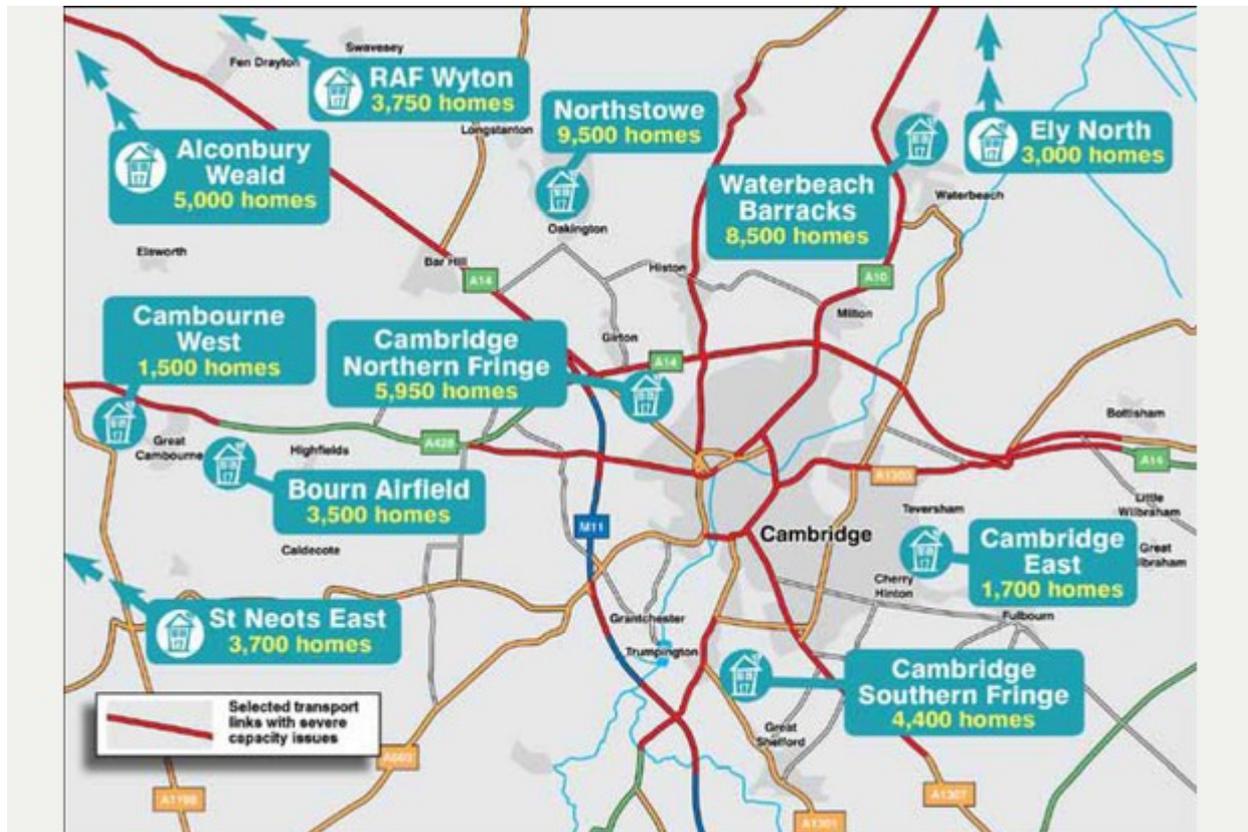


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Cambridge council chiefs grilled over lack of detail in transport plans to mitigate Cambourne West and Bourn Airfield

By [Cambridge News](#) | Posted: February 23, 2015



How Cambridge would look under the local plan

Cambridge's councils have been accused of plucking infrastructure projects “out of thin air” as they came under fire for a lack of detail.

QCs, planning consultants and local campaigners gave planning and highways chiefs a torrid time in the latest examination hearing of the Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire local plan.

A lack of detail for transport projects which have already been funded as part of the City Deal have been a cause of concern, with city MP Julian Huppert among those with fears over as-yet-unspecified ‘bus priority measures’ on Milton Road.

While these projects are due in the next five years, the local plan [shapes the delivery of some 33,000 new homes up until 2031](#).

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“Clearly there is a lack of any detail on the essential transport structure that is currently being prioritised in the City Deal, let alone other infrastructure schemes,” said David Bell from planners Bryan G Hall.

“It’s no surprise the local plan cannot identify specific transport schemes, because the councils don’t even know what the detail is.”

The major cause of concern was the A428 corridor, which could see more than 5,000 new homes built along it at Bourn Airfield and Cambourne West.

“This is a corridor that already suffers from serious congestion,” added Mr Bell.

“The council’s own modelling shows even with the infrastructure in place, it will continue to suffer severe congestion. If you’re going to put development on the A428 it’s critical to get the right infrastructure at the right time.

“The council have provided no evidence they know what’s going to be delivered at this moment, and where it’s going to be delivered.”

A segregated bus route and new park and ride serving the A428 have been earmarked in the first five years of the City Deal.

Caroline Hunt, South Cambs District Council’s planning policy manager, said that while Cambourne West could arrive within the next two years, Bourn Airfield was not planned until 2021 at the earliest.

She said major measures were not needed for Cambourne West on its own, adding: “Through the City Deal the partners have already committed to working up those key schemes for delivery so that they are very able to be provided to support that development in a timely way.”

Peter Village QC, though, told the hearing last week the local plan identified that “extensive offsite transport infrastructure will be required to mitigate” the Bourn Airfield and Cambourne West plans.

“That’s in relation to Cambourne West, yet it doesn’t identify what they are,” he added.

“Before we even get onto the later stages of the plan, for substantial development proposals which are proposed imminently, they have not identified any detail, other than to identify ‘extensive offsite transport infrastructure will be required’.”

Ms Hunt also said improved orbital routes to take traffic to the north and south of Cambridge would save buses having to go into Cambridge, while highways officer Jeremy Smith said “there is an intention there to look at measures that will make the situation better.”

But Cllr Steve Jones, of Bourn Parish Council, said he had never heard of these orbital routes before during discussions with highways officers.

“I suspect these are coming out of thin air” he added.

“What we’re proposing to do is go ahead with possible development of West Cambourne and Bourn Airfield quite quickly, without adequate infrastructure. The cost of that is going to be on these communities that live in this part of South Cambs.”

Cllr Jones was there on behalf of a coalition of 14 parish councils along the A428 that fear for the impact of development the corridor.

The coalition has undertaken its own traffic survey and claims county council figures are an under estimate of some 50 per cent of existing traffic levels leaving Cambourne.

They argue that most journeys from the new settlements will be made by car but there is not adequate road improvements, and have called for a new interchange at the A428, A14 and M11.

However, Cllr Jones told the hearing that he had been informed this was not possible until the late 2020s.

Mr Smith also told the hearing that the Addenbrooke's access road opened in 2010 was likely to be at capacity "in a depressingly short period of time".

The councils were accused of a £180 million funding black hole for the proposed new town of Waterbeach, but Douglas Edwards QC, who is acting on behalf of the councils, said this was not unusual at such an early stage.

The hearings will resume in March.

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