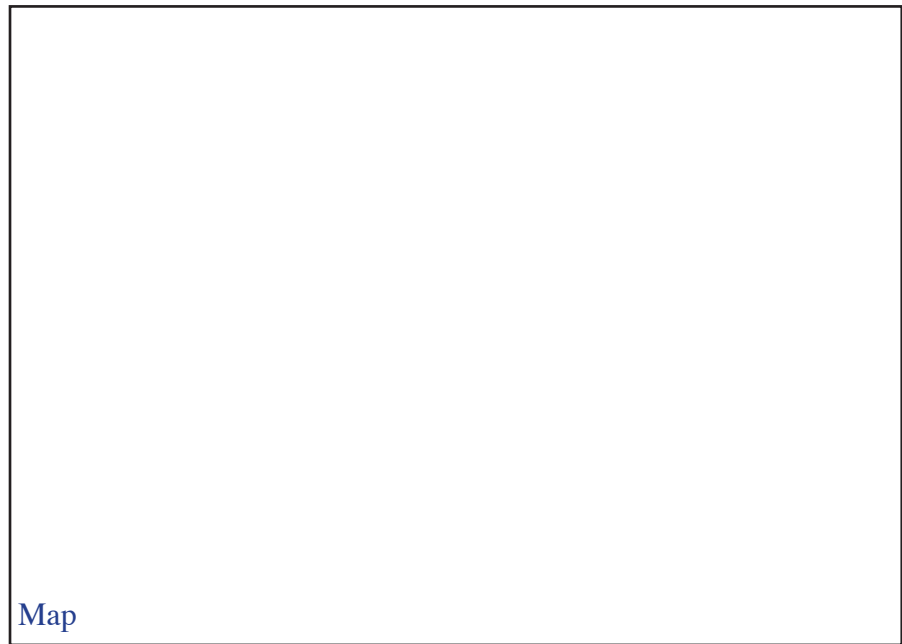


rural-urban fringe, cambridgeshire

What is a rural-urban fringe?

The rural-urban fringe is the area between the city and the countryside that displays characteristics of both areas, and is thus indefinable as such. It is a zone where land use and population density can change rapidly. It moves outwards in accordance with urban sprawl.



Cambridgeshire

Cambridge, a long established centre for technology firms such as Microsoft and IBM, is surrounded by many main roads, especially the M11 motorway corridor. This excellent access, and Cambridge's role as a regional centre, has caused the urban-rural fringe to play host to many commuters. In the area there is also a good railway system and Heathrow. The area also benefits from it's proximity to London.

Developments

In 1999 Cambridge launched a series of plans to deal with it's rapid expansion (a projected 44% population increase by 2050). The idea is partly to preserve the greenbelt by developing areas outside of it, and providing the facilities to commute into Cambridge itself.

The booming growth of Cambridge has caused a similar growth in the surrounding towns such as Cambourne. Young, skilled employees who commute to Cambridge are moving into these satellite towns and forcing house prices up.

In Cambourne, the three small villages (Greater, Lower, Upper) that until recently comprised it, are being unified into one. The plans to expand a series of locations around Cambridge to house the rapidly expanding commuting faction include the building of 3300 new houses in Cambourne: 900 affordable homes starting at £50,000 and the top end housing at £230,000. Cambourne secondary school is also building new facilities, along with the development of new leisure facilities, woodland and lakes.

Demographic changes

The population is becoming younger, as a new, young, skilled labour force moves in. They are middle class, with high affluence. They sometimes bring families with them. Because they are wealthier than the locals, they force house prices up.

The Future

It is unclear what the future holds for Cambridge. There are several options being made available:

- **Minimum growth:** Preserve the city as it is. **Increases commuting & preserves green belt.**
- **Densification:** Redevlop land & transport, only within the city. **Increases jobs but also pollution and congestion.**
- **Necklace:** Concentrate on developing satellite towns. **Increased commuting, preserves green belt.**
- **Green Swap:** Upgrade poorer areas of the green belt, replace with new green amenities further out. **More jobs, less commuting and green facilities.**
- **Transport links:** Upgrade railway to London, Huntingdon & Ely and build new stations. **Expensive but environmentally sound.**
- **Virtual highway:** Create a web of teleworking provision, in according with Cambridge's skills. **Environmentally sound & reduces commuting.**
- **New town:** Build a single new town outside of the green belt. **Expensive but environmentally sound.**

Cycle of Growth: A virtuous circle

