

The Infrastructure Gap: The future of sustainable energy in Greater Cambridge

Call for Evidence



Closes: 30th August 2024



Introduction

The climate crisis alongside growing demand for energy, particularly in our city region, mean that it is essential to plan for significant changes in the way we produce and distribute power to homes, companies and public buildings.

In this Call for Evidence, we are interested in gathering evidence and ideas about the best way to decarbonise energy production and distribution in the Greater Cambridge area. We are thinking in the medium term (2050+) and we are interested in aiming for the most ambitious vision possible, to unlock the region's full potential.

This work exists alongside efforts to decarbonise across the public and private sectors in the Cambridge region, including a number of strategies and plans being produced in local government, academia and by businesses. This is why this Call for Evidence looks to the most ambitious vision of the whole system we can consider, so that it works alongside the efforts of other organisations and brings in ideas that existing work may not capture.

Who is involved?

Cambridge Ahead (CA) is a business, research and academic membership organisation dedicated to the sustainable and inclusive growth of Cambridge and its region in the long-term. CA works with policymakers locally and nationally to support their statutory role in shaping the future of Cambridge, with over a decade of experience in research, analysis, and acting in partnership to make a positive difference towards long-term prosperity and quality of life. CA has [50 member organisations](#), who represent a workforce of over 40,000 in the Cambridge city region. In 2024-2025, CA is conducting a series of projects to generate ideas about tackling the region's 'infrastructure gap'.

The Global Sustainability Institute was established by Anglia Ruskin University in 2011. The institute has grown to become a high profile and dynamic research group of over 45 members, has led or partnered on many multi-million pound research projects funded by the UK and European Commission. A truly interdisciplinary institute, the GSI has built a global reputation for its research with major publications in theories of social practice, communication of climate science, energy policy, climate finance, the psychology of change, and interdisciplinary working. We have a core staff of researchers, visiting and honorary fellows, project management and knowledge transfer partners, and collaborate closely with colleagues across ARU.

How will responses be used?

In this Call for Evidence, we are seeking responses from the public and private sectors as well as individuals based in the Cambridge region. Anyone can respond and all responses will be considered as part of the analysis. To maintain the anonymity of respondents, individual responses will not be published. However, a list of organisations (such as local government bodies or private companies) who respond to the Call will be published as part of a final report which will summarise the themes and proposals suggested. This work is not directly related to any specific public policy decisions at the local or national level. However, the final report of this work will be used as part of ongoing work to engage with and shape local and national government policy, such as through consultation responses, public letters or in dialogue with policymakers.



Call for Evidence Questions

The questions below are intended to begin to gather evidence related to the long-term vision for sustainable energy for Greater Cambridge as described above. We are seeking a wider range of views, and anyone can respond.

It is not expected that you respond to every question. Please only answer those where you feel you have evidence that should be considered. Please provide supporting evidence for your answers. See 'How to respond' below for further details.

Growth, energy and sustainability

1. To what extent is sustainable energy a barrier to long-term sustainable growth in Greater Cambridge?
2. What would make Greater Cambridge a leading UK region for net zero energy infrastructure and globally demonstrate its innovative capabilities?

Funding energy infrastructure

3. Are there innovative approaches to funding net zero energy infrastructure (such as community energy) which could be applied in Greater Cambridge?

Energy and inequality

4. How could future energy needs be met in an equitable and inclusive way?
5. Could energy infrastructure help facilitate a reduction in inequality across Greater Cambridge?

Contact details

6. We may choose to contact you about your response or to invite you to workshops to discuss the themes emerging from this work. Please share your email if you would like to be contacted about these workshops.

By providing your email, you consent to Cambridge Ahead and the Global Sustainability Institute contacting you regarding this call for evidence.

How to respond

Responses should be sent to info@cambridgeahead.co.uk by 30th August 2024.

Please provide sources and references, case studies, data and evidence to support your responses where possible. We ask that you make your response as concise as possible and aim to provide no longer than 500-word answers to each question.



About the Infrastructure Gap programme

Over the past few decades, the Cambridge city region has experienced significant economic and population growth. This growth has made it a world-leading region for science, innovation and technology. But it has also presented challenges to quality of life for people living and working in the region, put strain on existing infrastructure and highlighted inequalities between and within communities.

The Infrastructure Gap programme highlights the Cambridge city region's exceptional growth and contribution to the UK economy, as well as the infrastructure challenges that threaten that growth in the long-term and the impacts these constraints have on quality of life.

The programme is led by a team focused on developing solutions to the infrastructure gap to support the long-term sustainable and inclusive growth of the Cambridge city region. It is overseen by Cambridge entrepreneur and national policy advisor Dr David Cleavelly CBE and economist Dame Kate Barker. They are supported by individual workstreams each led by an expert Chair focusing respectively on Energy and Sustainability, Transport, and Social Infrastructure.

Privacy Statement

There may be occasions when Cambridge Ahead and the Global Sustainability Institute will share the information you provide, excluding personal data, with external parties. This is for the purposes of analysis of the evidence provided or to share insights with relevant collaborators. Individual responses will not be published, however a list of organisations who respond to the Call will be published as part of a final report which will summarise the findings.