Cambridgeshire and Peterborough 2050

United by our Shared Ambition

" By igniting innovation, embracing our diversity, and championing collaboration, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will be globally recognised for our groundbreaking achievements inspired by our rich history, determined communities, and unique natural assets.

Harnessing the collective strengths of our fast growing cities, historic market towns and productive Fen landscapes, we will advance our equitable, pioneering, connected, and resilient region. "

Foreword

A message from our Mayor, Dr Nik Johnson

Building A Shared Future

As the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, I am privileged to present our Shared Ambition—a comprehensive and visionary blueprint designed to make Cambridgeshire and Peterborough a better place to live, work, and thrive by the year 2050.

This plan has been carefully developed in collaboration with our stakeholders, businesses, and residents. It outlines a unified vision for our region, aiming to create an equitable, pioneering, connected, and resilient community that benefits everyone in our society. Our Shared Ambition plan is not just a roadmap; it is a collective commitment to the future we want to build together.

As our region continues to grow and evolve, it is crucial that we strategically plan for a future that meets the diverse needs of all our communities and businesses. This involves not only ensuring economic prosperity but also creating an environment where everyone can share in the benefits of growth and new opportunities.

The Shared Ambition plan promotes inclusivity and puts planned sustainability and innovation at the centre of our core principles which will guide future progress.

I am immensely proud to be part of a region that embraces pioneering approaches and cutting-edge technologies to drive sustainable development. Over the past year alone, we have undertaken a range of projects aimed at enhancing greater access to further education, supporting our environment, and funding regional travel initiatives. These efforts are designed to create a healthier and more adaptable future, supporting businesses, and ensuring our region can respond to changing circumstances and challenges.

By uniting as a community and aligning our efforts around the commitments set out in the Shared Ambition plan, we can now effectively plan, allocate resources, and collaborate with a wide array of stakeholders. This collaborative approach is essential for transforming our region

and leveraging major national funding sources to ensure future development and prosperity. It is through this shared commitment and collective action that we can achieve the ambitious targets we have set.

Our Shared Ambition plan is more than just a document; it is a call to action. It challenges us all to think beyond the present and to work together towards a brighter, more inclusive future for everyone in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

I invite all residents, businesses, and stakeholders to join us in this transformative journey, as we build a region where every individual has the opportunity to thrive and succeed. Together, we can make this vision a reality.

Mayor Dr Nik Johnson

Contributors

The following stakeholders and organisations have supported the development of this Shared Ambition*:

✧ Anglian Water

✧ Arts Council England

✧ ARU Peterborough

✧ Buro Happold

✧ Cambridgeshire ACRE

✧ Cambridge City Council

✧ Cambridge Council for Voluntary Services

✧ Cambridge Living Streets

✧ Cambridge Regional College

✧ Cambridge United Foundation

✧ Cambridge University Health Partners

✧ Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Integrated Care Board

✧ Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority

✧ Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce

✧ Cambridgeshire County Council

✧ Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service

✧ Camcycle

✧ College of West Anglia

✧ East Cambridgeshire District Council

✧ Eastern Education Group

✧ Ely Cycling Campaign

✧ Federation of Small Business

✧ Fenland District Council

✧ Hills Road Sixth Form College

✧ Homes England

✧ Huntingdonshire District Council

✧ Innovate Cambridge

✧ Inspire2Ignite CIC

✧ Long Road Sixth Form College

✧ Nene Park Trust

✧ Newlands Development

✧ National Institute of Agricultural Botany

✧ Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough

✧ Oxford to Cambridge pan-Regional Partnership
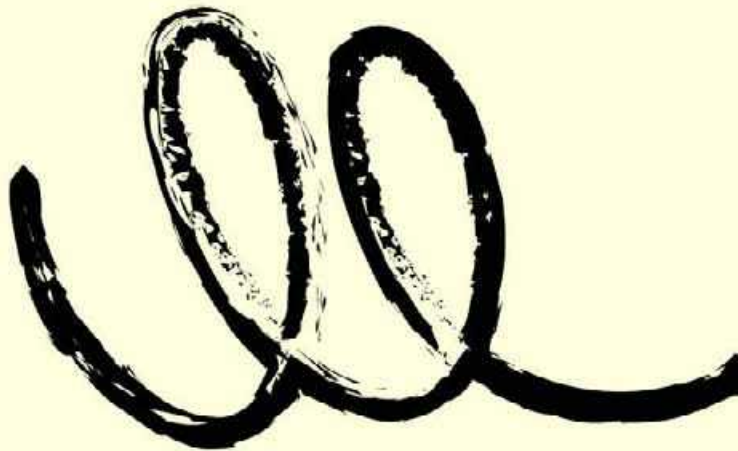
✧ Peterborough City Council

✧ Social Enterprise East of England

✧ South Cambridgeshire District Council

✧ Stagecoach

✧ St Neots Initiative

* Subject to further additions

Contents

01
Introduction

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Shared Ambition has been shaped by stakeholders, residents and businesses in partnership. Together, we will influence the future of the region and inform how and where we develop public services, grow and support local businesses, educate our young people, develop our future workforce and support our changing communities, ensuring all residents have the chance to benefit from future opportunities to live well and fulfil their potential.

Purpose of our Shared Ambition

" Having a Shared Ambition means that we can collectively achieve more for our communities to improve health and our overall quality of life. "

Unifying our region

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is a great place to live and work today. We are proud to be a prime location for investment with unrivalled growth opportunities and world-renowned entrepreneurship that continues to attract global interest and investment while delivering good growth. In addition, our rich cultural heritage, unique environment, and historic market towns make this a place people are proud to call home.

It is however important that we make sure that is true for future generations too. The rate of change we are experiencing is accelerating.

While this brings challenges, we want to embrace this change to maximise emerging opportunities, tackle entrenched inequalities and protect and preserve what is most important to us today.

The audience

Our Shared Ambition is a statement of our shared aspirations—a guide and charter setting clear commitments. The Shared Ambition is intended to be used by local and nationally elected representatives, public sector bodies and place leaders to unite and support a common direction in shaping future plans.

Collaboration at the heart of the process

A participative process

The Shared Ambition has been co-created to determine what is important and right for all those living and working in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, providing a framework that shapes the type of place we all want the region to be in the future. The development of our Shared Ambition has been driven by a wide range of stakeholders through a comprehensive engagement strategy using a range of tools and techniques, including in-person workshops, online sessions, focus groups, pop-up events and online feedback.

We began our journey at the beginning of 2024 through an active, engaging and participative process consisting of three distinct periods of engagement:

Engagement Period 1:
Understanding the region today

Engagement Period 2:
Developing the Shared Ambition

Engagement Period 3:
Testing the Shared Ambition

Stakeholder engagement

Various groups of stakeholders have been engaged to help shape the Shared Ambition. These groups consisted of:

→ **CPCA Board:** Chaired by the elected Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and consists of the leaders of the seven constituent councils, the chair of the Business Board and co-opted members: the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Police and Crime Commissioner, along with representatives from the Fire Authority and Integrated Care Board.

→ **CPCA Business Board:** Working with businesses, education, and local authority partners to drive economic growth, secure inward investment and protect and create jobs across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
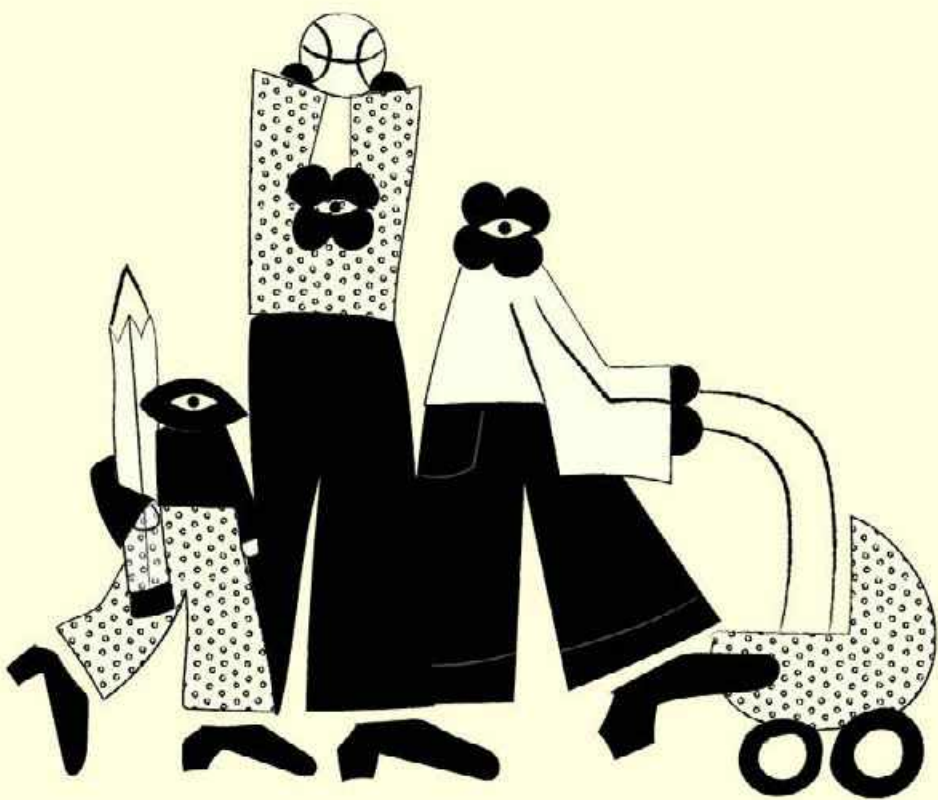
→ **CPCA Committees:** A range of committees that make the decisions that deliver projects across the region.

→ **Key Stakeholders:** Key members of statutory bodies, key businesses, community groups, key voluntary and charity sector leads.

→ **Resident Groups:** A schedule of pop-up events, focus groups, as well as an online survey ensured a broader resident view was sought.
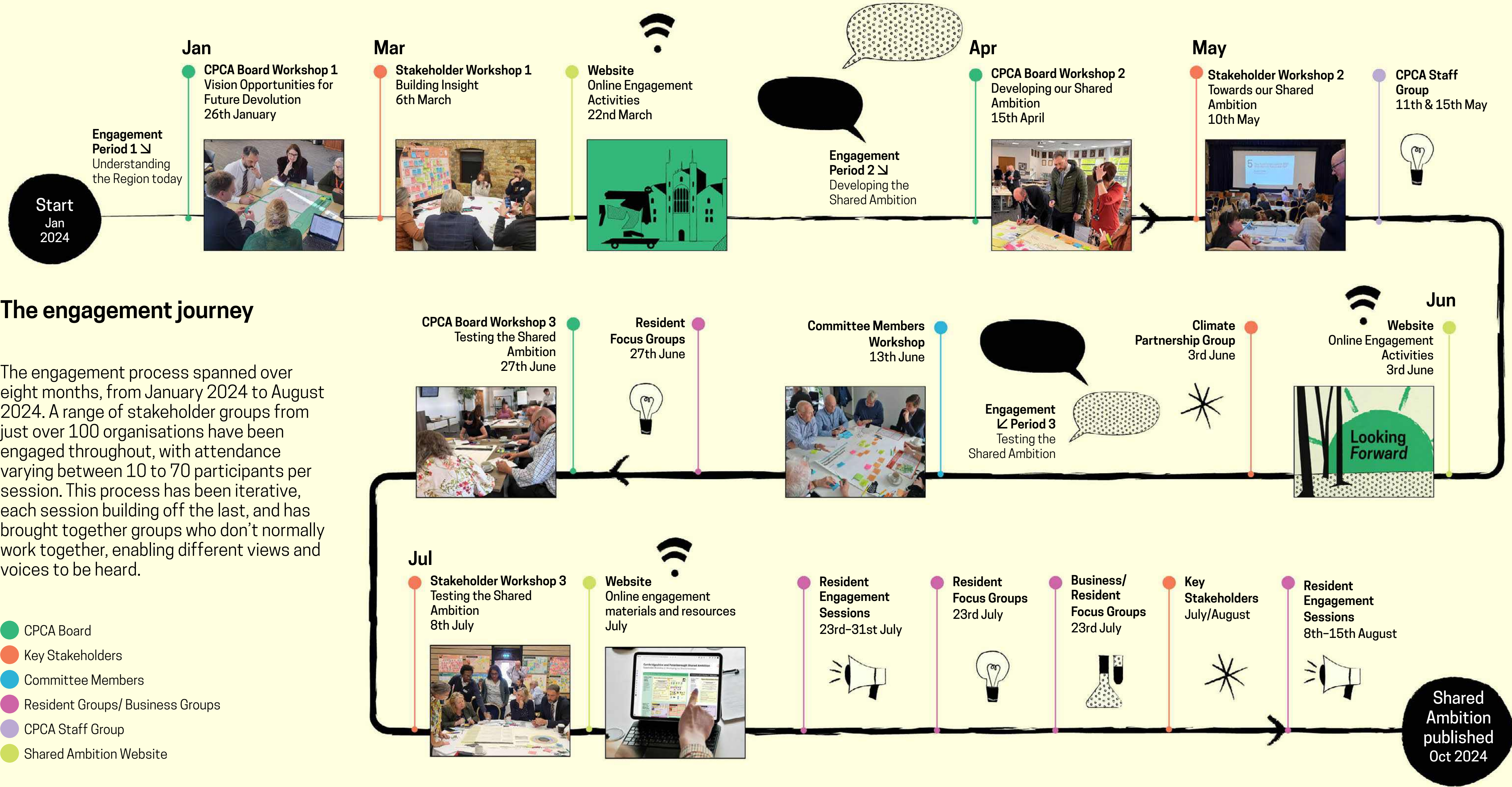
> " Team spirit is growing and positive. We are on a journey and that's really important. "

Jan

CPCA Board Workshop 1
Vision Opportunities for
Future Devolution
26th January

Mar

Stakeholder Workshop 1
Building Insight
6th March

Website
Online Engagement
Activities
22nd March

Apr

CPCA Board Workshop 2
Developing our Shared
Ambition
15th April

May

Stakeholder Workshop 2
Towards our Shared
Ambition
10th May

CPCA Staff
Group
11th & 15th May

Engagement
Period 1 ↘
Understanding
the Region today

Start
Jan
2024

Engagement
Period 2 ↘
Developing the
Shared Ambition

The engagement journey

The engagement process spanned over
eight months, from January 2024 to August
2024. A range of stakeholder groups from
just over 100 organisations have been
engaged throughout, with attendance
varying between 10 to 70 participants per
session. This process has been iterative,
each session building off the last, and has
brought together groups who don't normally
work together, enabling different views and
voices to be heard.

