

Greater Cambridge Greenways – Melbourn and Sawston Full Business Cases

Report to: Greater Cambridge Partnership Executive Board

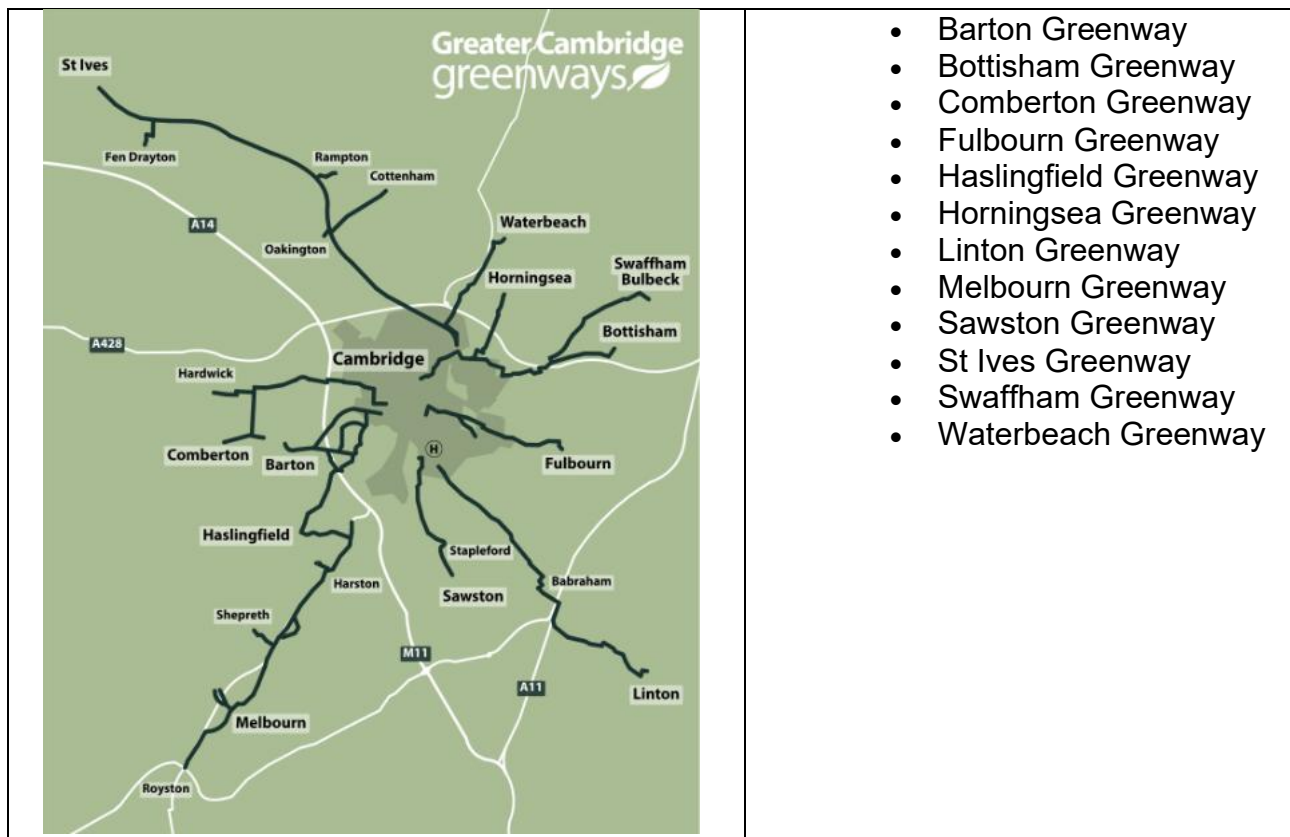
Date: 9 July 2026

Lead Officer: Thomas Fitzpatrick, Programme Director - Transport

1. Background

- 1.1 The creation of an extensive 150km network of Greenways is part of a strategy to encourage people to walk, wheel and cycle into Cambridge and to better connect local areas in South Cambridgeshire (some of which are rural). The focus of the Greenways is not only to improve connectivity, but to help reduce traffic congestion and contribute towards improved air quality, better public health and better places.
- 1.2 Greenways are sustainable travel corridors which are intended to make walking and cycling in Greater Cambridge both safer and easier for people of all ages. The work focuses on the improvement of existing corridors and the development of new corridors throughout Cambridge, East Cambridgeshire and South Cambridgeshire.
- 1.3 The Greenways Network has the potential to significantly increase access to a range of sites, including planned housing and employment developments at Babraham Research Campus, Cambridge Biomedical Campus, Cambridge Northern Fringe, Cambridge Southern Fringe, Cambridge Science Park, Granta Park, Wellcome Trust Genome Campus, Waterbeach New Town, and West Cambridge (collectively providing around 10,500 new homes and 19,000 new jobs between 2011 and 2031).
- 1.4 There are a total of 12 Greenway routes being developed, as shown in the network map in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Greenways Network



