

D2 THE DISTRICT CENTRE

OBJECTIVES

- D2/a To provide a vibrant District Centre which is located at the heart of Cambridge East where it will be as accessible to all of the urban quarter's population as is possible by walking, cycling and public transport;**
- D2/b To maximise accessibility and usability within the District Centre;**
- D2/c To provide a District Centre with shops, services, cultural, leisure and community facilities to serve the needs of Cambridge East and the immediately surrounding area which will complement and not undermine the vitality and viability of, or compete with, Cambridge City centre;**
- D2/d To provide a District Centre with a range of comparison and convenience shops and other units and spaces which will create an attractive urban environment at the heart of Cambridge East;**
- D2/e To ensure that no single store sells such a range of comparison and convenience goods that it would threaten the development of the remainder of the District Centre;**
- D2/f To create a high quality and varied built and open space environment where people will wish to shop and access services and facilities, both day and evening;**
- D2/g To support the success of the District Centre by locating uses which will generate additional custom and activity in and around the centre which will provide the opportunity to combine trips;**
- D2/h To provide car parking of a scale appropriate to a District Centre with a limited catchment area;**
- D2/i To secure the start of the development of the District Centre as early as possible to help create an identity for Cambridge East at the earliest opportunity.**

POLICY CE/8 The District Centre

District Centre Location

- 1. The detailed location of the District Centre at Cambridge East will be determined as part of Strategic and Local Masterplans to be approved by the local planning authorities and will be:
 - (i) Close to the geographical centre of the urban quarter where it will be most accessible to the population of Cambridge East as a whole;**
 - (ii) To the south of Newmarket Road and north of the Green Corridor; and**
 - (iii) On a dedicated local busway route through the urban quarter in order to maximise accessibility to all of its residents.****

District Centre Form and Uses

- 2. The District Centre will make provision for such a range of shops, services, cultural, leisure and community facilities that will serve the needs of Cambridge East and the immediately surrounding area without undermining the vitality and viability of, or competing with, Cambridge City centre.**
- 3. The District Centre will be a mixed use area, and include a variety of uses vertically within buildings, such as high density housing over other uses.**
- ~~**4. The District Centre will be developed in the form of a linear high street.**~~
- 4. The District Centre will be designed and laid out to provide squares and other meeting places to which the public has unconstrained access and which will provide opportunities for Cambridge East's residents to socialise as well as to shop.**
- 5. Parking provision for cars and cycles will be included in the form of public car and cycle parks for the District Centre of a size consistent with its role to serve the urban quarter and the immediately surrounding area.**

Vitality and viability

- 6. A District Centre Strategy for Cambridge East must be submitted and approved prior to the granting of planning permission for the Airport area. It will be implemented as part of the planning**

obligations for the development of the new urban quarter. The District Centre Strategy will provide detailed guidance on the overall size, mix of uses, urban design and measures required to provide early support for the development of the District Centre. The Strategy will include tying the development of key retail, services and other facilities in the District Centre to stages in the development of housing at Cambridge East.

- 7. Development of the District Centre will begin no later than 3 years after the commencement of development on the Airport area.**

Location

- D2.1 The focus of Cambridge East will be a District Centre located broadly in the geographical centre of the site to ensure that its shops, services and facilities are as accessible as possible to the maximum number of its residents. Developed as a compact urban quarter, most parts of Cambridge East will be relatively close to the District Centre which will help to ensure its success and allow a sustainable urban quarter to be developed with the car as the least preferred transport mode; its design should instead maximise access by foot, cycle and public transport.
- D2.2 Placing the District Centre on a dedicated local busway through Cambridge East will increase accessibility to those parts of the urban quarter furthest from it. The District Centre will also provide shops and facilities not found in parts of the adjacent urban area and the nearby villages and therefore access by road to car parking close to the District Centre will also be needed, and by footpaths and cycleways linking across the Green Corridor and areas of Green Separation.

