

Wisbech 2020 vision

"A passion to deliver a prosperous future"

Connecting North Cambridgeshire

Infrastructure for Growth



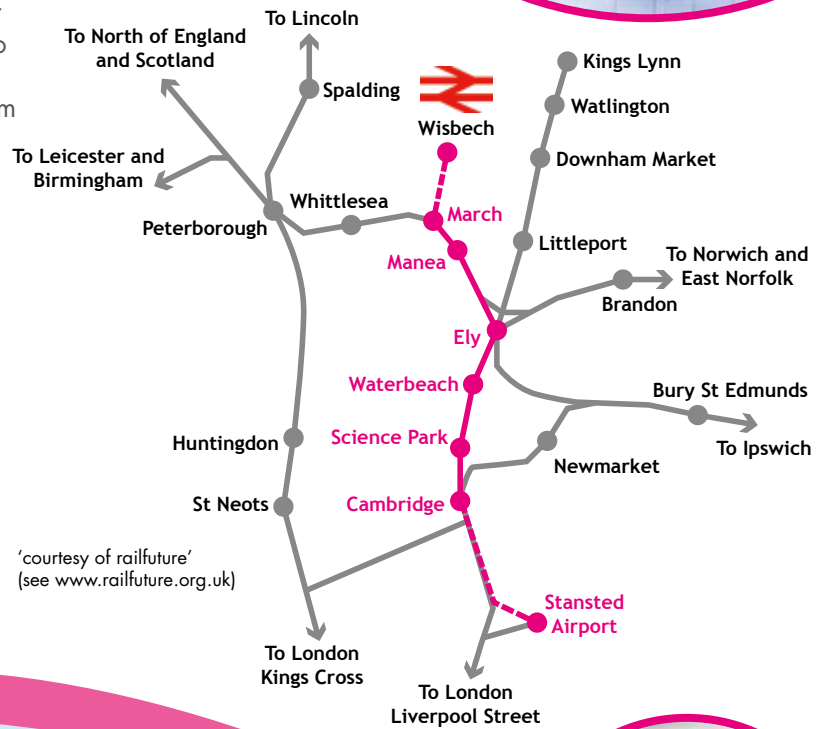
Infrastructure for growth

Wisbech is the largest settlement in Fenland. The town and its hinterland has a population of approximately 40,000. Thanks largely to an inland port located on the River Nene, Wisbech has a rich heritage, fine Georgian architecture and has played an important role as a trading centre serving a wide rural catchment. The town is a great place to live and work with comparatively lower property values than the neighbouring cities of Cambridge and Peterborough. It also benefits from being located close to the attractive Norfolk Coast.

Today it remains an important destination for shopping and local services. Wisbech is also home to cinemas, leisure centres and award winning parks, making it an important tourism destination in the Eastern region.

To maximise the potential of Wisbech and attract new investment, a number of factors need improvement, including:

- essential road and rail transport connectivity;
- higher educational attainment and skill levels;
- increased job opportunities through business and housing growth.



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Strategy

We are a Coalition of both public and private sector partners. Our priority is to deliver an economic game-changer for North Cambridgeshire through an integrated strategy for rail, road and growth infrastructure.

This programme will be the enabler for a sustainable transformation.



Wisbech and Cambridge - narrowing the gap

Wisbech is just 30 miles from the economic powerhouse of Cambridge.

But with heavy congestion and parking charges of up to £30 a day mean car commuting to Cambridge is impractical, as are the long complex journeys currently available on public transport.

Economic Case - to Cambridge in under an hour

The railway from Wisbech to March, with a through service to Cambridge, offers potential to open up the Cambridgeshire jobs market through an efficient and sustainable transport option. Travelling time of under one hour would support business and employment within Wisbech through increased accessibility, whilst offering a wider more affordable choice of housing for everyone. The wider County jobs market will become available to Wisbech residents, helping to raise local aspirations and improve skills.

