

Economic context and forecasting

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Chapter 9. Economic context and forecasting

This chapter deals primarily with the labour market and likely growth in labour demand and supply. Chapter 10 looks separately at the population and household context.

9.1 The Policy Background

The key policy documents which currently guide the likely future rate of economic, housing and population growth in the Cambridge housing sub-region are the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Structure Plan, approved in 2003, the Suffolk Structure Plan, approved in 2001, the Regional Economic Strategy (RES), RPG6 (regional planning guidance for East Anglia) and the more recent draft East of England Plan, (published 2005). At the time of writing the final approved plan has yet to be confirmed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, although her proposed modifications were published for consultation in late 2006. This is unlikely to be finalised before Spring 2008 (see chapter 21, *Planning for housing delivery*).

The Cambridge sub-region is recognised in all these plans as a key growth area due to the importance of its world-class hi-technology industries. Significant employment growth has occurred in the 1990s, based on education, research & development, technical consultancy, computing and related telecommunications as well as highly specialised manufacturing in fields such as aerospace and electronic engineering. Although manufacturing employment has generally declined, the sub-region continues to support specialist sectors, such as biotechnology, printing equipment, new technologies and prototype development. Business services have also grown rapidly and so have associated local services.

The policies in all recent economic and spatial strategies and plans continue to support this selective employment growth. District Councils have incorporated appropriate policies in their local plans and in their work on the successor Local Development Frameworks. A key aim is to reduce the need for commuting and broadly align people and jobs locally. A number of economic consultancies have produced 'trend' or 'business as usual' employment projections which assume that a land-use planning environment which is supportive of high technology employment and associated population increase will continue for the foreseeable future. A range of forecasts was also commissioned in 2003 and 2004 from Experian BSL to explore the likely outcome of policies which work to increase the region's productivity. The policies are geared to moving the region's economic performance into a top rank in Europe by 2021 – termed 'enhanced growth' (EG21).

The publication of the Government's policy towards Sustainable Communities in 2004 further reinforced the policy supporting growth in the area. The London Stansted Cambridge Peterborough corridor was identified as one of four national growth areas, (along with Ashford, Thames Gateway and the Greater Milton Keynes conurbation). The emphasis of the policies is for growth of employment and population together. Thus it is important to assess the extent to which anticipated employment and population/household growth occurs in tandem.

As at 2001 the Population Census indicates a broad balance of employed residents and workforce in the seven district areas comprising the sub-region. Table 1 shows the breakdown for the Cambridge sub-region and Table 2 shows the districts individually:

Table 1: Employed Residents and Workplace Population, Cambridge sub-region, aged 16-74

	Number
Residents	354,155
Workforce	350,979
Net commuting	- 3,176

Source: Census 2001

Table 2: Employed Residents and Workplace Population, Cambridgeshire Districts, aged 16-74

Districts	Residents	Workforce	Net commuting
Cambridge City	49,236	78,694	29,458
East Cambridgeshire	37,208	24,903	- 12,305
Fenland	37,757	31,803	- 5,954
Huntingdonshire	82,318	69,000	- 13,318
South Cambridgeshire	69,160	64,097	- 5,063
Forest Heath	28,297	32,165	3,868
St Edmundsbury	50,179	50,317	138
Cambridge sub-region	354,155	350,979	- 3,176

Source: Census 2001

Table 2 shows that although net out-commuting from the housing sub-region as a whole is a very modest 3,200, there are significant imbalances between numbers of employed residents and workforce populations at the level of individual districts. It is a major policy aim of the Structure Plan to reduce the imbalance relating to Cambridge/South Cambridgeshire and the rest of the sub-region. The policies follow a 'sequential approach' to development in the Cambridge planning sub-region. They provide for substantially higher house-building rates and hence household/population growth adjacent to the City's built-up area, as well as in a new settlement of Northstowe to the north-west of Cambridge but linked by high-speed public transport. This should help reduce longer-distance commuting within the sub-region. Market towns are also identified for further growth.