- 1.5 The Full Business Cases (FBCs) for the Melbourn and Sawston Greenways are presented together in this paper. The Melbourn and Sawston Greenways interact closely with one another. Once complete, they will provide a crucial part of a strategically important network for walking and cycling into Cambridge from the south, via Trumpington and the growing Cambridge Biomedical Campus.
- 1.6 Concept work and consultation on the greenway alignments concluded with Executive Board decisions throughout 2020 to release funding. The Outline Business Cases (OBC) for both the Melbourn Greenway and the Sawston Greenway were approved on 9 March 2023 (the papers can be found [here](#)).
- 1.7 The Melbourn Greenway route is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 – Melbourn Greenway



- 1.9 The Greenways network will form the basis of a significant active travel network for Cambridge and the surrounding areas. It will provide links to already delivered schemes such as phase 1 of the Chisholm Trail, and future projects including the Hills Road and A1134 corridor schemes. It is therefore a critical part of the GCP programme to increase the number of trips made through active travel. In particular, the Melbourn and Sawston Greenways will form a vital part of a growing active travel network into Cambridge from the south and support planned growth at Cambridge Biomedical Campus and the rural southern cluster.
- 1.10 The Melbourn Greenway will link into strategically important planned and existing active travel and public transport schemes, including the Sawston and Haslingfield Greenways and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) schemes for Cambridge (7, 9, 18) and South Cambridgeshire (15, 18). Once both schemes are complete, the Melbourn Greenway will also connect directly into the Cambridge South West Travel Hub, a new travel hub at M11 Junction 11 providing approximately 2150 car park spaces and 326 cycle parking spaces.

- 1.11 The Sawston Greenway will also link into strategically important planned and existing active travel and public transport schemes, including the Linton and Melbourn Greenways, the newly opened Cambridge South Station, and LCWIP schemes for Cambridge (9, 18, 2, 15) and South Cambridgeshire (18). The Sawston Greenway will also have a significant interface with the proposed Cambridge South East Transport Phase 2 (CSET2) public transport route and active travel path.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Executive Board is recommended to:

- a) Agree the Full Business Case for the Melbourn Greenway, with the recommended scope changes in section 4.10.
- b) Agree the Full Business Case for the Sawston Greenway.
- c) Agree to delegate authority to the Service Director of the Greater Cambridge Partnership to enter into the required construction contracts to build the scheme.

3. Joint Assembly Feedback

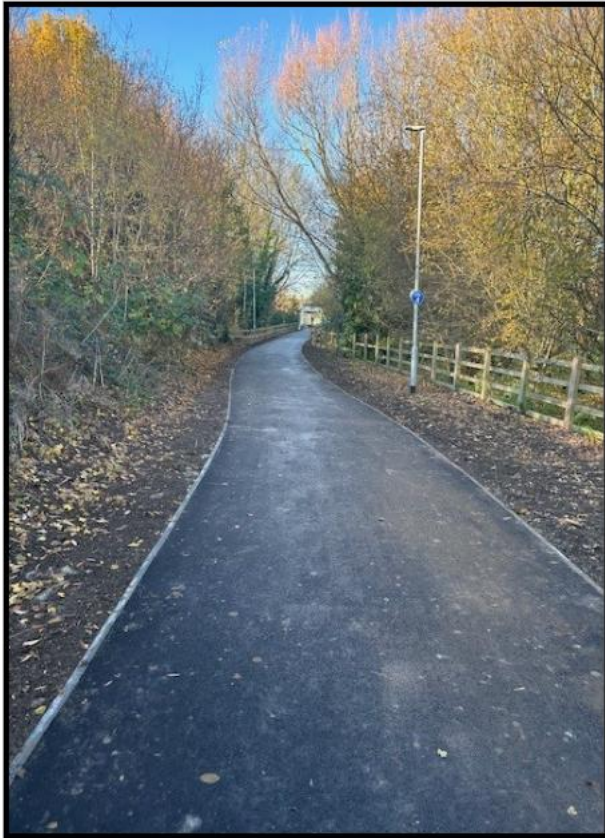
- 3.1. Members supported the proposal to agree the Full Business Cases for the Melbourn and Sawston Greenways, and to delegate authority to the Service Director of the Greater Cambridge Partnership to enter into the required construction contracts to build the scheme.
- 3.2. Members raised concerns around the absence of a spur between the main Sawston Greenway route and Whittlesford Parkway train station, and the potential missed opportunity to encourage walking, wheeling and cycling for people travelling by train. Officers referred to further work that may take place in the future to deliver further spurs to train stations, after the Sawston Greenway route has been delivered as currently planned.