CPCA Board Workshop 3
Testing the Shared
Ambition
27th June

Resident
Focus Groups
27th June

Committee Members
Workshop
13th June

Climate
Partnership Group
3rd June

Jun

Website
Online Engagement
Activities
3rd June

Engagement
↙ Period 3
Testing the
Shared Ambition

Looking
Forward

● CPCA Board
● Key Stakeholders
● Committee Members
● Resident Groups/ Business Groups
● CPCA Staff Group
● Shared Ambition Website

Jul

Stakeholder Workshop 3
Testing the Shared
Ambition
8th July

Website
Online engagement
materials and resources
July

Resident
Engagement
Sessions
23rd–31st July

Resident
Focus Groups
23rd July

Business/
Resident
Focus Groups
23rd July

Key
Stakeholders
July/August

Resident
Engagement
Sessions
8th–15th August

**Shared
Ambition
published
Oct 2024**

Fig 01.1   Shared Ambition Engagement Timeline

Gathering resident insights

Throughout the engagement process, transparency and open dialogue has been a key principle of building consensus for the Shared Ambition. Outside of the stakeholder groups, thoughts, ideas and feedback have been gathered online through the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Shared Ambition website, and social media has been used to promote further opportunities for residents to find out what is happening and share their views. Outputs from the stakeholder workshops have also been captured and shared through an online Miro board, which can be accessed via the Shared Ambition website.

In addition to the website and social media, residents were directly engaged through focus groups and pop-up events across the region. This approach ensured that a representation from all communities was heard with opportunity to contribute ensuring valuable insights were gathered.

Five resident focus group sessions and one business focus group session were held over three evenings in June and July 2024, with 60 participants recruited from diverse socio-economic background. A total of 47 individuals took part in the focus group sessions.

Additionally, twelve resident engagement pop-up events were held in public libraries throughout July and August 2024, showcasing the project and providing opportunities for residents to share their thoughts. These events were particularly important for gathering feedback from those without internet access or who hadn't seen social media updates. Approximately 175 individuals were engaged across the twelve sessions.

The insights gathered from residents have been invaluable, not only for shaping the Shared Ambition but also for informing future plans and strategies.

Collaboration: a catalyst for new ways of working

Collaboration has been at the heart of this process, and through actively engaging with a wide variety of stakeholder groups with a tailored and iterative approach, we have fostered new ways of working together, ways that have demonstrated our ability to come together and share joint exploration, validation and challenge in bringing forth our Shared Ambition for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

In developing our Shared Ambition, we've shown that this was more than just a process—it has been a catalyst for how partners now work together. This journey has set a new benchmark for partnership and collaboration, serving as a springboard for continued joint working across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, extending beyond the Shared Ambition.

Partners across the region are re-energised and excited to continue working together, building on the momentum that has been created.

" Relationships are hugely strengthened by this work. "

Evidence informing the Shared Ambition

Fig 01.2 Constituent Councils of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
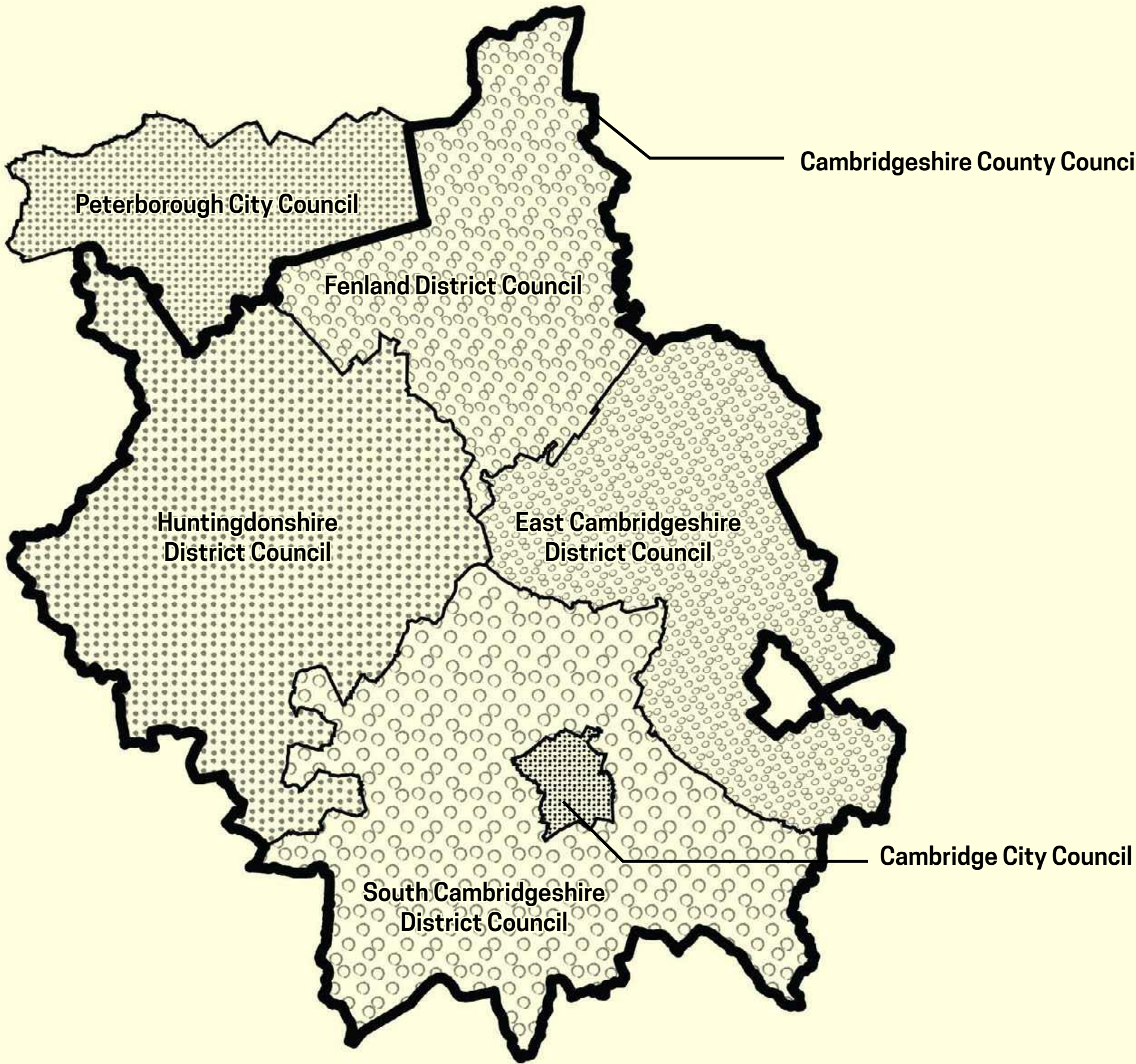
Insight

Evidence, data, insights and strategies are continually being prepared, by both the Combined Authority as well as constituent Councils and key stakeholders. This creates a rich and ever live body of work that helps us to set the foundations for future planning.

To support the preparation of our Shared Ambition, a detailed review of this evidence has been undertaken. The emerging State of the Region Review 2024 provides a comprehensive, evidence-based assessment of the region's current economic, social, and environmental landscape by analysing the most up-to-date data and insights from across the region. This work has developed a resource and evidence base for stakeholders, policymakers, and community leaders to understand the area in detail and provides an important foundation for our Shared Ambition.

Together with insights and feedback gained through the lived experiences and engagement of stakeholders, businesses and residents, a more holistic and deeper understanding of the region has been gained, so that we are better able to address today's challenges and future concerns through our Shared Ambition.

The digital format of the emerging *State of the Region Review* allows for regular updates, making it easy to keep data current and provide a flexible, up-to-date view of the region. By regularly reviewing data and progress against a set of metrics and indicators, we can track our journey toward the Shared Ambition, understanding how our region can continue to positively evolve, building on strengths and tackling challenges as they arise.

02
Our Region Today

We are a region with a rich story, of distinctive global, national and local assets, but we are not without challenges. To move forward, we must acknowledge our region today—what are our strengths, and what are we known for? What are our weaknesses, and where are we challenged? The foundation of our Shared Ambition must be grounded in a clear and evidenced understanding of our place.

National and Global Importance

Leveraging our success

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is a world leading region that drives the nation's economy and showcases British science, human knowledge and commercial endeavour.

With a unique blend of history, diversity and opportunity, our Combined Authority region is unparalleled in its potential for future growth and success. We have a proven track record of world-leading innovation and economic development that sets us apart from other regions.

We are harnessing our collective strengths and potential to create opportunities for all across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, ensuring everyone can unlock their full potential.

" We have an enviable history and track record of successful investment, innovation and economic growth. "
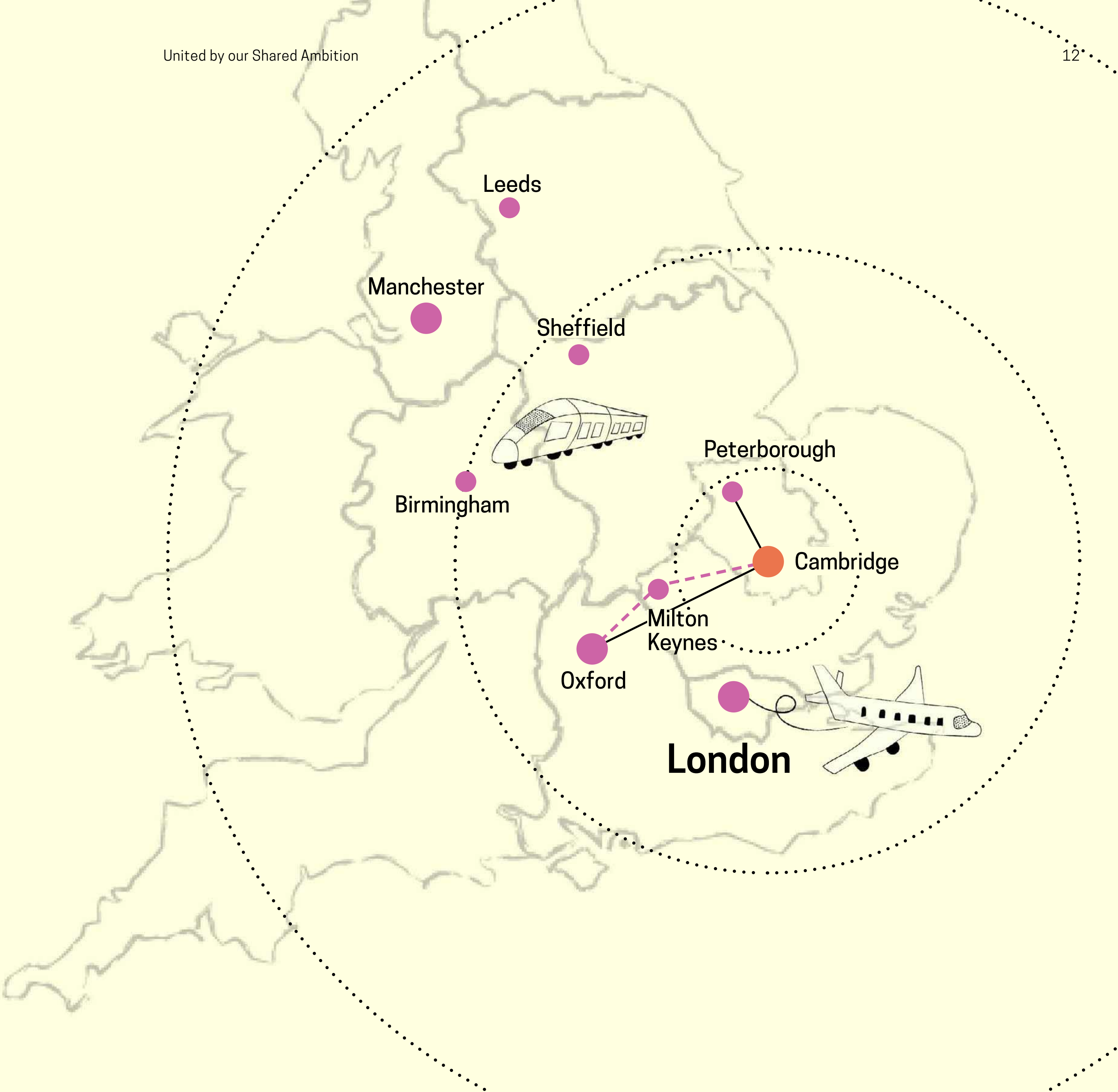
Fig 02.1 Cambridge: a national focus

Regional Powerhouse

Informed by the State of the Region Review, and enriched by the lived experiences of our residents and other relevant stakeholders as well as existing strategies such as the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Growth Plan, this section captures a snapshot of strengths and challenges across the region.

