role of community food growing.

Rework the way agriculture functions to serve community and biodiversity too.

Food growing enterprises e.g. community orchards, Community led, educational benefits. Where are the opportunities to expand?

First community farm in Abbey Ward.

Reasons for gaps in agri-environment scheme take up? What are the opportunities in these areas?

Catchment management - water company working with land managers to fund improvement to water quality. Align with CSF areas for high water quality improvements.

Tend to be where there is vested interest (from water company side) to improve drinking waters but not necessarily across the board.

Importance of local food growing and local sharing of food.

Sustainable diets and nutrients.

Need to truly understand where our food comes from. Opportunity to help everyone understand this - politicians need to push for this within local planning to cover food issues linked to social, culture, community and health.

Final comments:

Roads are severance features in the landscape. The southeast is therefore valuable in part of overall larger view of Greater Cambridge.

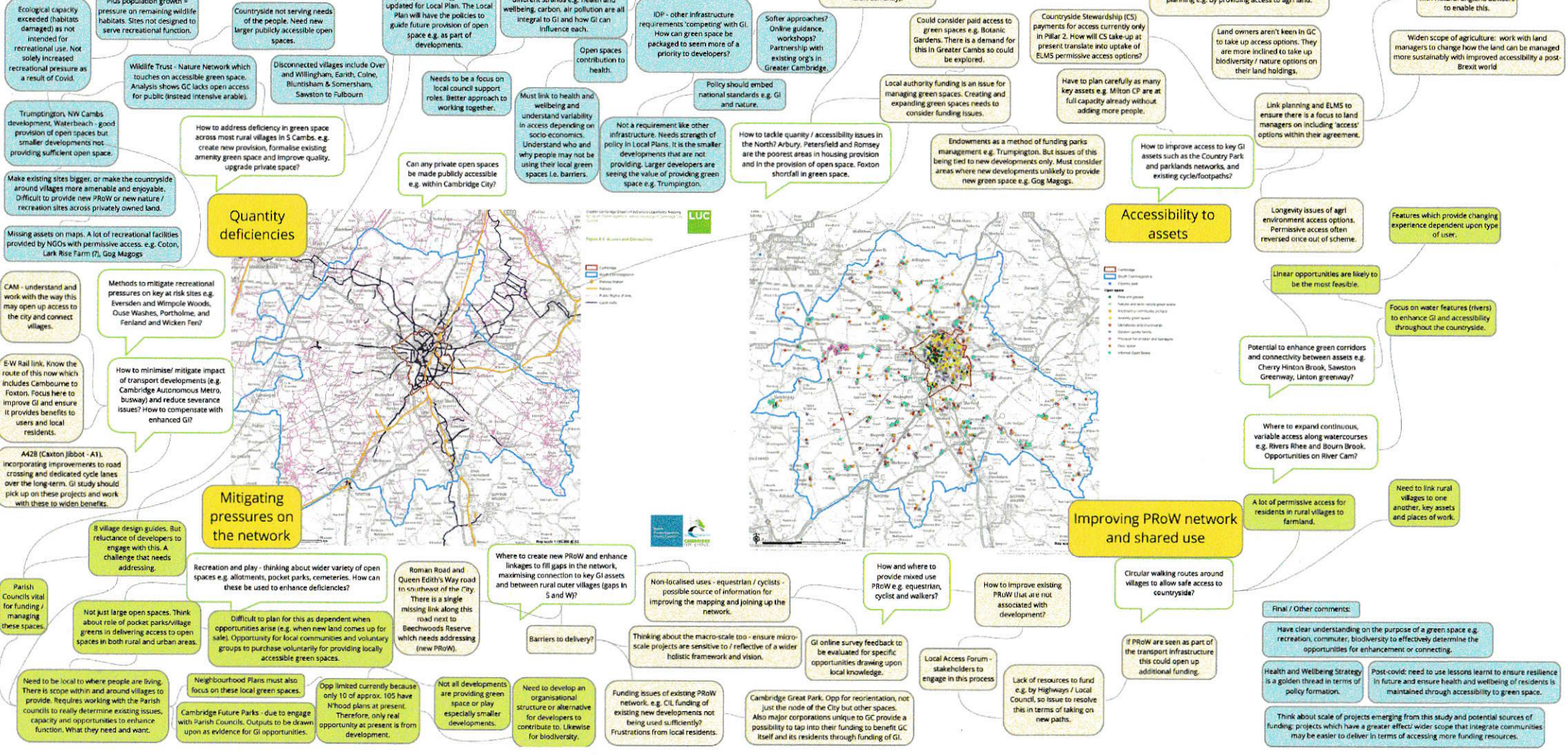
Importance of a macro-scale vision to then enable more micro-scale projects / opportunities to be developed, aligned to the overarching vision for Greater Cambridge.

