

OAKINGTON & WESTWICK PARISH COUNCIL

Response to the Cambridge 25 Additional Consultation Proposals for the Wider Site Masterplan

The recent “Additional Consultation” issued by the Cambridge 25 Project Team describes a development that appears, at first glance, highly attractive:

“Delivering sustainable and high-quality employment premises... structural landscaping and tree planting... community ‘hub’ facilities... public WC facilities in the nature park... extensive walking and cycling connections...”

It reads almost as an idyllic vision of green employment space integrated harmoniously into the local community.

However, behind this carefully curated presentation lies a development of a fundamentally different scale and character — one that poses serious and lasting risks to the communities of Oakington, Bar Hill, Dry Drayton, Longstanton and Northstowe, and to the wider Greater Cambridge region.

1. The True Nature and Scale of the Development

Cambridge 25 was originally described as approximately **123,000 square metres** of employment floor space — framed as:

- “a major new employment site”
- “employment floor space”
- “a high-quality employment park”

Such language naturally suggests an extension of business park office space — perhaps comparable in character to Oakington Business Park.

However, within a matter of months, the proposal has expanded dramatically to approximately 240,000 square metres — nearly doubling in scale. More significantly, its core purpose has become clearer.

The development is, in substance, not primarily an “employment park” but:

- A large-scale road freight terminal
- A warehousing and distribution centre
- A logistics hub of regional or national scale

Potential occupiers would logically include major distribution operators such as Royal Mail, Tesco, Amazon, IKEA and similar corporations.

This purpose is implicitly acknowledged in the consultation materials, where it refers to:

“providing large HGV yards with significant HGV parking bays... and space for drivers to park up/rest in addition to spaces for vehicles delivering/collecting.”

This is not ancillary infrastructure. It is central to the scheme.

The Parish Council considers it deeply concerning that the true logistical function of the site is not stated plainly and prominently. The language used throughout the consultation document risks obscuring the primary operational reality of the development.

2. Our Position: We Support Sustainable Growth — But Not in This Location

Oakington & Westwick Parish Council supports the principle that:

“The success of the Cambridge economy... means more demand from companies for additional logistics and business space.”

We do not oppose economic growth.

We do not oppose logistics infrastructure.

We do not deny the need for distribution capacity within Greater Cambridge.

Our objection is specific and principled:

The chosen location is fundamentally unsuitable.

It fails on two essential grounds:

1. Inadequate strategic highway access for the volume of HGV traffic proposed
2. Failure to meet the sustainability imperatives required by national policy

3. Major Concern 1: HGV Access to Strategic Road Infrastructure

The consultation states:

“The site’s location is key to its connectivity – close to Cambridge, directly off the A14 and A1307...”

This assertion is misleading.

a) Access to the A14

Access is not “directly off the A14.”

The site connects via two traffic-light-controlled junctions on the A1307 local service road — infrastructure designed for local passenger traffic, not sustained high-frequency HGV flows.

Both junctions would require significant redesign to accommodate the projected freight volumes. While there is a brief acknowledgement of access challenges within the consultation material, there is no clear commitment that these substantial infrastructure upgrades form part of the development proposal.

Without comprehensive redesign, congestion, safety risks and environmental degradation are inevitable.

b) Access to the A428 and the Oxford–Cambridge Growth Corridor

The Oxford–Cambridge Growth Corridor (often referred to as the OxCam Arc) represents a nationally significant economic strategy, supported by:

- Investment in East-West Rail
- Improvements to the A428
- Government ambition to create “Europe’s Silicon Valley”

Yet there are no known plans to redesign the A14 Girton Interchange in a way that would safely accommodate large-scale HGV movements between Cambridge 25 and the A428 westbound corridor. Current routes via Dry Drayton and Maddingly are entirely unsuitable for sustained HGV freight traffic.

In effect, the site is not properly integrated into the strategic freight network.

c) Impact of Local Traffic

Besides the problems raised above, the proposed warehouse development would lead to an inevitable increase in traffic on the roads running through Oakington and Dry Drayton, as vehicles used by employees, visitors and delivery lorries traverse these roads to access the site. In particular there would be a very significant increase in the use of Dry Drayton Road, an unclassified road with a poor surface which is already under strain and dangerous.

Further, there are no provisions included for public transport or non-vehicle access to the site, despite references to transport interchange.

4. Major Concern 2: Sustainability and National Policy

The consultation references the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which supports sustainable economic growth.

However, the proposal fails to align with the UK’s legally binding commitments to:

- Achieve a **68% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 (relative to 1990 levels)**

- Reach **net zero by 2050**

The attached comparison data (Attachments 1 and 2) demonstrate clearly that:

- Rail freight produces approximately 75–80% lower CO₂ emissions per tonne-kilometre compared to road haulage.
- Rail freight reduces congestion, particulate pollution, accident exposure, and long-term infrastructure costs.
- Road-based logistics hubs externalise substantial environmental and public health costs onto local communities.

Given these well-established advantages, it is strategically and environmentally indefensible to locate a major distribution hub solely dependent on road freight when a **multi-modal road–rail freight solution** would deliver overwhelming ecological, fiscal and social benefits.

The omission of a rail-connected alternative represents a critical flaw in the conception of this project.

