

South West Cambridge Action Group FAQs 18 April 2021

Arising from 7 April SWCAG Public Meeting and 15 April South Cambs District Council meeting

1. Does the term 'Opportunity Areas' have some particular legal or technical meaning? Or is it just a generic term? I wondered if perhaps it was something like an Enterprise Zone where there is AIUI (possibly wrongly) explicit suspension of eg planning rules.

The term 'Opportunity Area' isn't defined in the OxCam Strategic Framework Introduction, published in February. There is the implication that an Opportunity Area would be a zone where it is easier to get planning permission, rather than the designation of specific sites. We would hope that there will be more information forthcoming in the summer.

The only other place where the term has been used in planning is the Greater London Authority (GLA). Opportunity Area Planning Frameworks (OAPFs) are documents used to specify how an 'opportunity area' can be developed. Opportunity areas are defined in the London Plan as brownfield land that has '...significant capacity to accommodate new housing, commercial and other development linked to existing or potential improvements to public transport accessibility'. Opportunity areas can typically accommodate at least 5,000 jobs or 2,500 new homes, or a combination of the two. The purpose of OAPFs is to consider how the key development sites fit within a policy context and to provide a strategic and design-led approach to spatial planning. The London Opportunity Areas do seem to be quite different to what MHCLG is talking about for OxCam. The new development would almost certainly be on greenfield sites

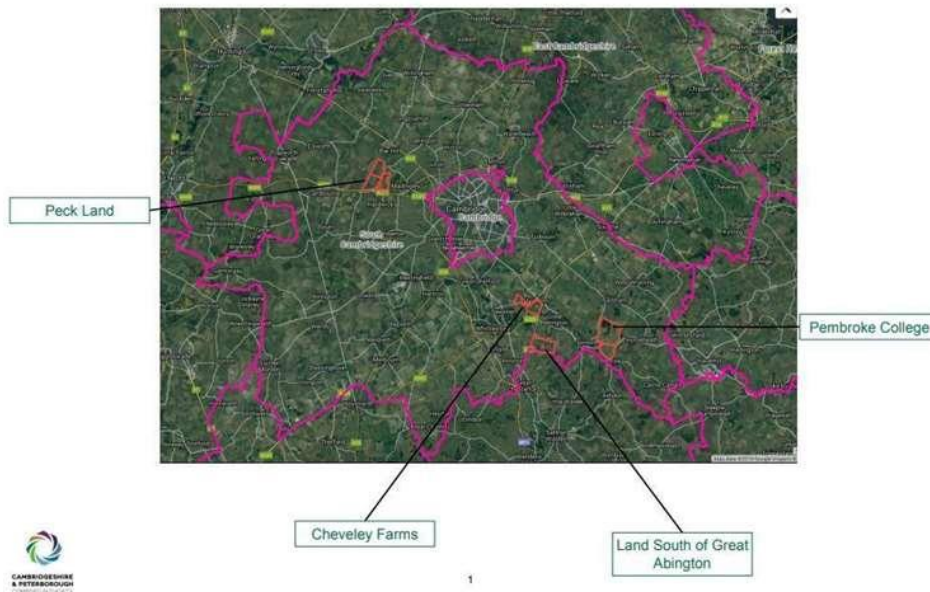
2. Is it now confirmed that the route into Cambridge for East West Rail is from the south i.e. between Foxton and Harston?

EWR has launched the next non-statutory consultation with a number of options but which all enter Cambridge from the south (i.e. close to the villages impacted by Thakeham).

3. Would you add to your list the Combined Authority garden villages proposals to help to pay for metro land?

Herewith the supposed site locations:

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE - SITES



The sites are:

- *Land owned by Pembroke College east of Linton, proposed for up to 7,000 homes*
- *1,000 acres north of the A428 and west of Madingley*
- *1,500 acres around Babraham*
- *600 acres on land east of the A11 and south of Great Abington.*

None of them is approved for planning permission at this stage. The Combined Authority, which does not have planning powers, said they are “still very much early options being considered as part of a much wider piece of work, not solid commitments”.

The Linton site was proposed by Bidwells along with a letter of support from the Mayor, Mr Palmer, when South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council put out a ‘Call for Sites’ for consideration in the next Local Plan blueprint.

4. Given the number of major housing submissions put in to the Local Plan around Foxton, Shepreth, and Barrington, will you also commit to opposing development on Cambridgeshire County Council land between Shepreth and Barrington?

The County is very much in the phase of acquiring land for its County Farms (currently 33,000 acres). CCC has put in proposals for the Call for Sites but these will come to the Commercial & Investment Committee. Peter McDonald the County representative would oppose any development of these.

5. What would a Development Corporation be able to do that normal developers can't, and what would be the consequences should Thakeham be designated as one?

A Development Corporation essentially takes over the planning responsibilities from the District Council and becomes the Local Planning Authority - with quite sweeping powers. Development Corporations could have Compulsory Purchase powers.

6. I recall that an Freedom of Information requests to the government was denied ('not in the public interest') - are there avenues to appeal those?

Yes. There have been several such refusals, and these are being appealed, with the help of a local lawyer.

7. How dependent is the business case for East West Rail on a particular number of new homes (potential new passengers)?

So far EWR have not provided a business case on new homes need.

8. Does the Foxton Travel Hub proposal support Thakeham's plan or is it completely irrelevant?

Not relevant.

9. What is to prevent individuals working for Thakeham (or other developers come to that) from registering and joining these calls?

We assume that Thakeham is on this call.

10. Where can we view major planning applications other than Thakeham, as it's been mentioned there's more than a few?

Thakeham has not yet submitted a proposal to the Call for Sites, though it promised to do so by Easter. All submissions to the Call for Sites are in the public domain and can be viewed at <https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/emerging-plans-and-guidance/greater-cambridge-local-plan/>

11. Did you say how many had signed Anthony Browne's petition?

About 3,500.

There is also an active petition against a Thakeham development in Sussex containing 20,000 signatures.

12. Has Anthony Browne agreed to follow up on all the requests we put to him?

Yes.

13. What is the status of Anthony Browne MP's Petition to South Cambs District Council?

South Cambridgeshire District Council, Full Council meeting April 15: Petition received under Agenda Item 9. Chair's statement:

"Members are asked to note that a petition has been received from Anthony Browne MP asking the Council to oppose the inclusion of Thakeham's proposal in South West Cambridgeshire in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

All Members have been informed by email in advance of this meeting of the following.

Advice from our Planning Counsel is that according to our own Constitution this petition can't be accepted at Council because it relates to a planning decision. There are serious risks to the integrity of our Local Plan process were we to debate this petition at Council. However, we are completely committed to listening to residents, and are grateful to the many people who took time to share their views. Counsel's advice is to ensure the petition is passed to the Local Plan team (which the Monitoring Officer has done) so that it can be considered as part of the wider consultation process. Members will have the opportunity to debate all site issues when the Local Plan comes before us."

The petition has now gone forward to the Greater Cambridge Local Plan team and will be used in its evidence in finalising the site numbers/locations. As shown in the SWCAG meeting, the upper limit of house numbers in the evidence was 26,400 homes, however it was previously stated that the upper scenario was unlikely.