Table 3 shows the employed resident/workplace population matrix at a district level in 1991. As compared with 1991 (when the Census used a sample for calculating workplace employment), net out commuting has fallen by just over 5,000, from 8,200 to 3,100. This suggests that job growth in the 10 year period 1991 to 2001 has outstripped population growth. Taking account of changes in methodology, in particular the move to a 'one number' Census in 2001, it is calculated that the sub-region has experienced an increase of around 37,000 employed residents and an extra 42,000 workplace population.

Table 3: Employed Residents & Workplace Population, 1991, Cambridge housing sub-region, aged 16-79, 10% sample grossed up

Districts	Residents	Workforce	Net commuting
Cambridge City	41,860	70,140	28,280
East Cambridgeshire	28,720	20,060	- 8,660
Fenland	32,670	28,000	- 4,670
Huntingdonshire	71,900	58,170	- 13,730

Districts	Residents	Workforce	Net commuting
South Cambridgeshire	60,630	46,970	- 13,660
Forest Heath	25,850	28,770	2,920
St Edmundsbury	44,420	45,720	1,300
Cambridge sub-region	306,050	297,830	- 8,220

Source: Census 1991

9.2 Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Structure Plan 2001 to 2016

For the five Cambridgeshire districts, many of the policies adopted in the Structure Plan have been 'saved' and included in the East of England Plan for the period 2001 to 2021. These relate to the general pattern and location of new development as well as expected rates of new house building. The Structure Plan incorporated a detailed analysis of the labour market, including forecasts of employment. At a county level the forecasts of employment, (labour demand) and the resident economically active workforce, labour supply, were generally in balance. It was therefore judged to be robust in terms of economic policy. In addition, the issue of sustainable development was at the heart of the Structure Plan's approved development pattern. In order to reduce the pressures for in-commuting into the immediate Cambridge area (Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire) the Plan sought to increase house-building on the edge of the city and in a sustainable new community at Northstowe, linked to Cambridge by a dedicated public transport route, the 'Guided Bus'.

The Structure Plan covered the period 1999 to 2016 and included labour demand and labour supply forecasts for the period 2001 to 2016. For the five districts which comprise Cambridgeshire the anticipated increase in employment was from 282,200 in 2001 to 333,300 in 2016 – an increase of 51,100 jobs. Assuming that job growth over the period 2011 to 2016 would be continued through to 2021 gives a 20 year job increase of around 68,000 to 350,200. The corresponding increase in labour supply, assuming that changes in economic activity rates followed nationally projected trends, was from 305,500 in 2001 to 349,050 in 2016, an increase of 43,550. Extrapolating this growth to cover a 20 year period results in a 2021 estimate of 359,250, an increase of almost 53,800 over 20 years.

Table 4: Labour supply and labour demand (jobs) forecast for Cambridgeshire 2001-2016, extrapolated to 2021

	Labour supply			Labour demand (jobs)			Supply	Jobs
	2001	2016	2021	2001	2016	2021	2001/21	2001/21
Cambridge City & South Cambridgeshire	133,950	168,800	180,100	155,500	191,950	204,250	46,150	48,750
East Cambridgeshire	37,550	41,700	43,150	22,800	25,350	26,150	5,600	3,350
Fenland	43,050	48,350	48,800	31,700	34,150	34,800	5,750	3,100
Huntingdonshire	90,900	90,200	87,200	72,200	81,900	85,050	-3,700	12,850
Cambridgeshire	305,450	349,050	359,250	282,200	333,350	350,250	53,800	68,050

Source: Cambridge Econometrics & Research Group CCC

Table 4 shows the detailed figures at a district level. Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire figures were aggregated due to problems in breaking down employment on sites on the City

boundary, such as the Science Park. It is important to be aware that an increase or decrease of just 1% in the overall economic 'participation' or employment rate of the county's population could raise or lower this by 5,000. It is important to bear in mind that these forecasts were produced before the 2001 Census results were published and, like most employment projections, were based on employment estimates derived from the Annual Business Inquiry, (Office for National Statistics, ONS). 'Jobs' do not equate with 'workplace population'. A steady increase in numbers of part-time jobs has occurred at the same time as increasing proportions of people holding more than one job. At the time the Structure Plan was produced it was estimated that 5% of workers held more than one job. If this share held true for the next 20 years, an increase of 68,000 jobs would equate to 64,000 working people.