Research indicates that restoration of a rail link with a through service to Cambridge could:

- Raise local incomes by at least £13m annually as a result of employment and business expansion.
- Raise employment in Wisbech by at least 230 jobs and support 30 hectares of new employment land identified in the Fenland Local Plan.
- Provide realistic community opportunities which will open up the Cambridgeshire jobs market to more people.
- Lead to an initial investment in over 500 new sustainable homes and support an additional 2,500 dwellings identified in the Fenland Local Plan.

Peak time travel: Wisbech to Cambridge (indicative figures)

	Now - car commute	Now - bus/rail via Peterborough	New Rail Link
Time taken (return)	Up to 4 hours	Over 4 hours	Under 2 hours
Cost (return)	£56 [1]	£30	£18

Benefits to Cambridge

These improvements could see a reduced pressure on over-heated housing markets in Cambridge, providing workers to reinforce the city's rapid expansion and help reduce congestion on its roads.

The cost of the rail reopening is estimated at between £50 and £70 million (depending on the option) with preliminary estimates of benefits being two to three times greater than that of the standard Department of Transport calculations. The economic case for reopening the line is compelling.

Investment potential in Wisbech

Housing and commercial offer in Wisbech compared with its neighbours...

Affordable residential properties for employees	Wisbech	Peterborough	Cambridge	UK
Average Current Value (£) semi-det property	134,466	160,756	334,477	230,302
Average Asking Rental Value (£) 3 bed house	644	751	1,300	1,118

...commercial property rents, make Wisbech an attractive proposition and land values demonstrate that Wisbech is 'Open for Business'.

Affordable commercial premises and land for business	Wisbech	Peterborough	Cambridge
Office Premises Rents (£/m2) - prime rents	92	150	366
Industrial Land (£/ha)	245,000	540,000	920,000
Industrial Premises Rents (£/m2) - prime rents	60	86	97

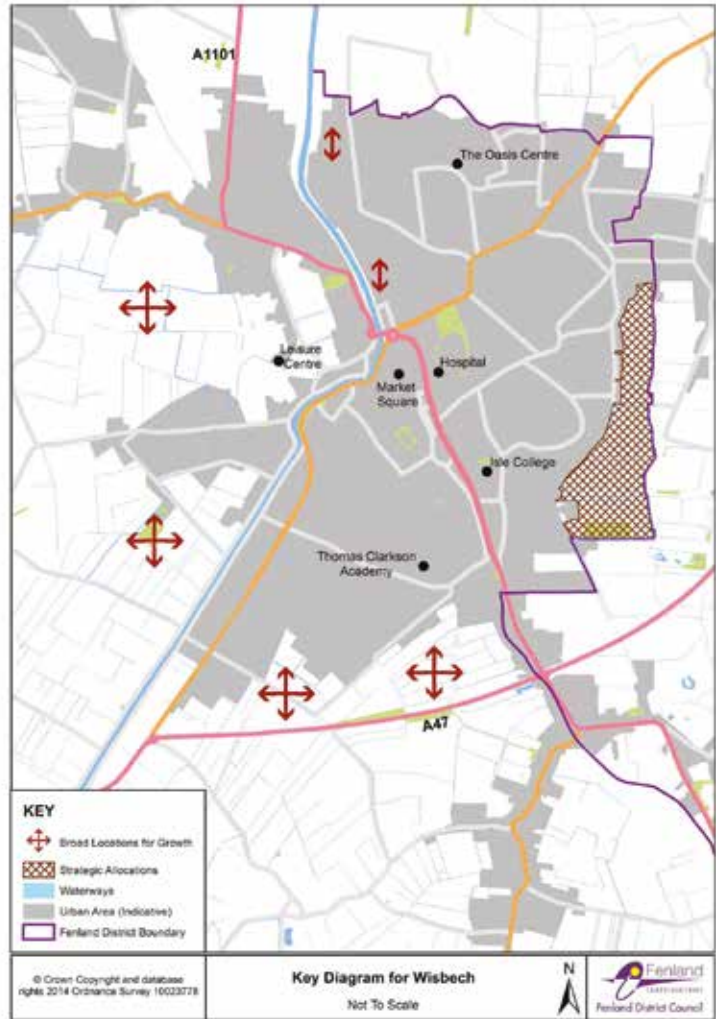
Note: The values above represent limited market research and do not represent formal valuation advice and should be used for reference purposes only.