4. Issues for Discussion

Progress to date (Construction of Early Works and Land)

- 4.1. As part of previously agreed early works for the Melbourn Greenway, infrastructure improvements to make it easier to walk, wheel and cycle have been installed at the path between Station Road and the railway station in Meldreth. The Meldreth Station Link provides a widened and newly surfaced path, new parking areas for bikes and improved lighting, and has significantly reduced severance between the villages of Melbourn and Meldreth. Images of these works are set out below in Figures 4 and 5. Construction work is now being undertaken in Shepreth village to deliver the second early work scheme.

Figures 4 and 5 – The Meldreth Link



- 4.2. As part of the development of the Sawston Greenway early works sections, conversations are ongoing with landowners to agree land acquisition, particularly at locations where the scheme interacts with private land, such as at the Genome Path (also referred to as the DNA Path).

Changes to design since Preliminary Design

- 4.3. Since the Executive Board agreed to the Outline Business Cases for the Melbourn Greenway and the Sawston Greenway in March 2023, subsequent decisions were taken by the Board to change the design of both Greenways. At their meeting on 28 September 2023, the Executive Board agreed to include a walking and cycling bridge over the A505 (the papers can be found [here](#)).
- 4.4. For Sawston, it was agreed by the Executive Board at the 28 September 2023 meeting to pause work on a walking and cycling section alongside the railway line in Stapleford. This was due to the high cost to construct the section, the impact on the environment and poor economic value.
- 4.5. The latest full designs for Melbourn can be found in Appendix C, the full designs for Sawston can be found in Appendix D.

Full Business Case – Melbourn

- 4.6. The delivery of the Melbourn Greenway gives people greater choice about how they commute, as well as offering improved spaces for people to enjoy through the provision of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and Green and Blue Infrastructure.
- 4.7. The Full Business Case for the Melbourn Greenway identifies three key benefits of the scheme, as shown in the table below.

Table 1 – Key Benefits of the Melbourn Greenway

Benefit	Description
Physical activity	Improved pedestrian and cycle connectivity and mode shift from car to active travel will result in a large increase in physical activity.
Safety	New crossings, segregated and shared use paths, and traffic calming measures will generate safety benefits for all users and vulnerable groups.
Severance	Speed limit restrictions, new crossings, and enhancements at existing crossings will reduce severance along the corridor and between settlements and open up improved connectivity between local areas – essential for agglomeration benefits and reducing congestion.