However, as Cambridge Econometrics have calculated for their study into commuting between the East, South-east and London regions, the overall employment forecasts mask some very significant growth and decline at an industry sector level. Manufacturing and primary industry jobs – traditionally almost entirely full-time – have been replaced and will be further replaced by service sector occupations. Here there is much more part-time working. More recently, in 2005, Cambridgeshire Econometrics have forecast that jobs will increase in Cambridgeshire by 59,000 over the 20 year period 2001 to 2021 (trend), but this will only materialise as an increase of 44,000 in the workplace population. The important message from the forecasts produced for the Structure Plan is that a steady growth in jobs over the years to 2016 was envisaged, although the 2001 'base' has since been proved to be somewhat over-estimated.

9.3 The Draft East of England Plan & recent updates to forecasts

Table 5 summarises the employment forecasts for the Cambridgeshire and Suffolk Districts that are at the heart of the Regional Spatial Strategy, the draft East of England Plan. They were published by Experian BSL in 2003, using a 2002 employment base and were produced before the 2001 Census was published. They are termed 'enhanced growth' in that they aim to forecast the jobs that could be created if policies were adopted to increase productivity significantly in the region. The forecasts were produced for the Regional Economic Strategy, to exemplify likely job growth which would be achieved if the region became one of the top 20 regions of Europe by 2021. They assume that population growth continues as a trend.

Table 5: Experian BSL 'Enhanced Growth by 2021' EG21 Employment Forecasts, Cambridge sub-region, (2002 base)

Districts	2001	2021	2001/21
Cambridge City	95,580	127,360	31,780
East Cambridgeshire	22,500	27,370	4,870
Fenland	32,680	37,800	5,120
Huntingdonshire	72,790	87,100	14,310
South Cambridgeshire	63,660	81,270	17,610
Forest Heath	28,000	33,650	5,650
St Edmundsbury	53,600	60,710	7,110
Cambridge sub-region	368,810	455,260	86,450
<i>Cambridgeshire</i>	<i>287,210</i>	<i>360,900</i>	<i>73,690</i>

Source: Experian BSL 2003

The draft East of England Plan took this set of forecasts for all 48 districts in the region as the starting point for further work in developing Policy E2, which established sub-area job growth targets for the period 2001 to 2021. In some areas it was considered that further policy initiatives could be taken, over and above productivity improvements, to lead to significantly higher rates of employment growth, e.g. in Thames Gateway. However, in Cambridgeshire it was considered that the 'EG21' forecast was a fair representation of planned growth linked to Structure Plan policies in that it was selective. The target for Cambridgeshire as a whole was set at 75,500. It also appears that the E2 forecast for the 3 districts comprising the 'Rest of Suffolk' sub-area were considered appropriate for adoption as job targets in the draft East of England Plan, (17,100 EG21 forecast and 17,800 East of England draft Plan target for the 3 districts of Forest Heath, St Edmundsbury and Mid-Suffolk).

In summary, therefore, the draft East of England Plan included a jobs target of around 87,500 increase for the Cambridge housing sub-region over the period 2001 to 2021. Alongside this, the dwelling and related household and population forecasts produced by Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) were used as the basis for assessing the likely labour supply to be resident in each district. In the absence of any 'National Statistics' forecasts of economic activity rates, the rates adopted were based on regional forecasts produced in 2003 by Cambridge Econometrics. However, these rates were increased somewhat for age groups of 50 and above to reflect issues relating to pension provision amongst the over 50s. It was considered that rates would rise for women especially because of the increase in pensionable age from 60 to 65. Table 6 shows the labour supply forecasts which align with the submitted draft East of England Plan.