We gathered the voices of those who live and work here to better understand their shared experiences within the themes of People, Place, Economy, Environment, Movement, and Infrastructure, stimulating thinking on how these areas might shape and inform our futures.

" The success of Cambridge is fantastic, but we need to ensure that the rest of the region doesn't get left behind **"**

Fig 02.2 Our Region: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

People
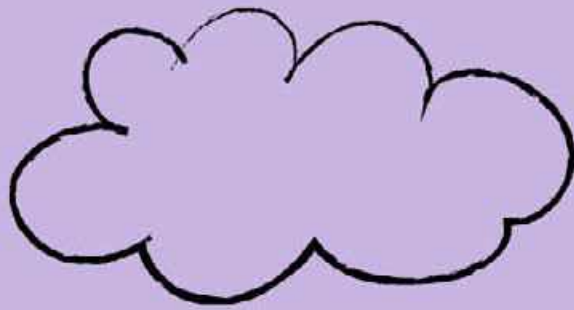
70%

of the population in Millfield, Peterborough, identifies as an ethnic minority, contributing to its rich cultural diversity.[4]

43,000

households live in fuel poverty, the highest rate in Fenland, affecting 13.4% of households compared with 13.1% across England.[1]

20 years

is the life expectancy gap between the lowest and highest healthy life expectancies across the region.[3]

10%

of businesses in Cambridge are in the Voluntary and Community Sector, higher than England's average of 3.1%.[5]

75%

of residents live in areas with low levels of deprivation.[7]

2 in 3

residents on average are educated to NVQ3+ or equivalent, though rates vary from 82% in Cambridge to 57% in Peterborough.[2]

8%

of children in East Cambs, South Cambs, Cambridge, and Huntingdonshire lived in poverty in 2022, much lower than Peterborough's 21% and the UK's 20%.[6]

3x

more income is earned by top earners than bottom earners across the region.[8]

How can we leverage our world-class educational institutions and diverse cultural fabric to bridge the gaps in health and income across our region? What strategies can we implement to ensure everyone benefits from our region's strengths and secures a more equitable future for all?

Our Strengths

From vibrant cities and historic towns to picturesque rural landscapes, our region is home to numerous communities and lifestyles. Our educational excellence attracts some of the world's brightest minds, fostering an enriching culture of innovation. The voluntary and community sector plays a crucial role in supporting this diversity, providing essential services and fostering social cohesion across the region, particularly in areas facing deprivation.

The region benefits from a diverse population, which contributes to its rich cultural environment and a community with strong social bonds. This diversity is further supported by a thriving tourism sector that capitalises on the region's natural and historical assets. Many of our residents embrace active lifestyles, supported by walking and cycling infrastructure, where available promoting health and reducing carbon emissions.

Our Challenges

Social inequalities are marked by disparities in income, employment, and health. Peterborough has some of the poorest health outcomes in the country, with high premature mortality. Employment gaps for low-skilled workers and those with long-term health conditions worsen the region's challenges. Fuel poverty in Fenland and Peterborough prevents families from heating their homes, worsening health outcomes.

Housing availability, not just affordability, is critical. Rising property prices displace residents, weakening community bonds, especially for young people. The lack of affordable homes worsens homelessness and insecurity. Loneliness among the elderly grows as communities fragment, deepening inequalities.

Safety and social cohesion concerns are growing, especially in rapidly developing areas. Childhood obesity, leading to long-term health issues like diabetes and heart disease, requires urgent attention for healthier futures.

Place

How can we harness our diverse landscapes and rich heritage to tackle housing affordability and enrich our high streets? How do we ensure unique and thoughtful development that contributes to a sense of place?

34%
of the region's collective population live in small settlements, each with populations of 10,000 or less, emphasising the importance of villages within the region.[9]

6.4%
of land across the region is designated for nature.[10]

6.5/10
life satisfaction score for Cambridge in 2023, decreasing from 7.9 in 2021. It is now below the national average of 7.4/10.[11]

8%
of land is developed and 92% is non-developed, similar to the average across England.[12]

1/3
of the UK's Grade 1 agricultural land is contained within the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough region, an important national asset.[14]

96%
of visits to the region are day visits, with 25 million tourist day trips annually to the region.[13]

78.3
average crime rate per 1,000 population across the region in 2023, lower than the national average of 90 per 1,000 population.[15]

Our Strengths

Our region boasts a remarkable diversity of communities and landscapes, encompassing vibrant urban centres like Cambridge, tranquil rural expanses of the Fenlands, and picturesque villages. This diversity in our environment fosters a strong sense of place and identity.

We have remarkable built heritage in landmarks like Ely Cathedral and the historic colleges of Cambridge. These iconic structures, along with our parks and waterways, draw in visitors and provide residents with beautiful spaces to live, work, and relax. The abundance of public green spaces in Cambridge enhances urban living by providing easy access to nature. Similarly, the Fenlands offer unique natural landscapes such as the Ouse and Nene Washes; internationally renowned habitats for wading birds contribute to the region's ecological richness.

Our Challenges

The region faces significant barriers, particularly in housing affordability and poor access to open space. We have the highest income inequality to house prices in the country, making it challenging for many to secure affordable housing. In Greater Cambridgeshire, house prices are often unaffordable, and a lack of social housing leaves vulnerable populations at risk. Additionally, we need to ensure that new housing developments contribute to a unique sense of place, preserving local character and identity. Standardised housing often lacks the distinct architectural and cultural elements that make our towns and villages special, leading to a more homogeneous and less engaging environment. Our high streets and local businesses, while vibrant, face challenges from larger commercial developments and online retail, but with clear and thoughtful planning, they can thrive and continue to be the heart of our communities.

Economy

2.2%

growth in number of employees across the region since 2017, lower than the 5.1% growth rate across England.[16]

24%

growth rate of small businesses across the region, lower than England's average of 32%, impacting local economies and job creation.[17]

2

of the fastest growing Cities in the UK - Cambridge and Peterborough[18]

£3 tril

worth of the global life sciences sector, part of which can be captured in this region.[19]

£31 bil

GVA contributions in 2022, representing 1.6% of England's total, with Cambridge seeing above average GVA growth of 144% from 1998–2020.[20]

£13 bil

turnover in the Manufacturing sector, the highest of all sectors out of £57 bil total turnover during 2022/23.[21]

£31,400

median income for Fenland in 2023, 10% lower than England's average and 25% lower than South Cambs and Cambridge's average.[22]

How can we use our prowess in agritech, manufacturing, and research to build a more vibrant and connected economy? Can we make sure that everyone living here has an equal chance to prosper in our thriving economy, regardless of where they live or what their background is?

Our Strengths

Our region is a powerhouse of economic activity and innovation, driven by a unique blend of research, industry, and agriculture. Cambridge stands as a global leader in science and technology, with its world-renowned universities fostering a robust ecosystem of innovation.

The university-to-spinout connection fuels numerous high-tech startups, making the region a magnet for global talent. In recent years, employment growth has been particularly strong in Greater Cambridge, especially in key innovation sectors, demonstrating the resilience of the Cambridge economy—even through challenges like Covid. Peterborough complements this with its strong manufacturing base, which supports local employment and contributes significantly to the national economy. Additionally, the region excels in agritech, a sector critical to the UK's future, leveraging cutting-edge technologies to improve agricultural productivity and sustainability. The interplay between these diverse sectors creates a resilient and future-focused economy.

Our Challenges

Nevertheless, the region faces significant economic disparities. While Cambridge is often seen as affluent, there are significant differences in outcomes within the city itself, with certain populations experiencing particularly poor performance and low social mobility. Income inequality is pronounced, with a stark divide between the affluent areas of Cambridge and the more deprived regions like Fenland and Peterborough.

Access to education also varies greatly, with both rural areas and certain urban populations lacking the same opportunities available in urban centres. This divide extends to digital connectivity, where rural areas lag in broadband access, further exacerbating economic inequalities by restricting access to online education, remote work opportunities, and digital services.

Environment

How can we harness our region's natural beauty and leadership in sustainable technology to tackle pressing environmental challenges both at home and across the globe? Is it possible to create environmentally responsible strategies that will safeguard everyone's health and sustainability in the future?

-79%

reductions in CO_2 emissions from commercial sources since 2005.[23]

13.7kt

of CO_2 emissions per km² in Cambridge, compared with 3.4kt in Peterborough.[25]

19,000

unique species of wildlife are found across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, out of a total 70,000 across the UK.[27]

36,000

hectares of the region is nature-rich, accounting for only 8.5% of the total land area, while agriculture accounts for 79% .[26]

37%

of land across the region is at flood risk, ranging between 83% in Fenland to 8% in Cambridge.[24]

553

designated Local Sites in the region, identified for their significant biodiversity and geological value, an increase from 517 sites in 2008/09.[28]
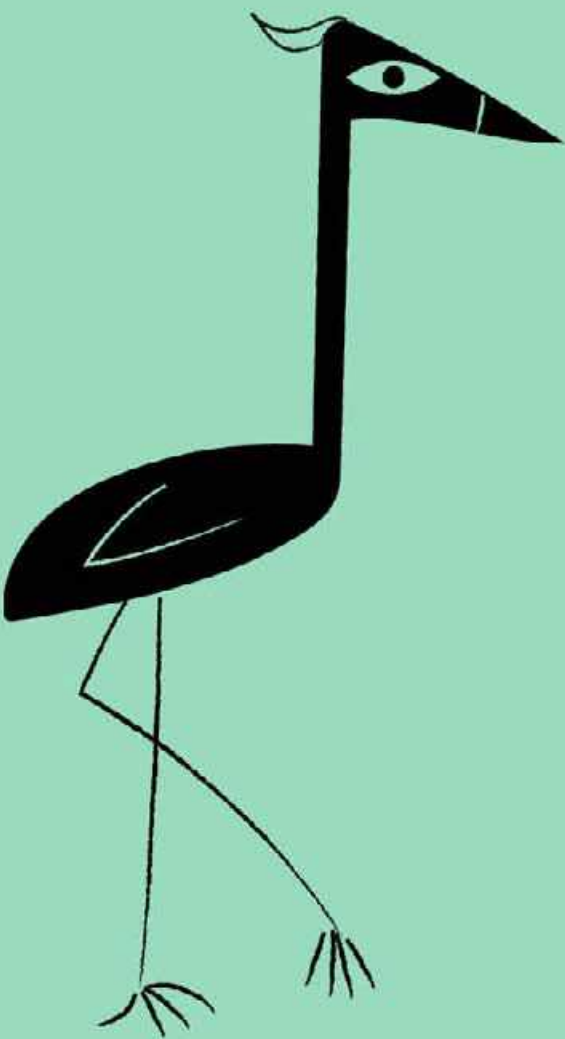
21%

of GHG emissions in the region are from the Land Use, Land-use Change and Forestry sector, second to the Transport sector at 28%.[29]

Our Strengths

From serene Fenlands to busy metropolitan parks, our region boasts incredibly rich landscapes. This variety of natural beauty improves the standard of living and helps locals develop a strong bond with the natural world.

The area is also recognized for its leadership in climate initiatives, with significant efforts in green technologies and renewable energy addressing global environmental challenges

Our commitment to environmental stewardship is further reflected in our extensive green and blue infrastructure, providing numerous publicly accessible natural spaces, which benefit residents' physical and mental well-being as well as biodiversity.

Our Challenges

However, our region faces pressing environmental challenges that require urgent attention. Much of the Fenlands is at risk of flooding, threatening homes, agriculture, and infrastructure. Predicted rise in sea levels could have an existential impact on the northern part of our region, therefore taking a holistic approach to deal with this looming threat is required.

Over-development, particularly in urban fringes, exacerbates these risks and puts additional pressure on already strained natural resources and habitats. The region's reliance on cars contributes to significant air pollution, particularly in urban centres like Cambridge and Peterborough, where traffic congestion leads to elevated levels of harmful emissions.

Effective flood management strategies, sustainable urban planning, and a shift towards greener transportation options are essential steps toward a healthier and more resilient environment.