Oakington and Westwick is already subject to high noise levels by the failure of Highways England to ensure the survival of trees planted alongside the road to ensure some sound screening. The huge increase in lorries arriving at all times of day and night. (we note that no time restrictions are included in the use of the warehouses), entering and leaving the site, and having engines idling whilst loading and unloading will hugely increase the burden of noise faced by villagers. The developers have made no statements about noise reduction.

Impact on semi-rural nature of the area

Oakington and Westwick have managed to retain a semi-rural aspect, positively welcoming Northstowe whilst seeking to retain green boundaries. This massive warehousing site will destroy this balance between development and countryside . The unsightly blocks of warehouses will be over 21 metres high, possibly 25 metres, and therefore will dominate the area, ruining any sense of countryside. The small piece of “parkland “ envisaged will simply provide a rest area for lorry drivers and employees of the warehouse site. There will be no benefit to the villages of Oakington and Westwick

Further, the current footpaths and bridle ways will be loomed over by the warehouses, such that they will not provide the recreational benefits intended.

Finally, the number and scale of the warehouses are unjustifiable as part of a Local Plan They are clearly of a scale for national/ international trade and, as such need to be subject to the appropriate planning policies.

5. Long-Term Consequences

The proposed development would:

- Increase HGV traffic across surrounding villages
- Exacerbate congestion on already pressured junctions
- Increase noise and air pollution exposure
- Undermine climate objectives
- Lock the region into higher-emission freight patterns for decades

This is not merely a local planning issue.

It is a long-term structural decision with ecological consequences extending far beyond Oakington and neighbouring communities — affecting Greater Cambridge, national carbon targets, and global climate responsibilities.

6. Conclusion

Oakington & Westwick Parish Council urges that:

- The true logistical nature of the scheme be transparently acknowledged.
- Strategic highway suitability be independently and comprehensively assessed.
- A rail-integrated, multi-modal logistics alternative be seriously evaluated.
- The development be relocated to a site capable of delivering genuinely sustainable freight infrastructure.

Cambridge 25, in its current form and location, is not aligned with sustainable planning principles and should not proceed as proposed.

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Oakington & Westwick Parish Council

Cambridge 25 Updated Masterplan Consultation Response (Addendum) – Betterment / Planning Gain

Residents of Oakington and Westwick recognise that development proposals north of Cambridge must deliver clear and measurable public benefits if they are to offset the significant impacts on local communities and the rural environment. The proposed large-scale warehouse and logistics development on greenfield land will fundamentally alter the character of the surrounding countryside and introduce substantial increases in traffic, noise and industrial activity.

Under the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), developments should mitigate adverse impacts, enhance the natural environment and promote sustainable transport. In line with these principles, and with guidance applied by the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service, the following measures should be secured through planning conditions and legally binding agreements.

Landscape buffers and noise mitigation

The site is expected to operate on a 24-hour basis with frequent HGV movements. To mitigate noise and visual impacts on nearby communities, substantial woodland planting and landscaped earth bunds should be provided along site boundaries, particularly those facing Oakington and Westwick. These buffers should consist of multi-layered planting using mature or semi-mature trees to provide effective acoustic and visual screening, while also contributing to biodiversity enhancement in accordance with national policy.

Protection and enhancement of rural footpaths

Existing rural footpaths around the site are valued for recreation and access to the countryside. The development risks significantly degrading these routes. As compensation, a network of high-quality replacement and enhanced footpaths should be created, including circular walking routes and improved connections to the wider countryside. These routes should be secured as permanent public rights of way rather than temporary permissive paths.

Improvements to Dry Drayton Road

Dry Drayton Road is currently an unclassified rural road and is not designed to accommodate substantial increases in traffic associated with a major logistics development. Prior to any approval, a full structural and capacity assessment should be undertaken. Significant upgrades funded by the developer must be secured to ensure the road can safely accommodate additional traffic without compromising safety or residential amenity.

Cycle and pedestrian connectivity

In line with national and local policy promoting sustainable transport, the development should provide safe, segregated cycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Dedicated routes should run parallel to Dry Drayton Road but be physically separated from vehicle traffic.

These routes should connect the site to surrounding villages and link with existing cycling infrastructure on the A1307.

Country park governance and access

The proposal refers to a new country park but provides insufficient detail regarding ownership, management and long-term maintenance. Prior to approval, the developer should provide a legally binding management plan clarifying land ownership, governance arrangements, guaranteed public access and secure long-term funding for maintenance.

Flood mitigation and traffic modelling

Adequate on-site attenuation of flows from the development (south east of the bridleway) is essential in order to reduce flood risk. This will apply to any development but we are requesting betterment by the addition of attenuation ponds into which storm flows in the brook from Bar Hill can be diverted, stored and released when the brook levels reduce.

This was agreed as a reasonable addition and would be supported by planners if the developers came forward with such a proposal. The development area now includes the fields adjacent to the A1307 and Dry Drayton Road, next to the Nature Park, and some of this lower land next to the Brook could be utilised for this purpose.

Given the scale of development on greenfield land, detailed modelling of flood risk and drainage is required, including clear proposals for Sustainable Drainage Systems. In addition, comprehensive traffic modelling should be undertaken to assess cumulative impacts, particularly in relation to growth in Northstowe and resulting pressures on Dry Drayton Road and surrounding rural roads.

These measures are essential to ensure that the development delivers genuine community benefit and complies with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework while protecting the character and amenity of surrounding villages.