Table 6: Labour Supply for the Cambridge sub-region, submitted East of England Plan

Districts	2001	2021 RSS submitted	Change 2001/21
Cambridge City	52,500	72,900	20,400
East Cambridgeshire	38,470	46,630	8,160
Fenland	39,470	46,480	7,010
Huntingdonshire	84,750	86,540	1,790
South Cambridgeshire	71,190	100,250	29,060
Forest Heath	29,180	40,960	11,780
St Edmundsbury	51,730	56,200	4,470
Cambridge sub-region	367,290	449,960	82,670
<i>Cambridgeshire</i>	<i>286,380</i>	<i>352,800</i>	<i>66,420</i>

Source: ARU

As can be seen, at a sub-regional level there is a close alignment between the labour demand (jobs) and labour supply projections, (86,450 as compared with 82,670). The fact that the jobs figure exceeds the labour supply forecast is not an issue as some people will hold more than one job.

9.4 Forecasts produced since the submission of the draft East of England Plan

The draft East of England plan was subjected to public examination in the autumn of 2005 and the winter of 2006 and in the summer of 2006 the Panel Inspectors reported. They proposed changes to the employment targets in a number of areas as well as an increase in the dwellings proposed to be built. In response to the Panel, the Secretary of State made a

further set of proposed amendments to targets in December 2006, increasing both dwellings and employment over the period to 2021 in the region as a whole. For the Cambridge housing sub-region, however, despite a modest increase in targets for new house building, the job targets were left at around 87,000 over 20 years.

Since the RSS submission more information relating to in-migration and household composition has been published from the 2001 Census and fertility and mortality data has been updated. In consequence, national and regional population and household projections have been substantially revised by DCLG and ONS. Also during this period a set of national age and sex specific economic activity rate forecasts has been published by ONS. Both Experian BSL and Cambridge Econometrics have also published revised job forecasts for the region and all 48 districts. Experian BSL have produced two updated employment forecasts, one based on a 'business as usual' trend scenario and the other updating the 'enhanced growth by 2021' forecast. These forecasts were published in 2004, based on 2003 data. They were produced as part of the assessment of the impact of extending Stansted airport. The Cambridge Econometric forecasts were produced in 2005 as part of a three region study of commuting.

It is important to appreciate the implications of the updated forecasts. Looking first at labour demand, (jobs), the Experian BSL revisions have reduced the numbers of jobs forecast to be created between 2001 and 2021 in the Cambridge sub-region, see Table 7. Cambridge Econometrics have also reduced their 'trend' employment forecast as compared with the work produced for the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Structure Plan.

Table 7: Employment Forecasts (i) Experian BSL revised Enhanced Growth 21 (2003-based, published 2004) & (ii) Cambridge Econometrics trend published 2005

Districts	2001 EG21 (revised)	2021 EG21 (revised)	2001 CE trend	2021 CE trend	2001/21 EG21 (revised)	2001/21 CE trend
Cambridge City	91,180	114,330	98,440	113,950	23,150	15,510
East Cambridgeshire	24,730	30,110	23,210	27,620	5,380	4,410
Fenland	32,290	36,070	32,810	34,800	3,780	1,990
Huntingdonshire	73,180	88,990	76,110	90,050	15,810	13,940
South Cambridgeshire	66,010	81,830	66,340	88,030	15,820	21,690
Forest Heath	28,160	34,740	31,140	32,620	6,580	1,210
St Edmundsbury	55,310	62,200	57,250	60,040	6,890	2,790
Cambridge sub-region	370,860	448,270	385,570	447,110	77,410	61,540
<i>Cambridgeshire</i>	<i>287,390</i>	<i>351,330</i>	<i>296,910</i>	<i>354,450</i>	<i>63,940</i>	<i>57,540</i>

The forecasts of labour supply have also been lowered, as shown in Table 8. This results from both demographic and economic factors. As explained in Chapter 10, *Demographic context and forecasting*, life expectancy has increased – with the consequence of more elderly people and householders. Overall there are more single households – so reducing the numbers of economically active people per household. Finally, the ONS forecasts of economic activity rates do not assume such high rates of participation in the labour force of people close to 'pensionable' age as do the labour supply forecasts produced for the

submitted Regional Spatial Strategy. Table 8 compares labour supply forecasts using both sets of economic activity rates.