Movement

49 min

train journey time between Peterborough and Cambridge, compared with 11–16 mins between Bristol and Bath.[35]

28%
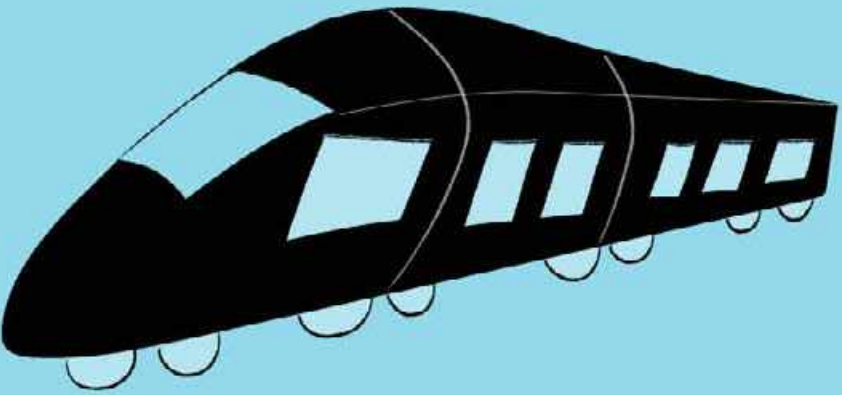
of households in Ely own three or more cars, compared to 3% in Cambridge.[30]

8,930

road collisions across the region between 2016–2020, with the highest number occurring in Peterborough at 2,370.[32]

20 min

cycle time to at least one type of healthcare facility in the majority of cities and towns within the region.[33]

18,000

licensed battery EVs within the region in 2022, with 12,000 of these registered in Peterborough, a substantial 1,440% increase since 2016.[36]

44%

of working age residents in Fenland could work at, or within 5km, from home, compared with 79% in Cambridge.[37]

A14

is one of the most congested roads in the country, linking major cities such as Cambridge, Huntingdon and Peterborough to the east coast.[31]

50%

of the region's residents in 2022 used active travel three or more times a week on average, compared with 45% across England.[34]

How can we leverage our strategic location and the robust parts of our transport networks to address connectivity gaps and promote equitable growth within the region and beyond? How can our approach to transport support healthy people and a healthy planet?

Our Strengths

Our proximity to London provides significant advantages, including access to job markets, cultural exchanges, and economic opportunities.

Additionally, being part of the strategic Oxford-Cambridge (OxCam) Innovation Corridor enhances our region's attractiveness to global businesses and talent. This corridor is a catalyst of research, development, and innovation, leveraging the strengths of top-tier universities and a vibrant start-up ecosystem.
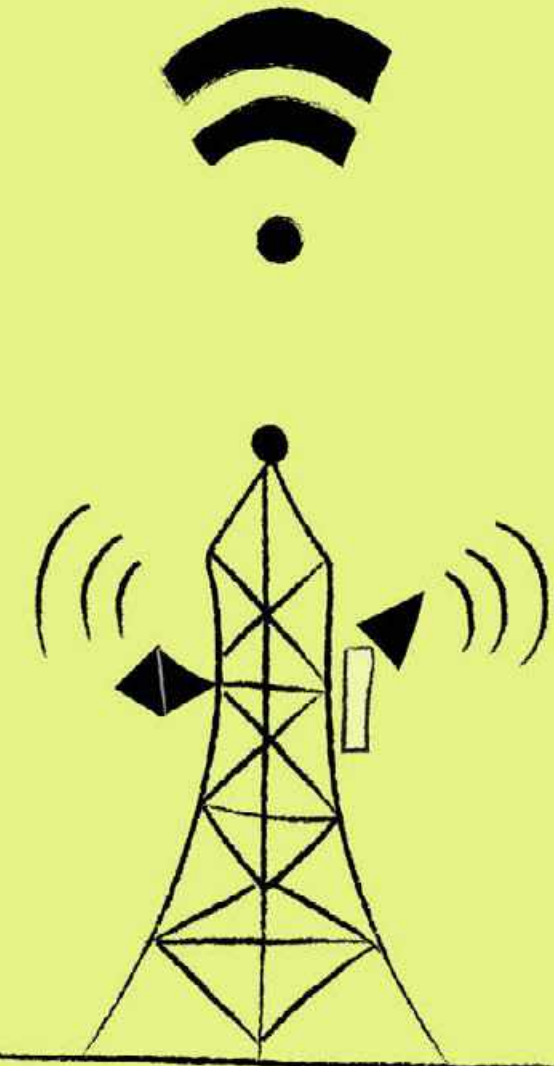
Our transport networks facilitate robust connections both within the region and beyond. The East Coast Main Line and Thameslink routes link Cambridge and Peterborough to major cities such as London, Birmingham, and Norwich. The area is well-served by major road arteries such as the A14, A1, and M11, which are vital for regional and national connectivity.

Our Challenges

Despite these advantages, significant connectivity challenges remain, hindering equitable and sustainable growth. Public transport is inadequate, with many rural and suburban areas under-served, limiting access to jobs, education, and healthcare. This increases car dependency, contributing to air pollution and reinforcing deprivation in isolated communities by hindering healthier, active travel options.

Journey times between cities like Cambridge and Peterborough are longer than in comparable regions, underscoring the need for improved intra-regional links. The lack of north-south transport infrastructure isolates market towns and rural areas, deepening their deprivation. Rapid development without matching infrastructure growth leads to congestion and environmental damage.
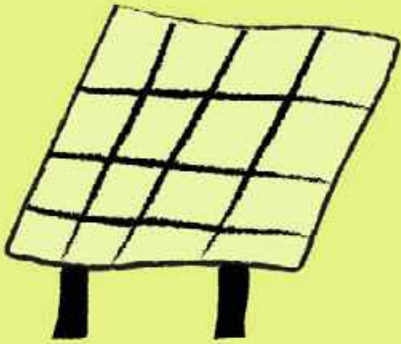
Infrastructure

How can we upgrade our infrastructure to support both economic growth and environmental sustainability? How do we ensure our infrastructure evolves to meet these demands while safeguarding and enhancing social equality and quality of life?

2%

increase in energy consumption across the region since 2011, compared with 1% across England. East Cambs' consumption rose by 9.75%.[39]

66%

of premises in 2023 had access to full fibre broadband, compared with England's average of 55%, although South Cambs had a lower average of 43%.[40]

3rd

largest reservoir in England is Grafam Water in Huntingdonshire, which is also an important SSSI and an asset to the region.[41]

69%

of Energy Performance Certificates within the region are rated C or higher, compared with England's average of 59%. The higher rate is likely due to the number of new-builds being completed.[38]

+157%

increase in solar photovoltaic capacity in the region since 2014, more than double its previous level and representing 5% of the total capacity in England.[42]

75%

of solar energy generation in the region comes from East Cambs, South Cambs and Fenland.[43]
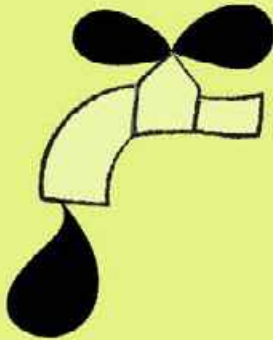
52

Electric Vehicle charge-points per 100,000 population, a third less of the average for England at 82 per 100,00[44]

Our Strengths

The strengths in our local infrastructure support both our economic growth and standard of living. The CPCA area is well-served by major transportation arteries such as the M11 and rail lines into London, which are vital for efficient movement and connectivity. This strong infrastructure underpins our region's appeal for both businesses and residents.

Our region's commitment to digital connectivity is also evident, with widespread gigabit broadband availability surpassing the national average. This connectivity is crucial for fostering collaboration, driving economic growth, and maintaining our competitive edge in key sectors such as technology, biosciences, and agritech. Furthermore, our region is at the forefront of renewable energy initiatives, with areas like South Cambridgeshire significantly contributing to the UK's renewable energy targets through substantial solar PV capacity.

Our Challenges

Despite these advantages, the area faces significant infrastructure challenges. Inadequate infrastructure hinders investment, job access, and quality of life, a problem worsened by ongoing development and expansion plans. Water management issues, such as Fenlands flooding, and challenges in water supply due to rapid construction, are ongoing concerns. Ageing roads, bridges, and public buildings require upgrades for safety and efficiency. Social infrastructure, like healthcare services, is lacking, especially in the Fenlands.

Electricity grid capacity constraints limit renewable energy connections and green energy initiatives. Digital inequality, particularly for older people and in rural areas, restricts access to remote work, education, and digital services, deepening economic and social inequalities and isolation. Bridging this gap is essential for modern economic participation.

03
Our Shared Ambition

Our Shared Ambition gives focus to a common set of desired outcomes, articulating what we collectively want for our future. It is intrinsically linked to our people and place, and leverages our strengths to address current and future challenges in a way which will positively shape new horizons and opportunities.

Our Shared Ambition Statement

By igniting innovation, embracing our diversity, and championing collaboration, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will be globally recognised for our groundbreaking achievements inspired by our rich history, determined communities, and unique natural assets.

Harnessing the collective strengths of our fast growing cities, historic market towns and productive Fen landscapes, we will advance our equitable, pioneering, connected, and resilient region.

United by our Shared Ambition

Our Shared Ambition is more than just a statement

It captures our collective vision for the region, anchored by **three overarching Values** that shape our actions and discussions.

Through clear **Commitments**, we will leverage our strengths to overcome challenges, driving progress towards four defined **Outcomes** that will shape our region in 2050.

Three overarching Values

Our guiding values that will shape how we act and frame discussions that help us deliver the Shared Ambition.

Commitments

Clear statements on what we will do to draw on our strengths, overcome the challenges, and succeed in working towards our four outcomes.

Four Outcomes

Descriptions of our future—what we want to achieve for our region by 2050.
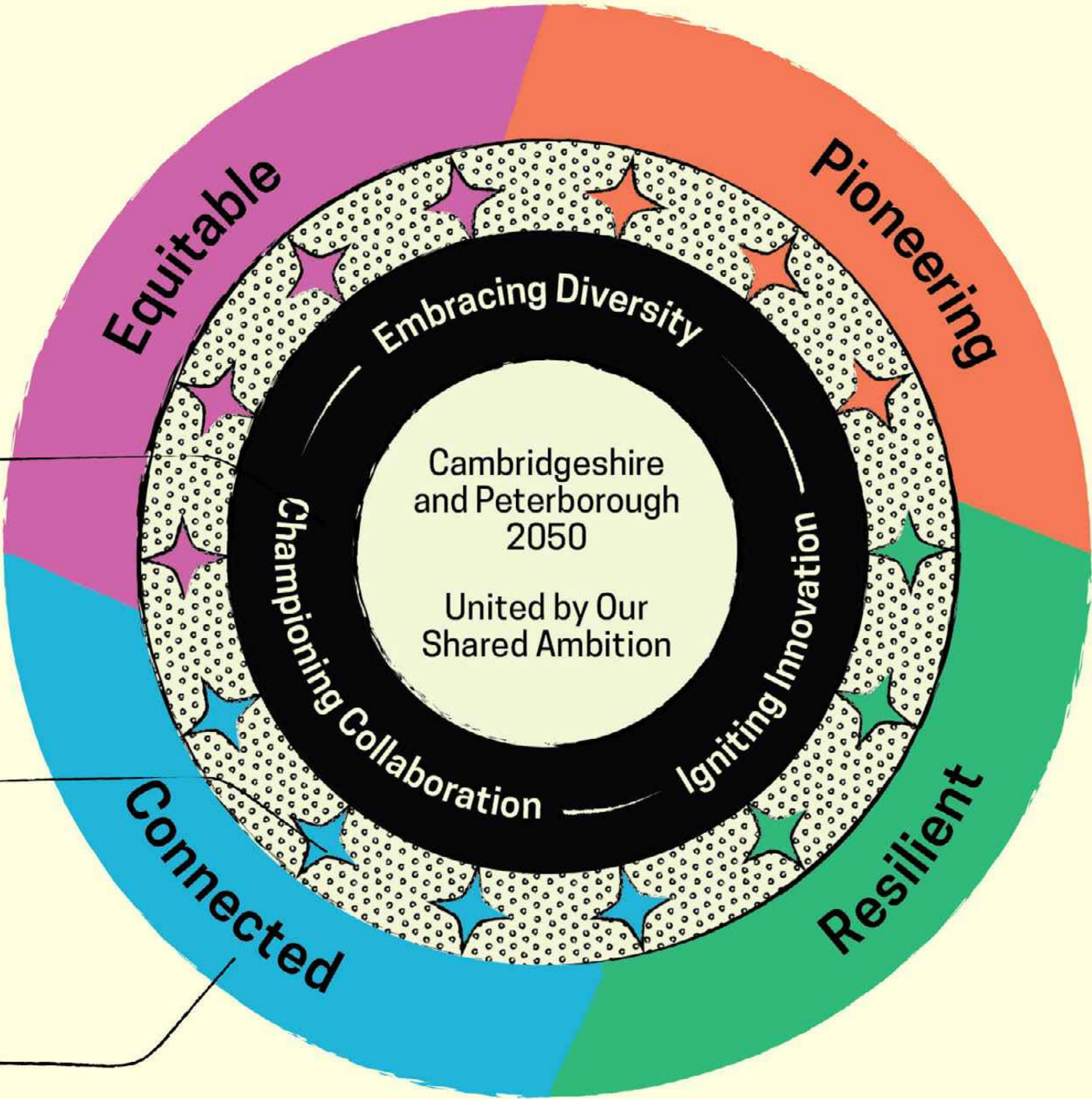
Our Values

What will guide us?

Working towards our Shared Ambition will be a journey, it will be shaped by many different voices and perspectives that will help us draw consensus and direction through constructive dialogue and positive debate.

To help us all find common purpose and perspective we have established three overarching values.

These common values will shape how we act and frame discussions—helping us deliver the Shared Ambition in a manner that unites us.

Igniting Innovation

Always be willing to encourage innovation, be confident to try and test new ideas.

We're known globally for our know-how, innovation is embedded in our region's DNA. Our ability to turn inspiration into tangible success will continue to define our road ahead.