Gateway to growth

Wisbech, alongside March, is the main focus for housing, employment and retail growth in Fenland.

All development should contribute to the promotion of Wisbech into a strong, safe and community focussed market town, preserving and enhancing its unique historic character and making appropriate use of its heritage assets to benefit its regeneration, tourism potential and sense of place.

However, the growth of Wisbech is constrained by the capacity of the highway network both internal (i.e. within the town) and external (i.e. the A47). As such, all Wisbech development proposals, and especially the urban proposals (described on the next page) must have an exceptionally strong focus on sustainable transport modes which encourage the use of walking, cycling and public transport. Such transport networks are expected to support the existing and new communities along with access to employment within Wisbech.



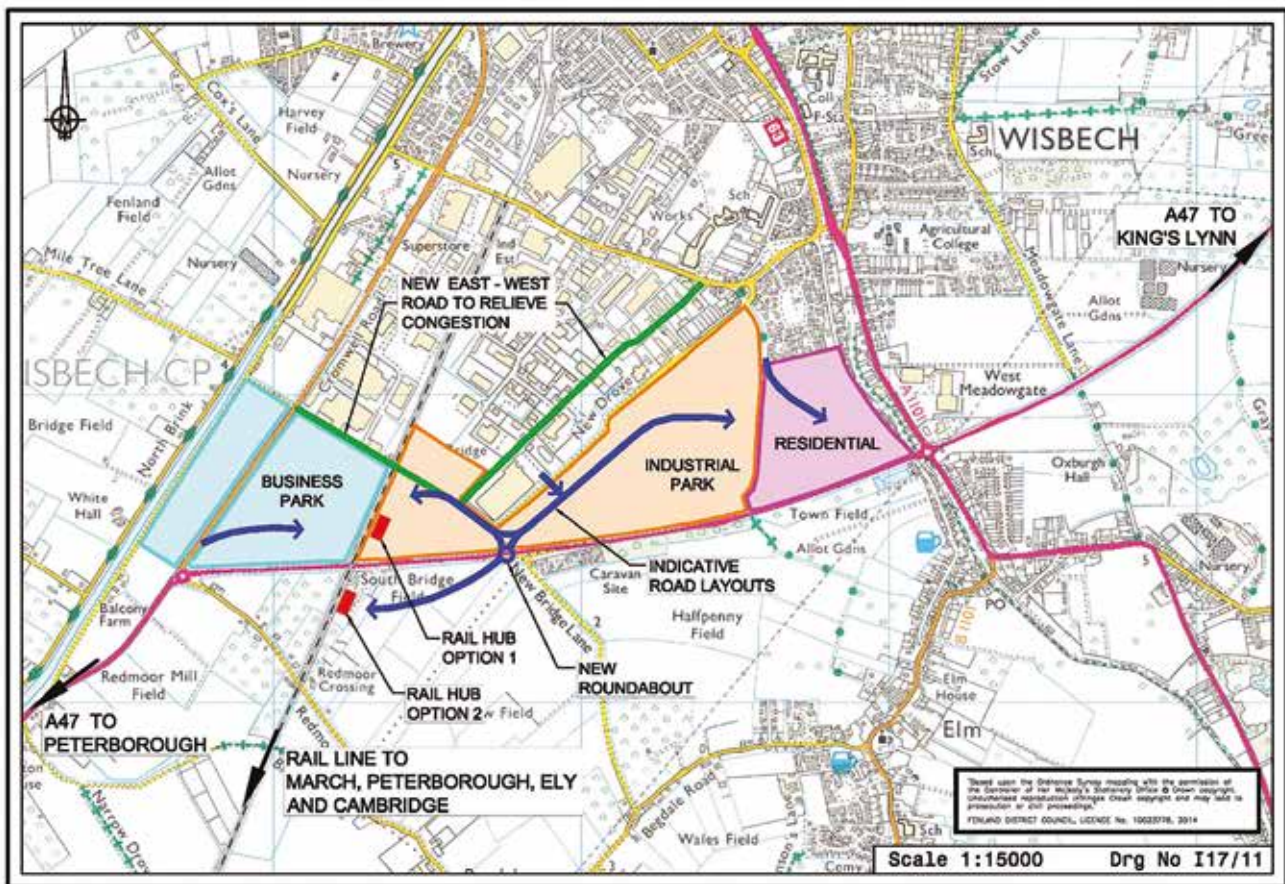
Extract from Fenland District Council Local Plan 2014