Case study: Wild Kenhill Estate (North Norfolk Coast) - review document (16.5.2020). 4 climates here where they are looking to change entire agricultural process.

Ensure habitat / ecological connectivity is considered alongside the opportunities for agricultural land change and enhancement.

Help us guide the Greater Cambridge's Green Infrastructure Network....

Workshop 2: Access and connectivity & Recreation and play



Help us guide the Greater Cambridge's Green Infrastructure Network....

Workshop 3: Biodiversity and geodiversity

Mindful of issues - extra pressure on commons (Grantchester Meadows). This is not a recreational site - highlights the challenges between appropriate management of biodiversity and recreation

Greater emphasis on the integration of biodiversity and tree planting within all major infrastructure projects

Holistic view at a national level and regional connectivity required

Types of habitats characteristic of Greater Cambridge - wetlands, woodland, farmland habitats

Data for visitors should help to shine a light on existing visitor impacts. Most visitors to sites within Greater Cambridge are from Cambridge and surrounding villages

Understanding and consideration required of how green spaces connect at a regional and national scale

Tension - remove trees along watercourses? Understanding of site specific scale required

Requirement to identify existing priority habitats - in accordance with the Lawton Report. Large scale opportunity areas include Wicken Fen Vision, Cam Valley, Gog Magog etc. Need to focus on these priority areas. Link to wider woodland habitats.

Tree and hedgerow planting - BFI - air quality improvement potential. Trees also provide positive benefits in terms of shielding people in terms of air pollution

Tree and urban hedge planting can be of great benefit in urban areas where there is poor air quality, as detailed within recent research from Birmingham University Forestry Institute. Small areas of woodland creation on urban sites which are currently managed as short mown grass can improve biodiversity and reduce management costs. Woodland Trust's Trees of Turf report looks at this issue.

Development pressures, recreation on remaining habitats, agricultural intensification and infrastructure. Lack of management

Three main roads form boundaries and frame Greater Cambridge - opportunities for GI

Lack of detail to comment. Wicken Fen - catchment areas large, attracting large numbers of visitors

Linear communities lack green spaces - GI within Greater Cambridge generally follow these corridors

Grantchester Meadows - heavily visited by students. Long coming out from the city centre - important GI asset

Loss of Parish boundaries - replacement planting for elms and alder lost. Large influence on waymarking. Tree linked routes not yet realised - longer vision of trees parallel routes has the potential to enhance South Cambs landscape and habitats

Bigger picture and holistic outlook required - links to Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes

What are the principal pressures on the natural and semi-natural habitats of the urban and urban-fringe areas of Greater Cambridge?

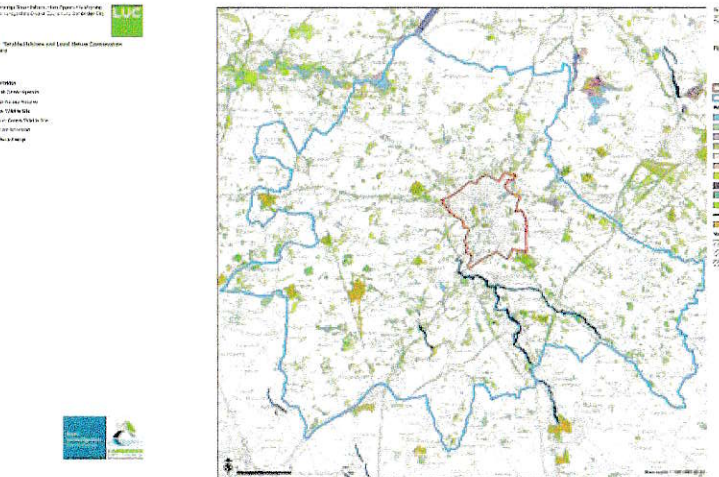
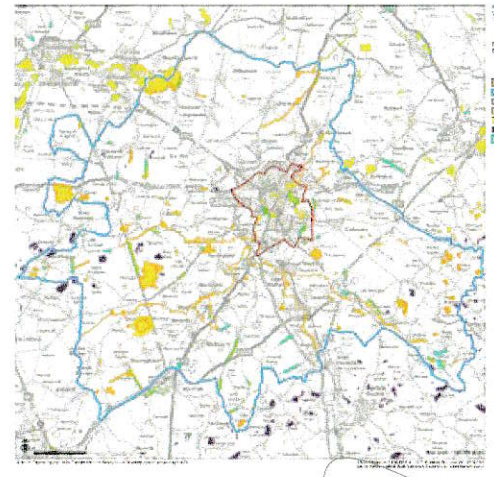
Lack of public open space and connectivity between biodiversity assets