From the venerable halls of education to the fertile Fenlands, our vibrant arts and cultural heritage, groundbreaking ideas and pioneering projects will help us use our longstanding tradition of using innovation as a guiding light as we face contemporary challenges like acute housing shortages and the climate crisis.
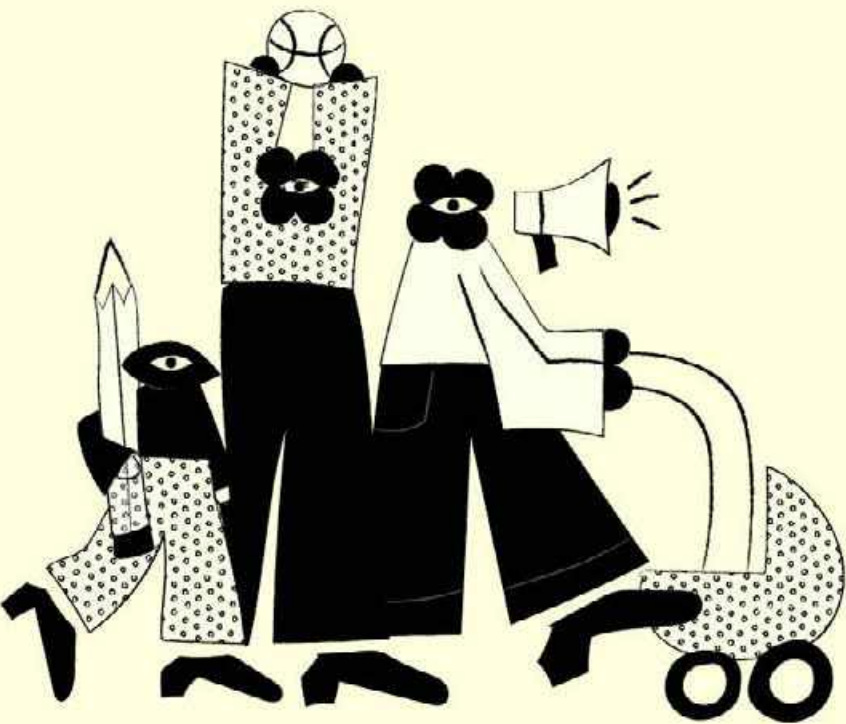
Embracing Diversity

Always check we are reaching to futures that benefit us all.

Across the rich tapestry of our region, diversity emerges as a defining characteristic of who we are. Embracing the differences across our wide-ranging settlements, communities and landscapes, we recognise that true progress must be checked against our ability to uplift everyone, and to allow various voices, including those hard to reach, to shape our future.

We will celebrate and embrace our diversity by fostering inclusive initiatives and leveraging the unique strengths of each community to drive collective success for our region.

Championing Collaboration

Always ensure new and under represented voices are at the table.

Our region is renowned for attracting some of the world's most creative and innovative minds. We are celebrated for tacking today's complex issues through embracing diverse ideas, listening to new perspectives and empowering others to explore new limits. Placing collaboration at the heart of how we shape the future will mean we continue to blend different disciplines, share experiences and consider alternative viewpoints. This will lead us to remain flexible and open-minded as we navigate future pathways with share confidence.

In an era where tackling big issues in isolation is impractical, harnessing our collective imagination becomes our strength. By championing collaboration as fundamental to our ways of working, we pave the way for a future where collective ingenuity generates progress and prosperity for all.

Framework of Outcomes and Commitments

Reading our Commitments

Our Shared Ambition is presented across four Outcomes, each with clear Commitments.

Our four Outcomes are descriptions of our future, what we want to achieve for our region by 2050.

Our Commitments are clear statements on what we will do to draw on our strengths, overcome the challenges, and succeed in working towards our four outcomes.

These represent Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's top priorities as we move towards 2050.

As we achieve our goals, we will review and update these commitments annually against work to track our progress against the State of the Region metrics.

This process will ensure their continued relevance, allowing for flexibility and update as we step forward.

For an **Equitable** region, we will...

- Harness health & wellbeing
- Provide education, skills & employment for all
- Deliver homes for all
- Build safer communities

For a **Pioneering** region, we will...

- Be the place to invest
- Grow our high-value sectors
- Maximise the benefit of investment

For a **Connected** region, we will...

- Champion sustainable regional mobility
- Connect communities
- Amplify all voices
- Enhance our cultural experience

For a **Resilient** region, we will...

- Plan for advanced water management
- Let nature & biodiversity flourish
- Secure local energy

Exploring our Commitments

Reading our Commitments

The following pages explore our commitments further, linking back to our strengths and challenges evidenced in the State of the Region Review, and looks ahead to how we could deliver to achieve our Shared Ambition. Each page features one commitment, detailing:

1. Title and description of the commitment.

2. The links back to our strengths and challenges evidenced by the *State of the Region Review 2024*.

3. How we could deliver the commitment, looking ahead at inspirational case studies and projects.

4. Ways to inspire momentum, with ideas for next steps, kick-starting a process that draws on our strengths, embedding innovative thinking and collaboration.

1. Title and description of the commitment

2. Links back to the *understanding our region today*

3. Inspirational case studies and projects

4. Ideas to inspire next steps

Our commitment to achieving an *Equitable* region is:

Harness health and wellbeing.

We will:

Champion public health as the cornerstone of every decision and policy, tackling health inequalities head-on to elevate the wellbeing of every resident and empowering everyone to thrive.

What does evidence tell us about our region today?

There is a **20 year gap** between the lowest and highest healthy life expectancies across the region.[45]

Self-reported life satisfaction scores are high fluctuating between 7.5 to 8 out of 10 across the region from 2014 to 2023. However, Cambridge has seen a decline from 7.8 in 2021 to 6.5 in 2023, bringing it below the national average of 7.5.[46]

Less urban areas have a greater distance to public green spaces with the highest median distance of 3,920 metres in East Cambs compared to England's average of 612 metres.[47]

How could we deliver this?

Inspiration—
Mainstreaming health in a fairer, healthier Liverpool

The Fairer and Healthier Liverpool Group has sought to integrate health considerations into city planning, housing, and resource allocation, fostering a holistic approach to public health in the city that is helping to improve the health and wellbeing of all citizens. Community engagement sits at the heart of the strategy, ensuring local voices shape policies. By addressing the social determinants of health (such as fuel poverty, which affects nearly 19% of households in the city) the group seeks to tackle the root causes of poor health. The work informs future public health strategies, building on Liverpool's experience and participation in networks such as the Healthy Cities Network.

Liverpool waterfront. Photo credit: Andrew Bishop, via Pexels

Forward momentum—
Exploring next steps

01 What if Cambridgeshire and Peterborough made a commitment to address the social determinants of health inequality, and implemented approaches and interventions to tackle these inequities?

02 Using key health indicators, could we measure Health Net Gain across the region and use evidence to measure future changes in population health?

03 How could we explore further devolution to enhance health and wellbeing in our region, for example by improving access to green spaces, or ensuring the most effective use of existing health and care resources?

04 What programmes and policies can we implement to ensure all children receive high-quality early childhood support, even before formal education, fostering healthy habits that promote lifelong wellbeing?

Our Outcomes and Commitments for an *Equitable* region

In 2050, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will be an *Equitable* region...

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is a region where all communities flourish, taking advantage of the rewards and opportunities from a region home to two of the UK's fastest-growing cities. We empower everyone to lead their healthiest, happiest lives, with access to housing, essential services, top-tier education and skills, and fulfilling employment.

To achieve our outcome as an Equitable region, our commitments are to:

◇ **Harness health and wellbeing**

◇ **Provide education, skills and employment for all**

◇ **Deliver homes for all**

◇ **Build safer communities**

Our commitment to achieving an *Equitable* region is:

Harness health and wellbeing.

We will:

Champion public health as the cornerstone of every decision and policy, tackling health inequalities head-on to elevate the wellbeing of every resident and empowering everyone to thrive.

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Liverpool waterfront. Photo credit: Andrew Bishop, via Pexels

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Our commitment to achieving an *Equitable* region is:

Provide education, skills and employment for all.

We will:

Ensure inclusive and equitable access to education, training, upskilling, and lifelong learning, helping our residents to feel supported and inspired to work locally, boost prosperity and remain economically active for longer.

What does evidence tell us about our region today?

Peterborough's Post-18 participation rate in education and training is high at 2,816 per 100,000, much higher than England's average rate of 1,922.

The employment rate is higher in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough than in England, at 79% compared with 75.7%. Within the region, Fenland has the lowest at 72%, while East Cambs has the highest at 84%.[48]

There has been slow growth in employee numbers across the region, with an increase of 2.2% since 2017, compared to a 5.1% growth rate across England.[49]

How could we deliver this?

Inspiration— Creating an inclusive skills curriculum in Lambeth and Southwark

The Citizens' Curriculum in Lambeth and Southwark, led by the Learning and Work Institute, aims to make adult learning more inclusive and relevant, especially for those with multiple long-term conditions. By co-creating content with learners and using community-based models, it ensures education is practical and engaging. The project maps local learning programmes and identifies gaps, promoting formal and non-formal education, and in-work support. It has improved learning, employment, and health outcomes in Lambeth and Southwark, fostering a more inclusive and skilled community where people are able to stay in work.

Photo credit: Monica Melton via Unsplash

Forward momentum— Exploring next steps

01 Could we create and deliver a Regional Skills Improvement Plan and improve the skills curriculum to ensure all residents have the skills they need to access the labour market?

02 How can we build on the success of existing facilities like the North Cambridgeshire Training Centre and ARU Peterborough, so that learners of all ages across our region are able to access education easily?

03 How can we promote digital skills to enable lifelong learning for people of all ages, especially those who are currently not able to participate in online training?

04 How can we leverage the world-class educational institutions and universities in our region to provide our young people with the best educational and training opportunities, including life skills and confidence-building to prepare them for the job market?

Our commitment to achieve a *Equitable* region is:

Deliver homes for all.

We will:

Deliver enough homes for all, including truly affordable housing that meets the diverse needs of our region, with an inclusive variety of housing types and tenures suitable for young people, families, older people and key workers to allow all of our communities to thrive.

What does evidence tell us about our region today?

Housing affordability is varied across the region, in Peterborough, the average house-sale price was 7.0x greater than the average full time worker annual earnings in 2023, compared to 12.3x in Cambridge and 9.0x in Huntingdonshire.[50]

Private rental affordability is low, in Cambridge the cost of rent as a percentage of monthly salary was 34% in 2023, compared to 24% across England.[51]

Affordable housing delivery is above the national average, with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough delivering on average 10% growth of affordable housing each year from 1992 compared to 5.6% across England.[52]

How could we deliver this?

Inspiration— Community-led housing in Cambridge

The Cambridge Community Land Trust (CCLT) is a community-led project to deliver affordable and sustainable housing, owned and managed by its residents as a Community Land Trust. The first was set up in Stretham and Wilburton which was formed in 2012. The CCLT is set up and run by ordinary people to develop and manage homes and other assets important to the community. The new village design intends to include shared facilities along cohousing principles, and will be designed to increase biodiversity and biocapacity to benefit the environment. It brings peoples' lives closer to nature and provides affordable and sustainable homes to as many types of household as possible.

Photo credit: Josh Wilburn via Unsplash

Forward momentum— Exploring next steps

01   Could we scale up the CCLT to create a community owned, affordable and sustainable homes across the wider region?

02   What lessons can we take from the CCLT to depart from traditional ideas of homes and housing delivery, embracing concepts such as co-housing, co-design and intergenerational living?

03   What if we took a more strategic, regional approach to delivering affordable homes in the right places, ensuring people can live near to where they work and play?

04   Inspired by local developments like Waterbeach and Alconbury Weald, could we become a model region for creating 21st-century new towns and settlements that provide high-quality, affordable, and sustainable homes for local communities?

Our commitment to achieving an *Equitable* region is:

Build safer communities.

We will:

Protect all residents from harm by preventing crime, antisocial behaviour and road traffic collisions. By putting community needs first, we will tackle all forms of insecurity to create a place where everyone can live and move about freely with confidence.

What does evidence tell us about our region today?

Violence against persons and theft are the most common crimes in the region, representing 36% and 34% of total criminal offences.[53]

24.9% residents released from prison re-offend within a year in Cambridge and Peterborough, slightly higher than the England average of 24.2%.[54]

Road traffic collisions are most common in town and city centres which impacts the safety of residents walking and cycling between where they live and work.[55]

How could we deliver this?

Inspiration— Protecting young people from violence in London and Birmingham

Redthread is an organisation which strives for a society where all children and young people live healthy, safe and happy lives. The charity operates in healthcare settings to identify and support children attending hospital due to exploitation, violence or mental and physical health issues. By identifying this 'reachable movement' when children are open to receiving help, the charity's specialised youth workers stand alongside them and focus on mental health, training, education or housing support according to need. This approach helps reach the most vulnerable young people and break the cycle of violence.

Photo credit: Vonecia Carswell via Unsplash

Forward momentum— Exploring next steps

01 How can we build on the lessons of Redthread's approach to develop human centred and effective initiatives to reduce crime and harm prevention?

02 How can we work towards a future where all road deaths are prevented and the subsequent physical and social impact of traffic collisions are limited across the region?

03 How can we ensure that all residents, especially vulnerable groups, such as young people and disabled people are able to live free from fear of violence, hate speech or other forms of abuse?

04 Could we develop a new, community focused and holistic approach to safety and harm prevention which addresses the root causes of insecurity and crime?

Our Outcomes and Commitments for a *Pioneering* region

In 2050, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will be a *Pioneering* region...