District Centre Form and Uses

- D2.3 Creating an attractive and successful District Centre for Cambridge East will be challenging. Such centres tend to grow up over a long period of time and their variety and number of shops and commercial premises owes much to the age of both the businesses and the buildings in which they are located. Without intervention, the commercial sector is likely to provide a few large retail units which might be highly efficient for shopping but would create a very poor District Centre environment.
- D2.4 The District Centre will be the main defining feature of Cambridge East by which it will be judged by its residents and visitors. It will be crucial to create a centre where people want to be even when the shops are shut because it has a high quality environment and provides a range of opportunities to socialise into the evening. It is also important that it offers locations and facilities to hold community events. The mix of uses will be crucial to this as will be creating a centre where people live and will help support many of its

facilities. Creating attractive landmark buildings and spaces will also be vital in order that the Cambridge East District Centre will be a place worthy of its residents and of Cambridge. It is also important that the level and range of facilities is such that they complement the City Centre rather than compete with it.

- D2.5 The District Centre will provide for the needs of the urban quarter, but also provides an opportunity for other uses which serve a wider area and would normally locate in the City Centre, but for which there are no suitable sites available. The District Centre will be the next most sustainable location in Cambridge and under the sequential approach in PPG6, would be an appropriate location for higher order uses under such circumstances. District Centre uses could include shops, including a food supermarket, restaurants, public houses/bars, commercial services (such as banks, building societies, post office) commercial leisure uses such as a cinema, library and learning centre, health facilities, cultural facilities, places of worship and public services including a one-stop shop for information and civic buildings (see also chapter on Community Facilities, Leisure, Art and Culture including Community Development). The District Centre will also be a place where a mix of uses will be appropriate, including employment uses (see also Employment chapter) and mixed use buildings which offer the opportunity for high density housing over shops and services.
- D2.6 Assessments will be required to establish how much shopping floorspace should be located in the District Centre and the types and mix of uses which will help to secure a successful and vibrant centre. This study will lead to the production of a District Centre Strategy which will be implemented as part of the planning obligations for the development of the new urban quarter and help in determining planning applications to ensure the staged development of the District Centre as a whole, and in particular an early start to the District Centre once the airport site comes forward for development, in order to provide a heart to Cambridge East at the earliest opportunity. The development of the District Centre is therefore required to start no later than 3 years after the Airport site comes forward for development. This will not only give the urban quarter an identity but also ensure that the rapid build up of population has available to it the services and facilities that its residents would expect to find in a growing area.
- D2.7 The form of the District Centre will be crucial to its success in terms of achieving a place that is attractive and convenient as a destination for shopping and leisure. This will take the form of a high street and will include one or more urban squares. In order to best serve residents in the areas north of Newmarket Road and south of the Green Corridor as well as in the heart of the development, a linear 'High Street' form of development is appropriate to maximise accessibility. This could include a more concentrated centre that clusters around stops on the dedicated public transport route. It will have a larger urban square as a key focal point for entertainment and gathering. The District Centre should include water at its

heart which is a typical feature of Cambridge and a very popular focus for activity.

- D2.8 Providing appropriate car and cycle parking will be required to serve the District Centre. In a high density urban quarter there is a particular opportunity for an innovative approach to high quality, secure cycle parking to encourage a high level of cycle use and help achieve the modal split sought for Cambridge East (see Transport Chapter).

Vitality and Viability

- D2.9 In order to ensure its vitality and viability, the District Centre is likely to need support to ensure that sufficient custom is offered to retailers and service providers, particularly during the early years of development. In addition to the resident population of Cambridge East as a whole, this can be assisted by:

- (i) The District Centre also being home to many of the urban quarter's residents – for example living above its shops, services and facilities;
- (ii) Mixing retailing with services and facilities such that undertaking one trip provides the opportunity to combine the journey with another purpose;
- (iii) Locating uses in the District Centre which can generate business activity in addition to the people normally living in Cambridge East, most importantly locating business activity within and adjacent to the centre will generate a significant amount of extra business during the working day.

- D2.10 It is expected that residents of adjoining parts of Cambridge and also Fen Ditton and Teversham will find the District Centre in Cambridge East particularly attractive for its shops and services. In addition to the opportunity to visit the District Centre by car, the cycle and footpath network in Cambridge East will be extended to serve these two villages and provide links into Cambridge.

- D2.11 It will be important to ensure that Cambridge East's District Centre is not so large that it threatens the viability of other existing centres, including the City Centre, local centres in the City and village centres, although it is inevitable that some changes elsewhere will occur. It is important that any such consequences are identified in advance and that change is managed and, wherever possible, mitigated in a way that is compatible with achieving the aims of the District Centre. The study referred to above will also address these issues.