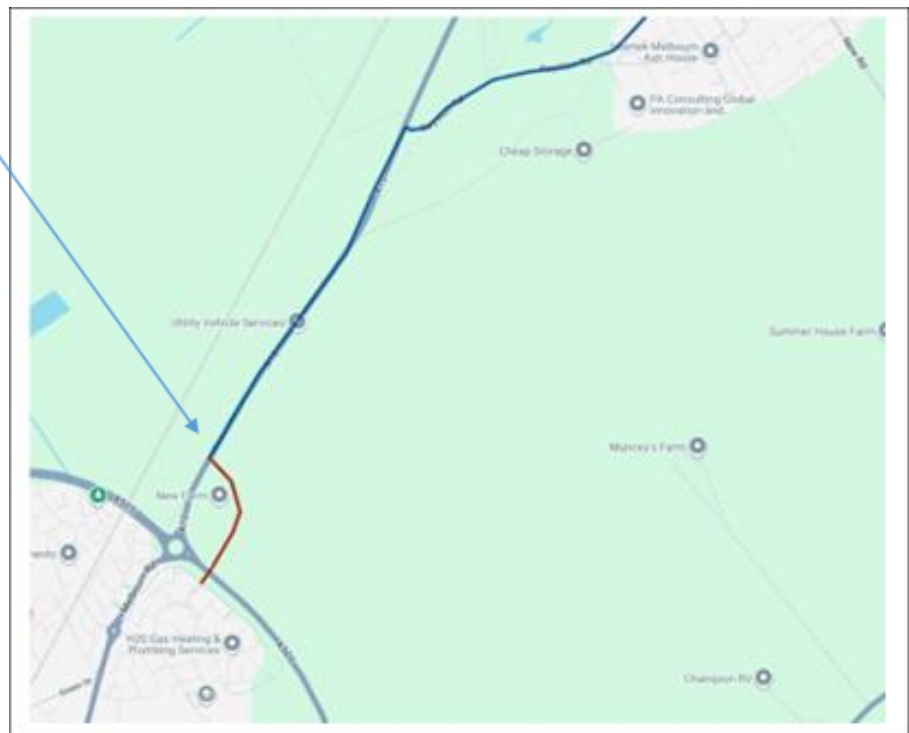
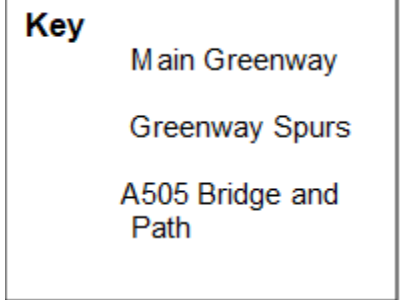
The benefits outlined above, as well as the expected impacts of the Greenway on improved journey quality, accessibility, air quality and personal affordability will culminate in extended transport connectivity, and related access to opportunities and services across Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire.

- 4.8. The economic appraisal for the Melbourn Greenway with the A505 walking and cycling bridge to Royston produces a Benefit Cost Ratio of 2.5:1 – representing very high value for money. This means that for every £1 spent on the Greenway, there is a 250% return.
- 4.9. The FBC for Melbourn underwent sensitivity tests to look at opportunities for value engineering. Four scenarios were tested, which are set out below:

Scenario	Benefit Cost Ratio
The Melbourn Greenway with the A505 walking and cycling bridge and Foxton Village	2.5
The Melbourn Greenway with the A505 walking and cycling bridge and the removal of Foxton village	2.7
The Melbourn Greenway without the A505 walking and cycling bridge to Royston including Foxton village	1.5
The Melbourn Greenway excluding the A505 walking and cycling bridge to Royston and Foxton village	1.6

- 4.10. A route through Foxton had initially been selected for delivery as an early work scheme. However, further discussions with Foxton Parish Council and residents demonstrated that the focus of a walking and cycling scheme should be concentrated on the East side of the village. Based on this and the economic benefits of each scenario it is proposed that the Foxton section is removed whilst the A505 bridge is taken forward. Transport interventions to improve

walking and cycling connectivity from the East of Foxton Village are now being delivered by Cambridgeshire County Council's Active Travel Team. A plan setting out these sections is below:



The Melbourn Greenway Full Business Case can be found in [Appendix A](#).

Full Business Case – Sawston

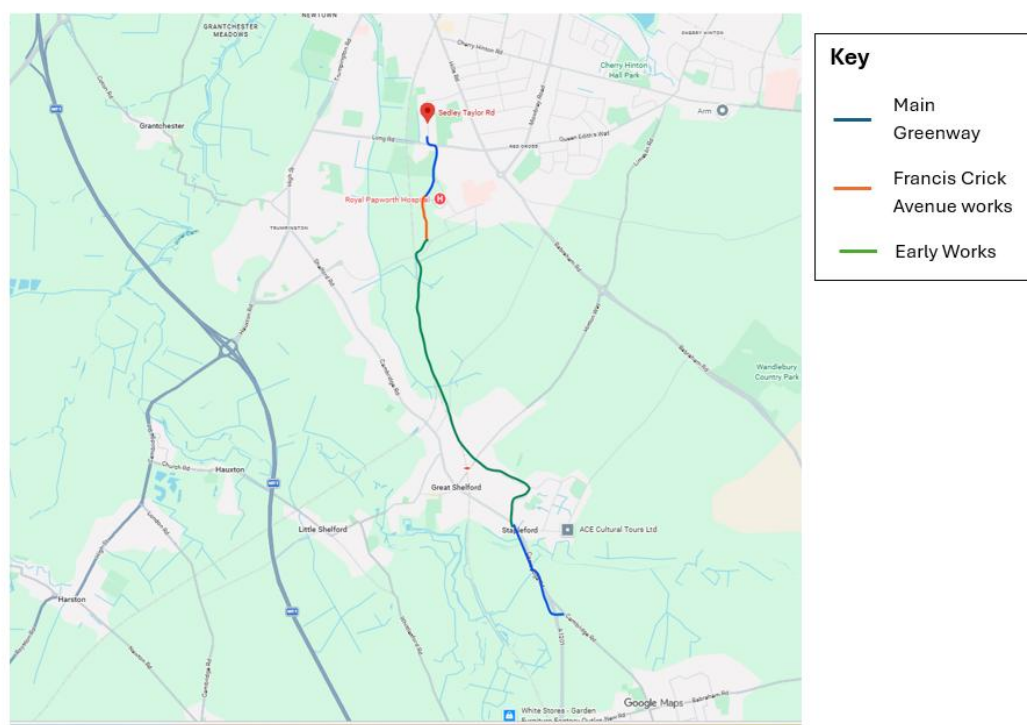
- 4.11 The Full Business Case for the Sawston Greenway identifies three key benefits of the scheme, as shown in the Table 3 below.

