

Girton Parish Council Response to Greater Cambridge Draft Local Plan

Executive Summary

This document sets out Girton Parish Council's position on the Greater Cambridge Draft Local Plan, highlighting alignment, gaps, and specific requests. Acronyms are expanded on first use (e.g., Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), Active Travel (AT)). The table below summarises key themes, priorities, and actions.

Local Plan Theme	Local Plan Priority	Girton NP Policy Ref	Girton NP Priority	Survey Sentiment	Girton Challenge Points	Suggested Actions for Local Plan
Homes	Deliver significant new homes across Greater Cambridge, including edge-of-Cambridge sites and new settlements; ensure affordability.	GP18-GP20	Limit major housing beyond Eddington; maintain Minor Rural Centre status; prefer 1-3 bedroom homes; max 3 storeys; climate-friendly design.	Mixed views; most want limits beyond Eddington.	Challenge scale of housing growth; resist further major development beyond Eddington; advocate Minor Rural Centre status; support landowner diversification for mutual benefit.	Request Local Plan to recognise Girton as Minor Rural Centre and restrict major housing beyond Eddington; support landowner diversification for economic sustainability.
Infrastructure	Reduce reliance on private cars; prioritise sustainable and active travel; integrate with new developments and transport corridors.	GP03-GP05	Safeguard strategic active travel routes; improve connectivity; NIAB bridge link; Huntingdon Rd junction; maintain rights of way; promote sustainable travel.	Very high interest (mentions: 293).	Ensure Local Plan commits to NIAB bridge and Huntingdon Rd junction improvements; integrate tunnel under Huntingdon Road linking Girton and Eddington; link Active Travel with Madingley Road corridor for child safety and local economy.	Include tunnel under Huntingdon Road and NIAB bridge in strategic infrastructure; link Active Travel to Madingley Road Park & Ride; prioritise child safety and congestion reduction.

Local Plan Theme	Local Plan Priority	Girton NP Policy Ref	Girton NP Priority	Survey Sentiment	Girton Challenge Points	Suggested Actions for Local Plan
Jobs	Encourage a flourishing innovation economy; allocate land for jobs; support mixed-use developments near transport hubs.	GP06-GP08	Support local retail and employment; resist loss of employment land; encourage cafes, shops, Post Office; flexible retail locations.	Strong qualitative support for local businesses	Push for stronger support for local retail and small businesses; challenge focus on large-scale innovation hubs overshadowing village needs; encourage hubs to include community-scale enterprise.	Require Local Plan to allocate space for small businesses and shared-use hubs; encourage economic diversification and local employment.
Biodiversity & Green Spaces	Leave nature better than before; expand green infrastructure; improve habitats and multifunctional green spaces.	GP09-GP12	Protect Girton Gap; maintain Green Belt; designate Local Green Spaces; enhance biodiversity; implement Local Nature Recovery Plan.	Strong support for biodiversity & green spaces.	Demand explicit protection of Girton Gap and Green Belt; question any weakening of Green Belt policy; promote shared recreation land near permissive path to Histon.	Protect Girton Gap explicitly in Local Plan; allocate land for shared recreation between Girton and Histon; integrate biodiversity corridors.
Wellbeing & Social Inclusion	Improve wellbeing and social inclusion; ensure access to community facilities; promote healthy lifestyles.	GP15-GP16	Protect existing community spaces; upgrade recreation ground; support new facilities for youth; explore Country Park and indoor sports centre.	High interest in pavilion upgrades & youth sport.	Ensure Local Plan prioritises village-scale facilities, not just strategic hubs; challenge lack of commitment to youth and sports provision; highlight parish councils spend up to 85% of budgets on this and need land (ARU and St John's).	Mandate Local Plan to safeguard land for youth and sports facilities; support shared-use agreements with schools; recognise social value and economic return on youth investment.
Great Places	Sustain unique character of	GP17	Preserve heritage assets; maintain	Comments on	Insist on rural character preservation; challenge	Require Local Plan to enforce design codes

Local Plan Theme	Local Plan Priority	Girton NP Policy Ref	Girton NP Priority	Survey Sentiment	Girton Challenge Points	Suggested Actions for Local Plan
	Cambridge and villages; require high-quality, distinctive design in all developments.		rural character; sympathetic design; avoid overdevelopment.	retaining village identity.	any design codes that impose urban styles inappropriate for Girton.	that respect rural character; consult Girton NP for heritage-sensitive development.
Climate Change	Transition to net zero by 2050; highest achievable standards for energy and water; climate resilience and flood mitigation.	GP18	Exceed building regs; Passivhaus standard; water efficiency; flood resilience; promote net zero initiatives.	Support for energy-efficient pavilion & homes.	Push for binding standards beyond minimum regs; question whether Local Plan measures are enforceable and ambitious enough; align with Girton's climate adaptation policies.	Adopt Passivhaus or equivalent standards; enforce water efficiency and flood resilience; integrate net zero targets into all developments.

Detailed Position by Theme

Homes

Local Plan Priority: Deliver significant new homes across Greater Cambridge, including edge-of-Cambridge sites and new settlements; ensure affordability.