Where do adverse effects most notably occur 'at distance' or off-site? These may include impacts originating within or outside Greater Cambridge

Where would tree, woodland & hedgerow planting &/or management serve to optimise connectivity... - as a benefit to biodiversity - as waymarking for local appreciation thereof?

River Cam and tributaries - GI. Importance for ecology. Overabstraction is an important issue

Medium to long term pressures including settlement expansion and development encroachment



Fen Drayton Nature Reserve - capacity for visitors (particularly within north Cambridge) - key asset within Greater Cambridge

ELMs - opportunities to link with GI projects. Battling with understanding of what the schemes are going to look like and who is able to successfully deliver the interventions

Multiple ownership of land - opportunity for various solutions. Open access to come from public bodies? Access vs recreation pressures. Overarching vision required. Landowners will be reluctant to allow public access without financial benefit

Ecological capacity of recreation sites - tension between biodiversity and recreational functions of sites

People value green spaces close to their homes. Street trees - important to note as trees form the most common GI features which the general public come into contact with

Where does the opportunity for expansion of the parkland and Country Park network draw greatest appetite?

Which GI interventions could best support wetland and grassland biodiversity (recognising, for example, that some mapped habitats may in reality be reduced as a result of intensive land management practices)?

Which locally appropriate GI interventions offer greatest opportunity to extend habitat connectivity through rural agricultural areas?

Encourage the establishment of habitats where visitor access is not permitted in order to promote habitat restoration? Help to create a mosaic of different habitats with a range of functions. Recreational environmental benefit

Species rich grasslands and root systems may be more beneficial for C sequestration than planting trees

County level - South Cambs - Ouse Valley grassland corridor provides links beyond the county. Grassland removal is a pressure - only a small number of parcels left. However, relatively easy to recreate. Aspiration for each village to have its own common or meadow?

Grassland creation - Gog Magog hills - created from arable farmlands. Magog Downs also converted from farmland. Long timescales required to create habitat

Grassland opportunities along the Cam corridor and its tributaries

Need to be mindful of not re-creating the 'tragedy of the Commons' as we seek to open up areas. Grantchester Meadows in the weeks after lockdown were a disaster due to the sheer numbers and lack of regard for the environment by many users.

How can a multifunctional GI network best support the landscape-scale peatland and wetland creation projects that are underway i.e. recognising the need to support active transport, recreational access, etc?

Biggest potential within Greater Cambridge area - how can facilitate linkages with these areas

Start off with better management, enlargement of existing sites, nature friendly farming. Corridors are less important from a biodiversity perspective (still have landscape value though). Need a very large network to be comparable to a stepping stone habitat

Where can habitat creation and enhancement, e.g. of grasslands, most usefully serve strategic cross-boundary connectivity?

Various groups within Greater Cambridge Partnership are looking at setting parameters for landscapes, heritage and habitat creation. Who is going to maintain habitat created? Habitats too small in scale to be viable from an ecological perspective?

Habitats should be of significant size to maximise benefits for biodiversity but the context is also important and looking at what is feasible in a particular location. Also worth bearing in mind that trees and hedgerows provide many benefits other than biodiversity.

Cambridge Arc - Gog Magog Hills, Wicken Fen Vision, Nene Valley etc.

No recreational pressure - overarching framework and understanding of scale - reintroduction of partridge

Grassland creation - need input from a conservation organisation and a reason to do it. Grazing system to provide a sustainable income? Younger generation of farmers? Still needs a profit from the land - emphasis given

Strategic corridors - Great Ouse Valley, linkages with habitat creation areas including the Ouse Washes

Access into fenland and rolling landscape - roman road up to Chester and York. Potential to link Royston and Newmarket

Potential to expand existing sites rather than create new sites - create linkages with existing conservation organisations to improve existing sites

Area west of Royston - grassland linkages to Greater Cambridge. Chalk pits - grassland restoration proposals

Help us guide the Greater Cambridge's Green Infrastructure Network....

Workshop 4: Carbon sequestration and storage & The water environment