Table 3 – Key Benefits of the Sawston Greenway

Benefit	Description
Physical activity	Improved pedestrian and cycle connectivity and mode shift from car to active travel will result in a large increase in physical activity.
Safety	New crossings, segregated and shared use paths, and traffic calming measures will generate safety benefits for all users and vulnerable groups.
Severance	Speed limit restrictions, new crossings, and enhancements at existing crossings will reduce severance along the corridor and between settlements.

The benefits outlined above, as well as the expected impacts of the Greenway on improved journey quality, accessibility, personal affordability and air quality will result in a significantly improved active travel network for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. This is particularly important given the locality of the Sawston Greenway scheme. The Greenway will link villages with the globally significant Cambridge Biomedical Campus. The campus already contributes over £4bn / year to the UK economy and has plans for significant growth.

- 4.12 Parts of the Sawston Greenway have already achieved full approval of the Executive Board including Francis Crick Avenue and the early works. The following plan below sets out the full route including these sections.



- 4.13 The economic appraisal for the Sawston Greenway scheme produces a Benefit Cost Ratio of 3.94:1. This means for every £1 of investment in the Sawston Greenway, there is approximately a 400% return, which represents very high value for money.

- 4.14 Delivery of the Sawston Greenway is key in supporting national, regional, and local strategic priorities.

The Sawston Greenway Full Business Case can be found in [Appendix B](#).

Construction

- 4.15 To date, sections of the Melbourn Greenway early works have been delivered through M Group, utilising the Highways Term Service Contract. For subsequent sections of the Melbourn Greenway and the Sawston Greenway, further options will be considered, such as utilising the Eastern Highways Alliance Framework or the Highways Term Service Contract.

5. Consultation and Engagement

- 5.1 Between June and August 2019, the GCP held an extensive consultation to develop routes for the Melbourn and Sawston Greenways. The Executive Board then agreed funds for the Greenway in October 2020 (the papers can be found [here](#)). Following this, there were two four-week engagement exercises on the Melbourn Greenway (October 2022) and the Sawston Greenway (November and December 2022). This was to provide an update on the proposals and to understand views from the local community, wider stakeholders and other interested parties on the designs. The results of these consultations were reported to the Executive Board in March 2023 (the papers can be found [here](#)). This culminated in a 'You said, we did' report, responding to the consultation responses.
- 5.2 Throughout all stages of the design of both the Melbourn and Sawston Greenways, the project has shared designs with residents and key stakeholders, including numerous stakeholder groups through forums such as the Non-motorised User Group. Areas where third-party land is required has been thoroughly discussed and the design altered to the landowners' specific requirements.
- 5.3 Officers have continued to work with local members and external stakeholders in the development of both schemes.

6. Options and Emerging Recommendations

- 6.1 The recommendations being presented to the Executive Board are to:
- (a) Agree the Full Business Case for the Melbourn Greenway, with the recommended scope changes in Section 2.10.
 - (b) Agree the Full Business Case for the Sawston Greenway.
 - (c) Agree to delegate authority to the Service Director of the Greater Cambridge Partnership to enter into the required construction contracts to build the scheme.