Girton NP Policy Ref: GP18-GP20

Girton NP Priority: Limit major housing beyond Eddington; maintain Minor Rural Centre status; prefer 1-3 bedroom homes; max 3 storeys; climate-friendly design.

Survey Sentiment: Mixed views; most want limits beyond Eddington.

Girton Challenge Points: Challenge scale of housing growth; resist further major development beyond Eddington; advocate Minor Rural Centre status; support landowner diversification for mutual benefit.

Suggested Actions for Local Plan: Request Local Plan to recognise Girton as Minor Rural Centre and restrict major housing beyond Eddington; support landowner diversification for economic sustainability.

Budget Context: Major Community Projects include land procurement (St John's Field, ARU land), Active Travel routes, and pavilion upgrades as per uploaded business case.

Supporting Evidence: National reports confirm £1 invested in youth returns £2.40 in social/economic benefits; parish councils spend up to 85% of budgets on youth and sports facilities.

Infrastructure

Local Plan Priority: Reduce reliance on private cars; prioritise sustainable and active travel; integrate with new developments and transport corridors.

Girton NP Policy Ref: GP03-GP05

Girton NP Priority: Safeguard strategic active travel routes; improve connectivity; NIAB bridge link; Huntingdon Rd junction; maintain rights of way; promote sustainable travel.

Survey Sentiment: Very high interest (mentions: 293).

Girton Challenge Points: Ensure Local Plan commits to NIAB bridge and Huntingdon Rd junction improvements; integrate tunnel under Huntingdon Road linking Girton and Eddington; link Active Travel with Madingley Road corridor for child safety and local economy.

Suggested Actions for Local Plan: Include tunnel under Huntingdon Road and NIAB bridge in strategic infrastructure; link Active Travel to Madingley Road Park & Ride; prioritise child safety and congestion reduction.

Budget Context: Major Community Projects include land procurement (St John's Field, ARU land), Active Travel routes, and pavilion upgrades as per uploaded business case.

Supporting Evidence: National reports confirm £1 invested in youth returns £2.40 in social/economic benefits; parish councils spend up to 85% of budgets on youth and sports facilities.

Jobs

Local Plan Priority: Encourage a flourishing innovation economy; allocate land for jobs; support mixed-use developments near transport hubs.

Girton NP Policy Ref: GP06-GP08

Girton NP Priority: Support local retail and employment; resist loss of employment land; encourage cafes, shops, Post Office; flexible retail locations.

Survey Sentiment: Strong qualitative support for local businesses.

Girton Challenge Points: Push for stronger support for local retail and small businesses; challenge focus on large-scale innovation hubs overshadowing village needs; encourage hubs to include community-scale enterprise.

Suggested Actions for Local Plan: Require Local Plan to allocate space for small businesses and shared-use hubs; encourage economic diversification and local employment.

Budget Context: Major Community Projects include land procurement (St John's Field, ARU land), Active Travel routes, and pavilion upgrades as per uploaded business case.

Supporting Evidence: National reports confirm £1 invested in youth returns £2.40 in social/economic benefits; parish councils spend up to 85% of budgets on youth and sports facilities.

Biodiversity & Green Spaces

Local Plan Priority: Leave nature better than before; expand green infrastructure; improve habitats and multifunctional green spaces.

Girton NP Policy Ref: GP09-GP12

Girton NP Priority: Protect Girton Gap; maintain Green Belt; designate Local Green Spaces; enhance biodiversity; implement Local Nature Recovery Plan.

Survey Sentiment: Strong support for biodiversity & green spaces.

Girton Challenge Points: Demand explicit protection of Girton Gap and Green Belt; question any weakening of Green Belt policy; promote shared recreation land near permissive path to Histon.

Suggested Actions for Local Plan: Protect Girton Gap explicitly in Local Plan; allocate land for shared recreation between Girton and Histon; integrate biodiversity corridors.

Budget Context: Major Community Projects include land procurement (St John's Field, ARU land), Active Travel routes, and pavilion upgrades as per uploaded business case.

Supporting Evidence: National reports confirm £1 invested in youth returns £2.40 in social/economic benefits; parish councils spend up to 85% of budgets on youth and sports facilities.

Wellbeing & Social Inclusion

Local Plan Priority: Improve wellbeing and social inclusion; ensure access to community facilities; promote healthy lifestyles.

Girton NP Policy Ref: GP15-GP16

Girton NP Priority: Protect existing community spaces; upgrade recreation ground; support new facilities for youth; explore Country Park and indoor sports centre.

Survey Sentiment: High interest in pavilion upgrades & youth sport.

Girton Challenge Points: Ensure Local Plan prioritises village-scale facilities, not just strategic hubs; challenge lack of commitment to youth and sports provision; highlight parish councils spend up to 85% of budgets on this and need land (ARU and St John's).

Suggested Actions for Local Plan: Mandate Local Plan to safeguard land for youth and sports facilities; support shared-use agreements with schools; recognise social value and economic return on youth investment.