Productivity is supercharged across a region celebrated for global and national leadership in science and technology, continually drawing talent and investment into our high-tech sectors, knowledge industries, and world-class universities and important voluntary sector. Continued investment will be optimised across our region, ensuring inclusive economic growth.

To achieve our outcome as a Pioneering region, our commitments are:

✧ **Be the place to invest**

✧ **Grow our high-value sectors**

✧ **Maximise the benefit of investment**

Our commitment to achieving a *Pioneering* region is:

Be the place to invest.

We will:

Leverage our legacy of attracting national and international investors, connecting them with our entrepreneurial talent. Our region will continue to be positioned as the destination of choice for innovation, creating a thriving hub for cutting-edge industries and growing our economy.

What does evidence tell us about our region today?
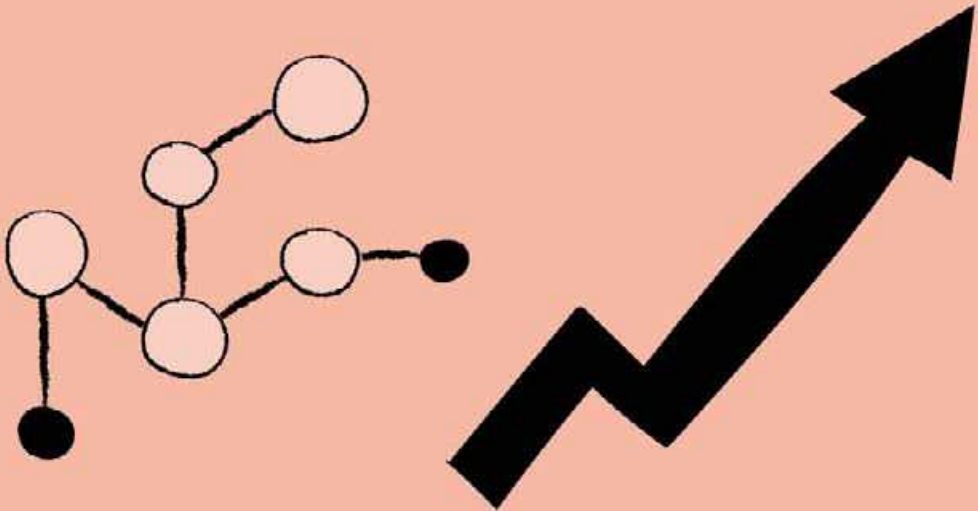
Our region is innovative with 53% of businesses in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are producing innovative new products, goods or services compared with 46% in England.[56]

Our region contributes significantly to the UK exchequer, representing 1.6% of England's total GVA, equal to £31 billion in 2022.[57]

Peterborough is the second fastest growing city in the UK with significant advancements in green engineering and manufacturing.[58]

£2.3 billion of foreign investment was made into our region's companies in 2015, which is one tenth of the £25 billion invested into the whole of the UK.[59]

How could we deliver this?

Inspiration— Continuing to attract business investment in Copenhagen

Copenhagen has solidified its role as a European hub for traditional and emerging industries like pharmaceuticals, clean energy, shipping, and design. Backed by the 'Invest in Denmark Strategy 2024–2027', a government initiative aimed at attracting investments aligned with Denmark's strengths and societal needs, Copenhagen has become a prime destination for international business investment. The city's commitment to sustainability, highlighted by its #1 Environmental Performance Index ranking, draws companies focused on green initiatives including CleanTech businesses. Programmes fostering industry cluster connections are also driving investment into clean industries.

Gammel Strand, Copenhagen. Photo credit: Robertkso via Pexels

Forward momentum— Exploring next steps

01 Can we leverage national and global platforms to communicate our regional offer to investors, and connect them to businesses across our region?

02 Could we attract investment and foster international partnerships by inviting and hosting national and global trade envoys in our region to showcase local opportunities?

03 Building on the work of regional assets such as Cambridge University and our region's sector champions, how can we incentivise purpose-driven, innovative investors to choose our region over other UK and European innovation hubs, and encourage them to stay?

04 How can we make the region the UK's top investment hub for Agri-tech and Food Production, Life Sciences, Advanced Manufacturing and Materials, Digital and IT, by leveraging our academic excellence and attracting the most forward-thinking investors?

Our commitment to achieving a *Pioneering* region is:

Grow our high-value sectors.

We will:

Support our world-class economic sectors in Agri-tech, Life Sciences, Advanced Manufacturing and Digital, while amplifying our international recognition in championing a new green economy to ensure we maintain a diverse and competitive economy.

What does evidence tell us about our region today?
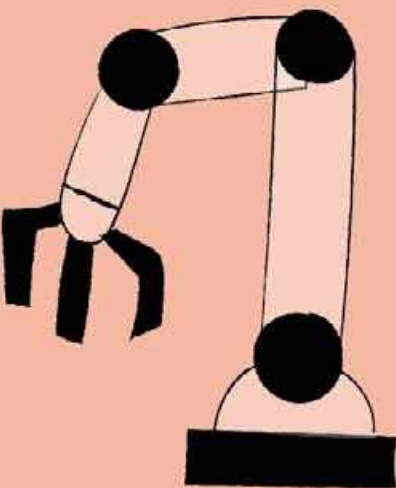
The life sciences and healthcare sector employs 22,000 people and generates the highest turnover per employee at £450,000.[60]

The manufacturing sector had the highest turnover out of all the sectors during 2022/23, generating £13 billion out of a total of £57 billion within the region.[61]

The agri-tech sector is critical for national food security and climate adaptation, and supports over 16,000 jobs in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.[62]

How could we deliver this?

Inspiration— Helping clean, high-growth sectors to expand in Boston

Local and regional government agencies in Boston have boosted the city's clean-tech, life sciences, and advanced manufacturing sectors by securing federal and private funding for the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center, an innovation hub aimed at growing the local economy in key high growth sectors. Elsewhere, business incubators including Greentown Labs are supporting emerging clean-tech companies to scale, while regional economic policies, such as the Growth and Prosperity Plan, focus on supporting existing key employers to access workforce training and enter the clean-tech market. In 2022, clean-tech firms in Massachusetts attracted $3.5 billion in funding.

Photo credit: Tyler Casey via Unsplash

Forward momentum— Exploring next steps

01 Building on existing work by Field Labs and the Eastern Agri-Tech Growth Initiative, could we drive growth in our agri-tech sector to make The Fens a leading global hub for agri-tech innovation?

02 Could we develop stronger partnerships between our local businesses and hubs of innovation, such as Cambridge University's Institute for Manufacturing, Peterborough's Centre for Green Technology, and the ARU Peterborough Global Innovation Centre for Energy Transition?

03 Could we support growth in high value sectors by creating more lab space for small and growing biosciences and life science companies, or promote targeted workforce training that allows skills clustering?

04 Building on the success of the East Anglia Energy Academy in Huntingdonshire, how can we ensure our workforce is prepared with the right skills to propel a green industry revolution in our region?

Our commitment to achieving a *Pioneering* region is:

Maximise the benefit of investment.

We will:

Optimise the continued flow of investment to benefit all communities and small businesses in our market towns and villages, ensuring people and places thrive alongside high-growth industries, promoting inclusive and sustainable economic development to eliminate wealth disparities.

What does evidence tell us about our region today?

The growth rate of our small businesses is low compared to England's average of 32%. At 24%, this is impacting our local economy and job creation.[63]

While Cambridge outperforms England in terms of GVA growth, East Cambs, Huntingdonshire, Fenland and Peterborough's GVA growth ranges from 120% to 140%, below the national average of 150%.[64]

The top 20% of earners in the region earn three times more income than the bottom 20%, with earners in Fenland making 10% less than the national average.[65]

How could we deliver this?

Inspiration— Inclusive procurement in Islington

Islington Council is pioneering Community Wealth Building by prioritising local procurement in schools, community centres and other organisations. By positioning the council itself as an anchor institution, the programme supports local businesses in retaining wealth within the borough. A new affordable workspace initiative will create over 100 jobs and generate £6m annually, while the £3 billion Green Skills Centre will provide training, boost demand for skilled workers, and enhance local job prospects and wages. Islington's inclusive economy approach ensures that development and infrastructure investment benefits the entire community, including residents and local businesses.

Moreland Primary School in Islington. Photo credit: d0gwalker, via Flickr

Forward momentum— Exploring next steps

01 Inspired by the development of the new university ARU Peterborough, the innovative partnership between Anglia Ruskin University, CPCA and Peterborough City Council, how can we encourage more investment into our region that boosts economic growth and also enhances social and environmental benefits?

02 Could we create a regional Social Value Charter to mandate more consistent and targeted investments into our communities alongside other projects and investments, and increase our commitment to volunteering and community service?

03 What if we negotiated an ambitious new devolution deal to fund investments that reflect our collective strengths, recognise our region's diverse characteristics, and build our regional resilience?

04 How could we drive increased social, environmental, and economic value from planned infrastructure investment, such as the new Fens Reservoir, for example by promoting access to nature, supporting local agriculture, and improving flood resilience?
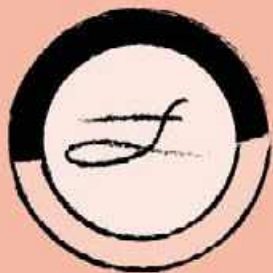
Our Outcomes and Commitments for a *Connected* region

In 2050, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will be a *Connected* region...

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is a connected region. A robust regional transport system, state-of-the-art digital infrastructure and inclusive engagement with residents bring together people, places and businesses. Our rural villages, bustling market towns, and dynamic cities will flourish as vibrant and connected places to live, work, and visit, enriched by our renowned heritage and culture.

To achieve our outcome as an Connected region, our commitments are:

✧ **Champion sustainable regional mobility**

✧ **Connect communities**

✧ **Amplify all voices**

✧ **Enhance our cultural experience**
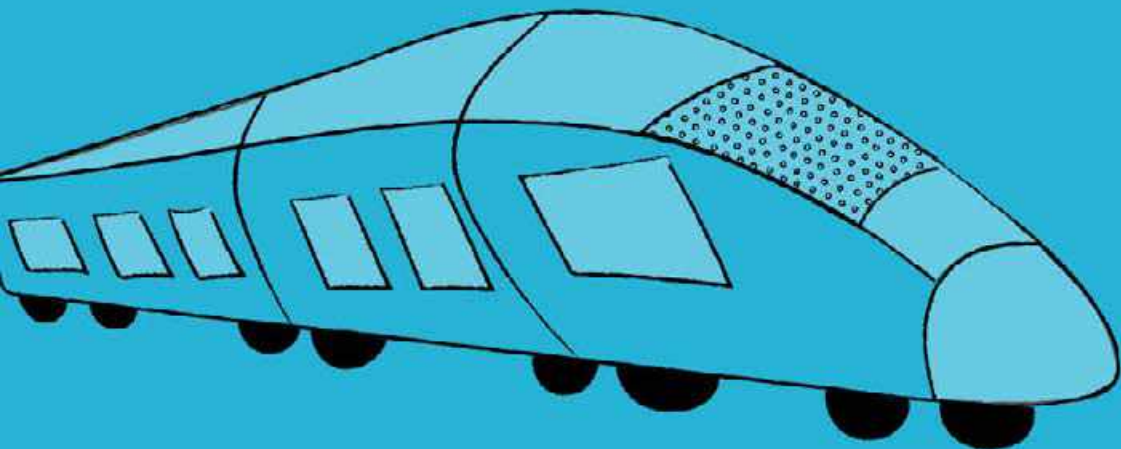
Our commitment to achieve a *Connected* region is:

Champion sustainable regional mobility.

We will:

Prioritise the challenge of urban-rural connectivity by creating an accessible, efficient, and green public transport network for local people and businesses, with walking and cycling routes. With a clear understanding of where people want to go, we will innovate solutions to meet the diverse needs of our region.

What does evidence tell us about our region today?
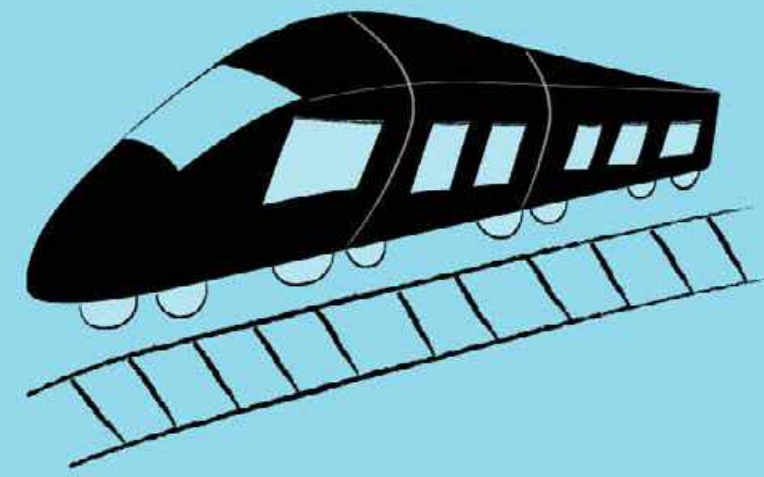
There is a high reliance on cars in rural areas compared to urban areas, with 28% of households in Ely owning three or more cars, compared to just 3% in Cambridge.[66]

The need for improved inter-regional transport links is highlighted by the 49 minute train journey between Peterborough and Cambridge, compared to just 23–30 minutes between York and Leeds. There are no direct local bus services connecting the region's two main cities. While there are some infrequent train services available, they are often slow and not conducive to efficient travel.[67]

How could we deliver this?