7. Alignment with City Deal Objectives

7.1 The Greenways network will:

- Contribute to securing the continued economic success of the area through improved access and connectivity;
- Contribute to improvements to air quality and enhancements to active travel, supporting a healthier population;
- Contribute to reducing carbon emissions in line with the partners' zero carbon commitments;
- Helping to address social inequalities where poor provision of transport is a contributing factor; and
- Wellbeing and productivity benefits from improving people's journeys to and from employment.

8. Citizens' Assembly

8.1 The Citizens' Assembly members developed and prioritised their vision for transport in Greater Cambridge. The proposals have the potential to complement delivery of the some of the highest scoring priorities:

- Be people centred – prioritising pedestrians and cyclists;
- Enabled interconnection (e.g. north/south/east/west/urban/rural);
- Restrict the city centre to only clean and electric vehicles; and
- Environmental and zero carbon transport.

8.2 The Citizens' Assembly voted on a series of measures to reduce congestion, improve air quality and public transport. The Greenways network will facilitate active travel as a sustainable transport option for commuting to employment sites and in doing so improve air quality.

9. Financial Implications

9.1 The budget for the Melbourn Greenway scheme is set at £15.2m and no further funding is requested.

9.2 The budget for the Sawston Greenway is £6.7m and no further funding is requested.

9.3 However, it is acknowledged that the cost in the Full Business Cases for the construction of Melbourn and Sawston Greenways is higher. This is due to the inclusion of allowances for inflation, risk, the costs associated with gaining rights to cross third-party land and biodiversity net gain contributions both on and off-site. The project team is working closely with relevant teams within CCC to identify areas for value engineering to reduce this overall figure and it is felt that savings will be achieved. This is in parallel with alternative procurement methods outlined in the sections above which will drive additional project cost savings. Should these mitigations not result in sufficient savings, then the main construction contract will not be entered until the Executive Board has taken an appropriate decision.

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? Yes
Name of Financial Officer: Rebecca Bartram

10. Next Steps and Milestones

- 10.1 Subject to approval by the Executive Board, officers will take forward the full construction of the Melbourn and Sawston Greenways subject to land acquisition.
- 10.2 Early works within Shepreth village will continue throughout 2026.
- 10.3 The GCP project team will progress with the negotiations for third-party land access and rights. It is anticipated that most of the construction work will take place in 2027.
- 10.4 It is recognised that there is a potential for the term of the construction contracts to extend beyond April 2028 and therefore beyond the timetable for Local Government Reorganisation. Officers have considered this and determine construction to be necessary to secure best value for money both now and in the future. As part of a procurement process suppliers will be notified of impending LGR and be asked to adapt their bids accordingly in anticipation of novation to new unitary councils. Additionally, all contracts that are anticipated to extend beyond April 2028 contain provisions to take into account novation, alteration or cessation of the service to ensure flexibility and a successful transition. The City Deal funding and delivery programme extends beyond this period and the expectation is that delivery will continue in line with currently agreed plans

List of Appendices

Appendix A	Melbourn Full Business Case
Appendix B	Sawston Full Business Case
Appendix C	Drawings showing the Melbourn Greenway Scheme here
Appendix D	Drawings showing the Sawston Greenway Scheme here

Background Papers

Source Documents	Location
Melbourn Greenway: Summary Report of Consultation Findings (September 2019)	Melbourn-Greenway-Consultation-Report-September-2019
Sawston Greenway: Summary Report of Consultation Findings (September 2019)	Sawston-Greenway-consultation-report-September-2019
Greater Cambridge Partnership Executive Board (1 October 2020) Meeting Minutes	Draft Minutes - 1st October 2020
Melbourn Greenway Outline Business Case (February 2023)	Melbourn OBC v2 ISSUED 2023-02-17
Sawston Greenway Engagement Summary Report (February 2023)	Sawston Greenway Summary Engagement Report 2022
Greater Cambridge Partnership Executive Board (9 March 2023) Meeting Minutes	Draft Minutes - 9 March 2023
Greater Cambridge Partnership Executive Board (28 September 2023) Meeting Minutes	Draft Minutes - 28 September 2023
Sawston Greenway Project: - You Said: We Did (2023)	Sawston Greenway You said We Did 2023
Melbourn Greenway Project: - You Said: We Did (2023)	Melbourn Greenway You Said We Did 2023
Cambridgeshire's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)	CCC website document library - LCWIP main document.pdf - All Documents