Table 8 shows that, as compared with the submitted RSS, the revisions to population and household formation assumptions alone have resulted in a reduction of the labour supply forecast 2001/21 from 82,670 (Table 6) to 70,080. This comparison assumes that the economic activity rates follow the 'mid' variant incorporated in the original RSS calculations. However, if lower economic activity rates are used, based on the published ONS series, the total increase in the labour supply falls further to just under 56,370. This is equivalent to an economic 'participation' rate almost 2 full percentage points lower than initially assumed.

Table 8: Forecasts of Labour Supply, based on submitted RSS dwellings and both ONS and 'mid' economic activity variants. Revised for household/population assumptions 2006

Districts	2001	2021 RSS dwells + ONS EA rates	2001/21 RSS dwells ONS EA rates	2021 RSS dwells + EA mid rates	2001/21 RSS dwells EA mid rates
Cambridge City	52,570	71,000	18,430	73,410	20,840
East Cambridgeshire	37,400	40,860	3,460	44,880	7,480
Fenland	39,700	47,290	7,590	46,410	6,710
Huntingdonshire	85,100	88,400	3,250	85,260	110 ¹
South Cambridgeshire	71,220	88,260	17,040	97,130	25,910
Forest Heath	29,180	34,740	5,560	35,760	6,580
St Edmundsbury	51,730	52,770	1,040	54,180	2,450
Cambridge sub-region	366,950	423,320	56,370	437,030	70,080

Table 8 assumes that the same number of dwellings will be built over the 2001 to 2021 period as the submitted RSS. Consequently any increase in building, as proposed by both the Panel and the Secretary of State, will increase the labour supply somewhat. An additional 4,300 dwellings in Cambridge City is forecast to result in an additional 2,800 residents in the labour force. It is also important to note that both the Panel and the Secretary of State, in response, have assumed that the job targets incorporated in the submitted RSS can be increased further, even though two recent forecasts produced by Experian/BSL and Cambridge Econometrics for Cambridgeshire districts have been lower. For the region as a whole the submitted RSS incorporated a target of 421,500 jobs. The Panel increased this to a target of 440,000 and the Secretary of State has increased this further to an 'indicative job growth target' of 452,000. This is justified by an anticipated increase in house building from the levels indicated in the submitted plan. For Cambridgeshire both the Panel and the Secretary of State are proposing a 75,000 jobs

¹ The final column in Table 8 (headed "2001/21 RSS dwells EA mid rates") is calculated by subtracting data in column 1, headed "2001" from data in column 4, headed "2021 RSS dwells + EA mid rates". Column 1 shows the labour force baseline at 2001 based on the RSS dwelling targets. It is used in calculating the final column because these are the figures in the submitted RSS. Column 4 shows labour force projections to 2021 based on the Chelmer projections from Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) and is used because it gives the most up to date set of figures for all districts in the Cambridge-sub region that are based on a local, integrated, model. This approach produces a projected increase in labour force in Huntingdon of 110. While this figure appears to be an anomaly, it is simply the product of subtracting the figures for labour force in columns 1 and 4. Other approaches have been explored using different household projections and economic activity rates, which show an increase in labour force in Huntingdon of the same magnitude – the low hundreds rather than the thousands.

target; for the 'rest of Suffolk', including Mid-Suffolk, a target of 18,000 jobs is proposed. Although this is little changed from the submitted RSS it is in the face of lower forecasts of job growth – but also lower expectations of the growth in labour supply.

9.5 Spring 2007 update

In the spring of 2007 Oxford Economics, together with ARUP Economic Consultants, were commissioned by the East of England Development Agency to produce a bespoke labour market forecasting model for the East of England. The model is required to produce employment and associated 'workplace population' forecasts for all 48 districts in the region, together with labour supply and associated population components. This model will incorporate the latest monitoring information available from the 'Annual Business Inquiry' survey of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) as well as output from the Labour Force Survey of households. It is to be hoped that this will provide a sound basis for testing the validity of the targets established in the East of England Plan and form the foundations for the RES and RSS review programmes.