Inspiration— Developing solutions for rural public transport in Europe

TOD-IS-RUR (Transit-Oriented Development in European Rural-Urban Regions) is an EU-funded research network, focused on addressing the challenges of achieving transit-oriented sustainable development in a rural context. Focusing on improving mobility while considering social and environmental factors, the network is training researchers and professionals to develop context-specific solutions that promote sustainable and inclusive development. By creating efficient transportation systems and urban planning strategies, the initiative aims to bridge the gap between urban and rural communities across Europe.
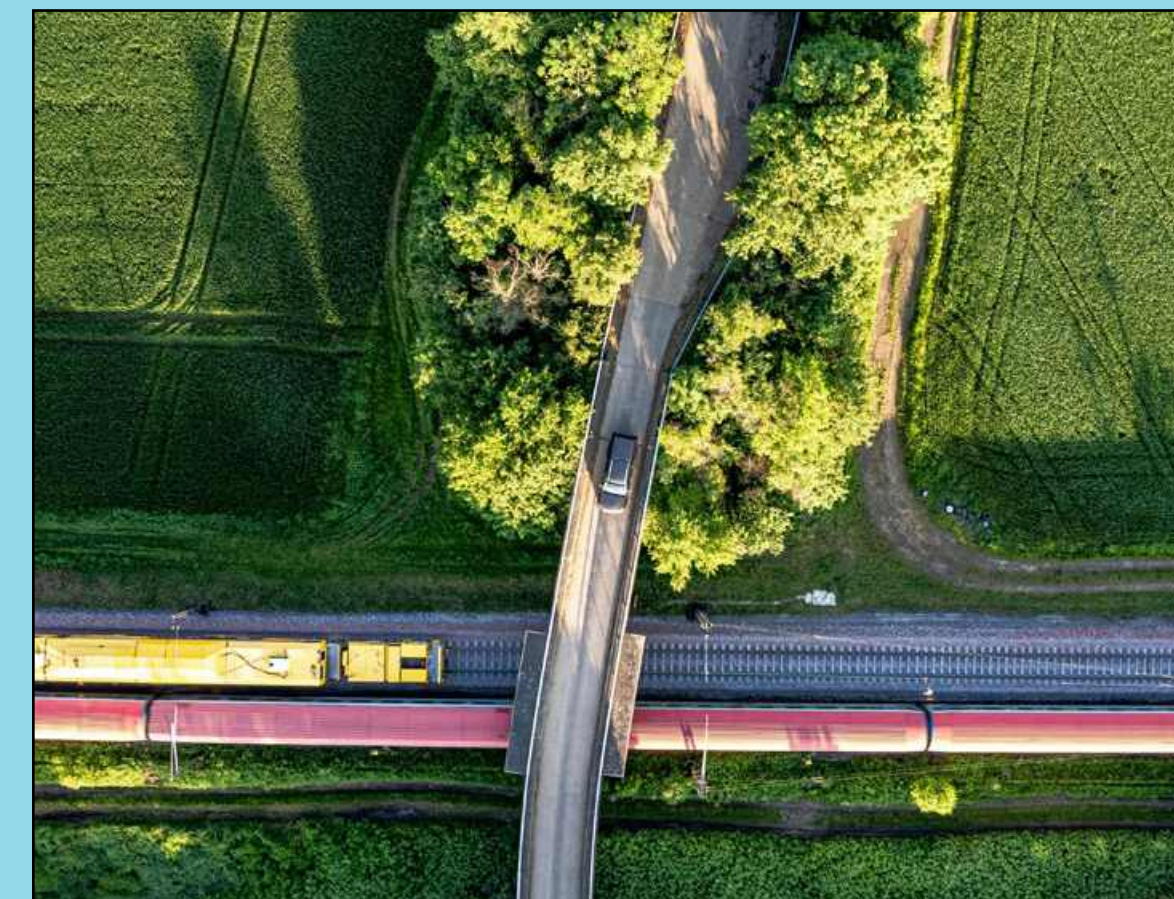

Photo credit: Bernd Dittrich via Unsplash

Forward momentum— Exploring next steps

01 How can we build on work of the Bus Reform Task Force to deliver further reform to bus services across the region—including strategic network improvements, demand-response transport schemes and route enhancements?

02 What steps should we take to research and assess the feasibility of on-demand rural transport technologies to enjoy more sustainable and reliable transport connectivity in our region?

03 Inspired by the success of the Chisholm Trail in Cambridge, how could we create a regional active travel network so that residents can walk, run and wheel everywhere safely?

04 What is the best way to implement a multi-modal transport approach across both urban and rural areas in our region?

Our commitment to achieve a *Connected* region is:

Connect communities.

We will:

Empower our rural and urban communities to connect through seamless digital networks and physical platforms, reducing isolation and fostering opportunities for communication, commerce, and employment, and helping our communities to stay connected.

What does evidence tell us about our region today?

Access to Gigabit availability in the region is good with 80% of premises in 2023 having full access compared to 77% across England.[68]

Gigabit availability has surged over the past four years, with access increasing by 260%. However, rural areas lag behind, with Huntingdonshire, East Cambs and South Cambs still below the national average and much lower than the 93% and 90% coverage in Cambridge and Peterborough.[69]

Rural communities face longer travel distances for employment, with only 44% of the working age population in Fenland and 47% in East Cambs able to work from home or within 5 km of home, compared to 79% in Cambridge.[70]

How could we deliver this?

Inspiration— Improving digital connectivity in rural Dorset

Wessex Internet is a Dorset-based company improving broadband connections in hard-to-reach areas across the South West. Focused exclusively on rural communities, Wessex Internet addresses the digital divide by identifying and connecting 'not-spots' that other providers have overlooked, and find solutions to install infrastructure there. Their cost-effective approach to installing fibre optic broadband in remote villages throughout Dorset, Hampshire, Wiltshire, and South Somerset has enabled more communities to access faster speeds. By enhancing connectivity, this has helped more residents in these communities access a range of opportunities online.

Photo credit: Compare Fibre via Unsplash

Forward momentum— Exploring next steps

01 How could we achieve universal, seamless full fibre and gigabit coverage to support communities and businesses?

02 Can we build on the work of the Connecting Cambridgeshire Smart Data Programme to integrate data, sensor technology, and digital connectivity into our villages, towns and cities, transforming the way people live, work, and travel across our region?

03 What if we developed a plan for digital reskilling and upskilling to enhance community engagement, build social capital, and increase digital opportunities for people in our region, especially for older people who find it harder to get online?

04 Could we establish a public-facing dashboard to track broadband deployment progress, identify coverage gaps, and prioritise future investment?

Our commitment to achieving an *Connected* region is:

Amplify all voices.

We will:

Create an inclusive platform for all residents to be heard. Fostering collaborative communities, and promoting democracy we will ensure diverse local voices shape our future and drive meaningful change.

What does evidence tell us about our region today?

The importance of the region's rural communities is reflected in the 34% of the population living in small settlements, each with populations of 10,000 or less.[71]

Peterborough's diverse population contributes to its rich culture and vibrant communities, with 70% of the Millfield population identifying as an ethnic minority.[72]

There is a strong sense of community in parts of the region, with 10% of businesses in Cambridge in the Voluntary and Community Sector, higher than England's average of 3.1%.[73]

How could we deliver this?

Inspiration— Citizen dialogue at a regional scale in Ontario, Canada

The state of Ontario, Canada has implemented several Citizen Assembly programmes at the state level to create an inclusive platform for shaping policy decisions at a regional level. The Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform used a civic lottery to select 103 members from over 7,000 volunteers across the state, representing a diverse demographic. Participants studied electoral systems, consulted the wider public, and deliberated on reforms, giving ordinary citizens a direct voice in reforming electoral system. Separately, the state has also introduced a Health Priorities Panel to understand public values, concerns, and recommendations for improving primary care.

Photo credit: Vilkasss via Pixabay

Forward momentum— Exploring next steps

01 What if Cambridgeshire and Peterborough had its own Regional Citizens' Assembly, inspired by experience of the Cambridge Citizens' Assembly and regional-scale citizen dialogue in Ontario?

02 Could we develop a regional-wide governance framework that requires strategic investment and projects to demonstrate how they respond inclusively to the needs of local people, as voiced by them?

03 Could we implement a participatory budgeting process, where local communities have direct input into how a portion of the regional budget is allocated to projects and services, and how could our voluntary sector support this?

04 How can we ensure that under-represented groups—such as young people, disabled people, and vulnerable communities—are heard through inclusive and equitable engagement?
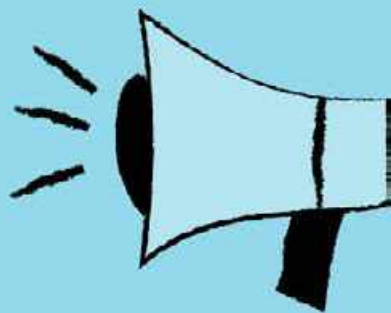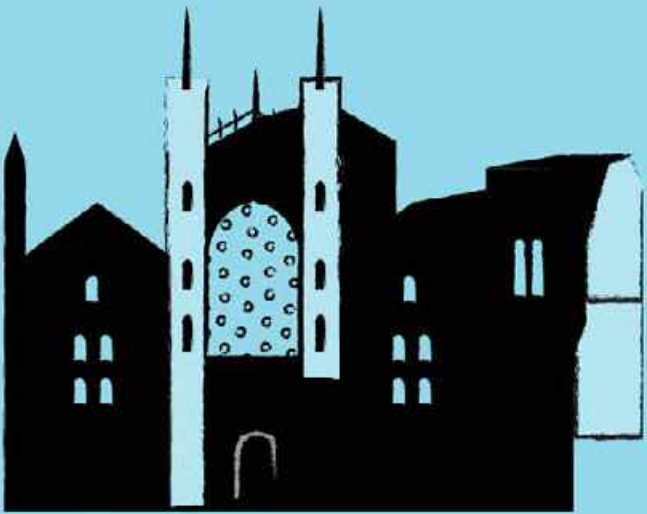
Our commitment to achieve a *Connected* region is:

Enhance our cultural experience.

We will:

Expand our unique visitor brand by showcasing the charm of our cathedral cities, market towns, waterways and expansive landscapes, joining up the compelling story of our rich diversity in our community arts and culture.

What does evidence tell us about our region today?

26 million tourists visit our region annually but only 4% of tourists stay overnight.[74]

Cambridge is a key destination receiving 24% of the annual tourist trips. Fenland accounted for 10% of trips.[75]

Tourism in the region is growing with a 23% increase in people employed in tourism related industries.[76]

How could we deliver this?

Inspiration— Developing a joined-up tourist offer in Belfast and Northern Ireland

Belfast has developed a comprehensive tourism strategy that leverages the city's rich history and cultural heritage, while promoting attractions in the wider region. The strategy positions Belfast as the gateway to the region, attracting international visitors through experiences, including its food and drink offering and the UNESCO City of Music bid. The city and wider region aims to increase visitor numbers, length of stay, and daily spend while showcasing the city's unique attributes and the region's famous landscapes to support development of a £2 billion tourism economy by 2030.

Photo credit: Zeynep Elif Ozdemir via Unsplash

Forward momentum— Exploring next steps

01 How can we create a place brand and strategy that celebrates our diverse visitor economy, highlighting our cities, market towns, landscapes, and cultural offering?

02 Could we achieve a two-fold increase in the size our region's tourism economy by 2050, attracting more visitors to stay for longer and boost the local economy?

03 Can we develop a targeted investment programme for cultural infrastructure, arts institutions, local outdoor attractions and public spaces to enhance our cultural offering for both visitors and local residents?

04 How can we further enhance our region's unique waterways and canal networks to create engaging outdoor experiences that attract both visitors and local residents?

Our Outcomes and Commitments for a *Resilient* region

In 2050, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will be a *Resilient* region...

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough stands as a resilient region at the forefront of the UK's climate response. Leveraging the expertise of our renowned research institutions and using our unique Fens landscape as a test bed for innovative methods, we will scale up solutions globally. By propelling the green agenda forward, our natural resources are secured, building resilience in our communities and ensuring adaptability into the future.

To achieve our outcome as an Resilient region, our commitments are:

◇ **Plan for advanced water management**

◇ **Let nature and biodiversity flourish**

◇ **Secure local energy**
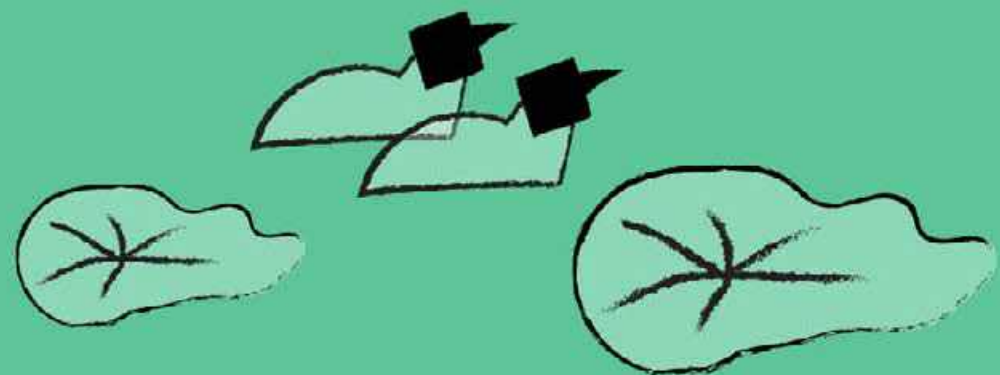
Our commitment to achieve a *Resilient* region is:

Plan for advanced water management.