Wisbech Enterprise Park

To illustrate the scale and potential for growth, the Wisbech Enterprise Park includes opportunities for business, industry and housing growth. As a site identified in the Fenland Local Plan (adopted in May 2014) this land is already approved and available for development. The delivery of Wisbech Enterprise Park is also seen as an important milestone to achieve the wider ambitions of the Wisbech 2020 Vision. The detail design and its future success is dependent on both the delivery of an East West road to address bottlenecks in the town road network, and rail and A47 infrastructure investment.

In addition to the wider Wisbech 2020 Vision Partnership leading the transformation programme, a project team is working to deliver the Local Plan South West Wisbech allocation. Master planning work is already advanced and a bid is under consideration by the Local Enterprise Partnership for key infrastructure proposals to help service the site.



Outline plan of the 217 acre Wisbech Enterprise Park. This includes a proposed new East – West road, direct access to the A47 and possible locations for the new Wisbech Railway Station.

REQUIRED ACTION	LEAD PARTNER	TIMESCALE
Launch of Infrastructure for Growth document and Coalition lobby for the following: 1. Wisbech to March reopened 2. Direct Service between Wisbech & Cambridge 3. Service to be fully operational within 5 years	Business /FDC/ CCC/MP	13 Nov 2014
Autumn Statement announcement – expectation to include A47 proposals	Government/LEP(s) A47 Alliance	3 Dec 2014
Finalise Master-plan - Wisbech Enterprise Park	FDC/CCC/ SW Wisbech Project team	Jan 2015
Stakeholder Coalition Event – MP/CCC/FDC/Business/LEP(s) and other key stakeholders	FDC/CCC/Business	Event to be held W/c 26 Jan 2015
Strategic outline of rail link business case options	CCC	Early 2015 (tbc)
GRIP 2 and 3 (rail appraisals) completed and approved	CCC/Network Rail	March 2015
Support to Railfuture campaign to reopen the line www.wisbechrail.org.uk	Railfuture	ongoing
Combined lobby with A47 Alliance www.a47alliance.co.uk	LEP(s)/FDC/CCC	ongoing

Wisbech 2020 vision

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The Wisbech 2020 Vision is a joint initiative, led by the Leaders of Fenland District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council, along with the local MP. This evolving vision aims to address the current and future challenges facing Wisbech through increased partnership working and public participation.

The vision includes key social, economic and environmental improvements under the following headings:

Wisbech – a great place to work

- Helping to grow new and existing business sectors
- Marketing and promoting Wisbech as a commercial and business location
- Increasing skills and aspirations throughout the community
- Securing resources and long term commitment to deliver various business improvement projects
- Strengthening and improving transport links

Wisbech – a great place to live

- Helping to improve the town centre and retail offer
- Providing affordable and market housing
- Bringing derelict buildings back into use
- Strengthening communities by improving services and increasing cohesion

Wisbech – a great place to visit

- Helping to improve and diversify the arts and culture offer in the town
- Promoting Wisbech's rich heritage and many tourist attractions
- Delivering community and visitor events
- Improving transport links throughout the town, including walking, cycling and public transport

To read the full Wisbech 2020 Vision document and for further information, please go to:

www.wisbech2020vision.co.uk



Train images courtesy of Antony Guppy