Budget Context: Major Community Projects include land procurement (St John's Field, ARU land), Active Travel routes, and pavilion upgrades as per uploaded business case.

Supporting Evidence: National reports confirm £1 invested in youth returns £2.40 in social/economic benefits; parish councils spend up to 85% of budgets on youth and sports facilities.

Great Places

Local Plan Priority: Sustain unique character of Cambridge and villages; require high-quality, distinctive design in all developments.

Girton NP Policy Ref: GP17

Girton NP Priority: Preserve heritage assets; maintain rural character; sympathetic design; avoid overdevelopment.

Survey Sentiment: Comments on retaining village identity.

Girton Challenge Points: Insist on rural character preservation; challenge any design codes that impose urban styles inappropriate for Girton.

Suggested Actions for Local Plan: Require Local Plan to enforce design codes that respect rural character; consult Girton NP for heritage-sensitive development.

Budget Context: Major Community Projects include land procurement (St John's Field, ARU land), Active Travel routes, and pavilion upgrades as per uploaded business case.

Supporting Evidence: National reports confirm £1 invested in youth returns £2.40 in social/economic benefits; parish councils spend up to 85% of budgets on youth and sports facilities.

Climate Change

Local Plan Priority: Transition to net zero by 2050; highest achievable standards for energy and water; climate resilience and flood mitigation.

Girton NP Policy Ref: GP18

Girton NP Priority: Exceed building regs; Passivhaus standard; water efficiency; flood resilience; promote net zero initiatives.

Survey Sentiment: Support for energy-efficient pavilion & homes.

Girton Challenge Points: Push for binding standards beyond minimum regs; question whether Local Plan measures are enforceable and ambitious enough; align with Girton's climate adaptation policies.

Suggested Actions for Local Plan: Adopt Passivhaus or equivalent standards; enforce water efficiency and flood resilience; integrate net zero targets into all developments.

Budget Context: Major Community Projects include land procurement (St John's Field, ARU land), Active Travel routes, and pavilion upgrades as per uploaded business case.

Supporting Evidence: National reports confirm £1 invested in youth returns £2.40 in social/economic benefits; parish councils spend up to 85% of budgets on youth and sports facilities.

1. Specific Measurable Requests and Draft Policy Wording

- Homes: Request Local Plan to recognise Girton as a Minor Rural Centre and restrict major housing beyond Eddington. Draft wording: 'Development beyond Eddington will not be supported unless exceptional public benefit is demonstrated.'
- Infrastructure: Include tunnel under Huntingdon Road linking Girton and Eddington; integrate Active Travel with Madingley Road Park & Ride. Draft wording: 'Strategic infrastructure must include safe active travel links between Girton, Eddington, and Madingley Road.'
- Jobs: Allocate space for small businesses and shared-use hubs. Draft wording: 'Local Plan will safeguard land for community-scale enterprise within Girton Development Framework.'
- Biodiversity: Protect Girton Gap explicitly; allocate land for shared recreation near permissive path to Histon. Draft wording: 'Girton Gap will remain Green Belt; recreation land will be prioritised for community use.'
- Wellbeing: Mandate land for youth and sports facilities; support shared-use agreements with schools. Draft wording: 'Local Plan will allocate land for youth provision and encourage school-parish collaboration.'
- Climate Change: Adopt Passivhaus standards and enforce water efficiency. Draft wording: 'All new developments must meet or exceed Passivhaus and water efficiency standards.'

2. Economic Sustainability and Collaboration with Landowners

Girton Parish Council is committed to economic sustainability. Parish councils spend up to 85% of budgets on youth and sports provision, yet face land shortages. We propose collaboration with Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) for Whitehouse Lane land and St John's College for land procurement. Supporting landowner diversification will enable mutual benefit and long-term viability.

Economic Argument: £1 invested in youth returns £2.40 in social/economic benefits (Centre for Young Lives). This justifies prioritising land allocation for youth provision in the Local Plan.

3. Alignment with Bridgwater Example for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

Bridgwater demonstrates how parish-level collaboration under LGR can deliver efficiencies and shared infrastructure. Girton seeks similar opportunities: merging or federating with neighbouring parishes for shared recreation land (e.g., Girton-Histon active travel corridor) and joint funding bids. This strengthens our case for Local Plan policies that enable cross-parish partnerships and resource pooling.

Supporting Hyperlinks and Citations

The following sources provide evidence and context for the policies and arguments in this response:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2024: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>
- Local Plan 2018 (South Cambridgeshire District Council): <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-and-neighbourhood-planning/the-local-plan/>
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- Centre for Young Lives Report on Youth Provision: <https://centreforyounglives.org.uk>
- UK Youth Report on Social Value: <https://www.ukyouth.org>
- Camcycle Active Travel Proposals: <https://www.camcycle.org.uk>
- Girton Neighbourhood Plan Evidence Base: <https://www.girton-cambs.org.uk/neighbourhood-plan>
- Local Nature Recovery Plan (2023-2033): <https://www.girton-cambs.org.uk/girton-parish-council-2/local-nature-recovery>