We will:

Lead the way in developing innovative, long-term solutions for water management, addressing the comparative challenges of water scarcity and flooding to protect our communities and waterways, and to secure sustainable water resources for generations to come.

What does evidence tell us about our region today?
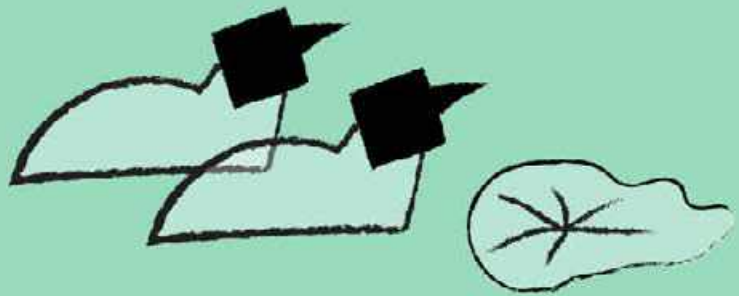
Much of Fenland is at risk of flooding with 83% of its land vulnerable, threatening homes, agriculture, and infrastructure. In Cambridge, 8% of land is at risk, with an average of 37% across the whole region.[77]

Grafham Water is England's third largest reservoir and a popular water recreation facility. It is also an important Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a valuable asset to the region.[78]

Pressure on water supply is a barrier to competitiveness and good growth in our region, along with other supporting infrastructure such as transport, affordable housing and digital connectivity.

How could we deliver this?

Inspiration— Using innovative technology to protect waterways in Yorkshire

The University of Sheffield, Yorkshire Water, and Siemens have developed a water management system that helps to mitigate the effect of both water scarcity and flooding in Yorkshire. Sensors connected to the Internet of Things track water levels, temperature, and quality in the county's chalk streams. Meanwhile, artificial intelligence systems are used to predict blockages in sewer outflows with 88% accuracy, allowing for early maintenance and reducing the risk of sewage overflow during heavy rain and flood events. The system predicts streamflow changes to manage water resources more effectively in times of drought, providing real-time data to support the health of river ecosystems in the area.

Protecting Yorkshire rivers including the River Ouse. Photo credit: Sarah Embee, via Unsplash

Forward momentum— Exploring next steps

01 How can we build on existing water management programmes in our region, such as Environment Agency Fens 2100+ programme, to create a region-wide approach to flood resilience and flood prevention that has community and stakeholder buy-in?

02 Could our region become a global leader in sustainable water management, leveraging our world-class academic institutions, unique Fenland landscapes, and expert stakeholder organisations including the Internal Drainage Boards?

03 How can we combine excellent and exciting design with water management systems, including green infrastructure, the Fens Reservoir, water recycling systems and sustainable urban drainage to create multifunctional assets?

04 How can we tackle water supply issues in the short-term by delivering inspiring education on water conservation, promoting sustainable daily habits, and helping people to embed simple behavioural changes?

Our commitment to achieve a *Resilient* region is:

Let nature and biodiversity flourish.

We will:

Position ourselves as UK's leading example in protecting and nurturing our natural environment, leveraging our assets as Britain's breadbasket to champion regenerative farming and boost biodiversity for the benefit of enhanced nature and the health and wellbeing of our communities.

What does evidence tell us about our region today?
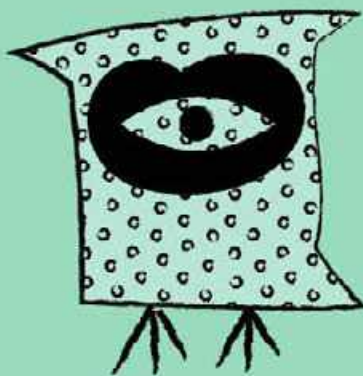
There are 553 designated Local Sites in the region, identified for their significant biodiversity and geological value, an increase from 517 sites in 2008/09.[79]

Only 8.5% of the region's land is classified as nature-rich despite 92% of the land being classified as 'non developed'. Agriculture makes up 79% and built-up areas account for 8%.[80]

There are 19,000 species of wildlife found across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, out of a total 70,000 species across the UK, which contribute to the region's biodiversity.[81]

How could we deliver this?

### *Inspiration—* Delivering nature-based agriculture solutions in Europe

The Natural Capital Financing Facility (NCFF), funded by the European Investment Bank and European Commission, supports projects that protect nature and boost biodiversity in agriculture. The facility offers financing, expertise, and technical assistance for initiatives such as pollinator conservation on farms in the Netherlands, and forestry integration in Spanish agriculture. Projects are funded based on their ability to deliver wide-ranging biodiversity benefits including genetic diversity (variety in crop genes and livestock breeds), species diversity and strengthening of local ecosystems. Projects may also improve economic resilience and access to nature.

Agroforesty project in rural Spain. Photo credit: Ardo Beltz, via Wikimedia Commons

Forward momentum— Exploring next steps

01 How could we expand on the efforts of Fenland SOIL, an existing not-for-profit organisation in The Fens, to develop comprehensive farm land use policies, promote biodiversity and enhance climate mitigation measures in our region?

02 What could we protect and enhance if we achieved UK National Park designation for The Fens? How could this help to protect this special natural environment?

03 Could we develop an Urban Greening Design guide for use in cities and towns across our region, to support ecosystem habitats and increase biodiversity in our urban areas? How can this support increased green space provision in new developments?

04 How could our landscapes, ranging from the Cambridge greenbelt to the Fens be made more accessible, so that it offers greater social benefits, including biodiversity and access to nature?
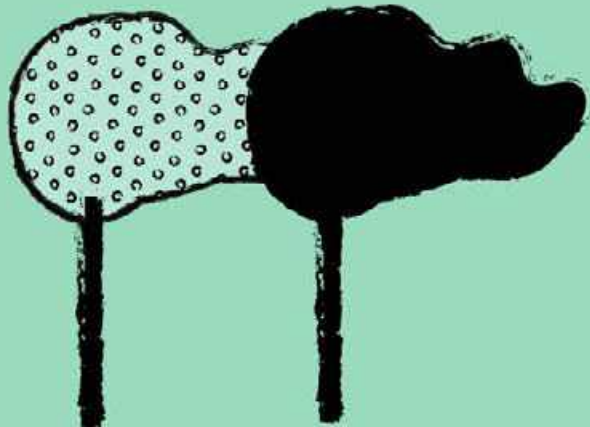
Our commitment to achieve a *Resilient* region is:

Secure local energy.

We will:

Accelerate toward a new era of energy security by embracing accessible and renewable local energy sources that will help to end fuel poverty, enhance food security and build resilient, self-sufficient communities, forging a sustainable future.

What does evidence tell us about our region today?
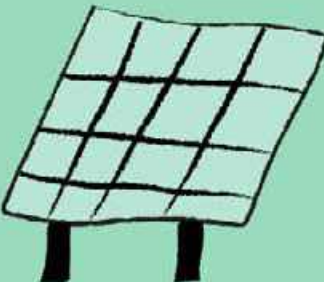
Fuel poverty affects 43,000 households in our region, with a relatively low average rate of 11.7% compared to 13.1% across England. However, in some central areas of Peterborough, it affects up to 40% of households, highlighting regional inequalities.[82]

Energy consumption across the region has increased by 2% since 2011, compared to 1% across England. In East Cambridgeshire, consumption rose by 9.75%.[83]

Our region is committed to green technologies with East Cambs, South Cambs and Fenland producing 75% of our solar energy generation, contributing to 2% of total generation across England.[84]

How could we deliver this:

Inspiration— Local Area Energy Plans

Local Area Energy Plans (LAEPs) are an important tool for turning national Net Zero targets into local and regional energy systems. LAEPs accelerate the transition to green energy through collaborative, data-driven planning involving local councils and stakeholders, presenting detail that is equivalent to an outline design or master plan. These outline plans can then be used to inform cost-effective strategies and timelines and additional design detail. LAEPs can help to mitigate fuel poverty by optimising energy use and costs, and ensure that there is locally available infrastructure to support transition to Net Zero. Peterborough City Council has already adopted a LAEP, and Cambridgeshire has developed an evidence base to support future delivery of a LAEP.

Photo credit: Kindel Media via Pexels

Forward momentum— Exploring next steps

01 Inspired by the Peterborough Local Area Energy Plan (developed by Energy Systems Catapult) and the existing evidence base for a Cambridgeshire Local Area Energy Plan, what steps can we take at a regional level to plan for sustainable energy systems on a strategic scale?

02 Could we increase our share of energy that comes from clean hydrogen, by investing in infrastructure, supporting research, training a skilled workforce and fostering partnerships to deliver this?

03 How could we end fuel poverty in our region to ensure that all residents have access to affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy, such as ensuring all new buildings have solar panels?

04 Could our region become a place capable of producing over 75% of its own food, ensuring greater self-sufficiency and food security?
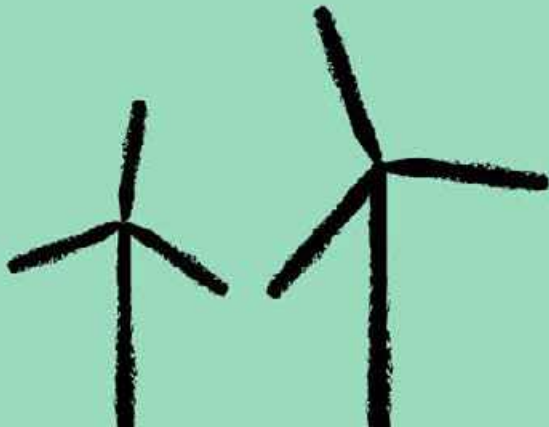
04
Next steps

With our Shared Ambition in place, it's time to focus on the next steps. This is our opportunity to build on the momentum we've created and continue working together with the same energy and collaboration that brought us here. By staying committed, we can turn our Ambition into meaningful action and lasting impact for the entire region. Now is the time to harness our collective strength and push forward, ensuring progress and success for our future.

Next Steps

Together we can, and will, unlock our Shared Ambition to advance our equitable, pioneering, connected, and resilient region.

Together Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will thrive.

Achieving our Shared Ambition

This Shared Ambition defines the future region we aspire to build.

We will achieve our collective aspiration by working with partners and stakeholders to ensure that the outcomes and commitments of this Shared Ambition are delivered by the right organisation(s) without duplication.

Only by working together, drawing on our collective strengths, skills and expertise can we overcome our joint challenges, and succeed in working towards our four outcomes.

Effective partnership working, which was crucial in developing this Shared Ambition, must be at the heart of how we move forward to deliver against it. Fundamentally, how we deliver must always reflect the three overarching Values set out in the Shared Ambition: embracing diversity, championing collaboration and igniting innovation. These values are key to bringing together the people, ideas and resources we need to unlock our Shared Ambition.

We will work together so that emerging strategies, plans and policies enable the brighter, more inclusive future for everyone in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough as envisioned by the Shared Ambition. As existing documents are reviewed and updated we will ensure they align with our Shared Ambition outcomes and commitments.

The Combined Authority will further encourage and enable this values-driven approach by convening an annual Shared Ambition Conference, with the first scheduled for late Autumn 2025. This conference will provide an opportunity not only to champion delivery against the outcomes and commitments, to celebrate our strengths, spotlighting the work of a wide range of organisations, but also to reflect on changes throughout the year to ensure the Shared Ambition remains relevant.

Collective progress against the outcomes and commitments will be reported on a regular basis through the Combined Authority's quarterly performance reporting.

An agreed set of key performance indicators will demonstrate our progress, helping to ensure we stay focused and united in our approach to both how we deliver and what we deliver.

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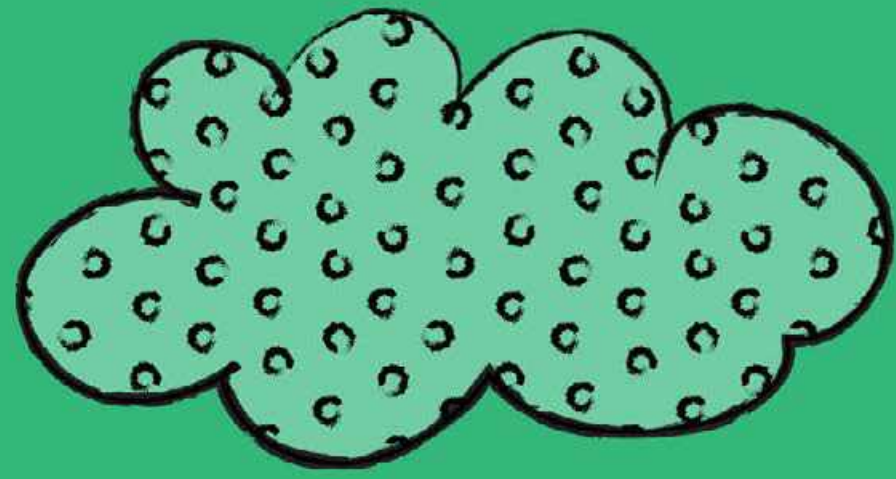81 National Biodiversity Network, 2024. NBN Atlas. [Online] Available at: https://spatial.nbnatlas.org/#

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