9.6 Conclusions

Labour market forecasting involves the adoption of a wide number of assumptions, ranging from international and national economic prospects down to local company performance, commuting and the qualifications of the local labour force. In a relatively short period of time the assumptions underpinning labour demand and supply forecasts for the Cambridge sub-region have changed significantly. Generally speaking the recent forecasts of job growth have reduced, as have the forecasts of labour supply. What is important, however, is that there is still a relatively close alignment of 'jobs' and 'labour force'.

The targets which the districts in the Cambridge housing sub-region are currently working to are those proposed in the submitted draft East of England Plan. The draft Plan does not, however, provide district-level figures. The original 'EG21' employment forecasts are very close to the draft Plan targets and are included in the summary Table 9. The labour supply forecasts set alongside the employment figures incorporate up-to-date population and household forecasts but assume that the economic activity rates adopted in the draft RSS are still valid – i.e. assume that changes in pensionable age etc will lead to an increase in numbers of older people in the labour force.

Table 9 indicates the 2001 'baseline' situation with respect to where people live and work – i.e. it shows net commuting, comparing the balance between workplace population and employed residents. Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire are combined as this reflects the fact that much of the growth associated with the built-up area of Cambridge will in fact be accommodated in adjoining South Cambridgeshire. The planning policies adopted by the Structure Plan, by the draft East of England Plan and now being incorporated in District Councils' Local Development Frameworks (LDFs), are aimed at increased sustainability. A key issue is the aim of reducing the need to commute to work. As a consequence the significant increase in house-building in Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire is aimed at stemming the increase in long-distance commuting into Cambridge.

Table 9: Key Labour Market Factors

Districts	Net commuting balance 2001	EG21 jobs growth 2001/21	Labour supply, EA mid rates 2001/21
Cambridge City & South Cambridgeshire	24,395	49,390	46,750
East Cambridgeshire	- 12,305	4,870	7,480
Fenland	- 5,954	5,120	6,710
Huntingdonshire	- 13,318	14,310	110
Forest Heath	3,868	5,650	6,580
St Edmundsbury	138	7,110	2,450
Cambridge sub-region	- 3,176	86,450	70,080

Sources: Table 2, Table 5, Table 8

Table 9 shows an apparent excess of 'jobs' over labour in terms of forecast growth over the period 2001 to 2021. However, the profile of job growth by industry sector suggests that there will be many more part-time jobs in future and it is likely that the current 5% of the labour force holding two or more jobs will increase. In their work on regional commuting, Cambridge Econometrics estimated that in the case of Cambridgeshire, an increase of over 62,000 jobs would equate to a much lower 44,000 workforce in terms of people. The difficulties of breaking the 'jobs' figure down to workplace population is an issue which will be addressed in the new regional employment model being developed by Oxford Economics.

9.7 Issues

- There is considerable uncertainty about the robustness of employment and labour supply forecasts for districts in the East of England; a new model has been commissioned to address this and enable different growth scenarios to be explored
- Although not explored in this chapter, the main data sources for monitoring employment change and workforce population change are not sufficiently robust to enable year-on-year changes to be accurately measured at a district level; this issue is being taken up with the Office for National Statistics
- Although recent forecasts of both employment and labour supply have varied significantly for the districts comprising the Cambridge housing sub-region they have generally moved 'in tandem' – i.e. both have been reduced, so alignment in terms of the balance of employed residents and workplace jobs has been maintained
- Within the sub-region the labour market forecasts indicate that Huntingdonshire should experience reduced net out-commuting and Cambridge City/South Cambridgeshire should experience a reduction in net in-commuting. Appropriate policies are being adopted in District Councils' local economic strategies
- There is a significant challenge for both East Cambridgeshire and Fenland to attract employment over and above that indicated by 'trend' growth in order to reduce a further increase in net out-commuting
- Should there be a major slowdown in the national and regional economy, the Cambridge sub-region will not be immune, although it should withstand problems better than many other areas due to its industrial and business base. This will have important implications on the ability to attract in-migrants to the region to live and work; the knock-on impact will be on sales of new dwellings and hence the trajectories of development in major new settlements and expansion areas.