

# Exploring social infrastructure around the Beehive Shopping Centre

Interim report

13 JUNE 2022



# Table of content

<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2 Key Findings</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3 About the research</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>4 About the area</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>5 What we have found</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>6 Next steps</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>7 Appendix</b>	<b>24</b>

# 1 Introduction

This report outlines the findings of research designed to inform a social infrastructure assessment of the neighbourhoods surrounding the Beehive Retail Park to the northeast of Cambridge city centre. Social Life was contracted by Railway Pensions Nominees Limited (Railpen) to review existing community assets, amenities and local perceptions of the area to ensure that development plans meet local needs and build on what is already succeeding socially.

The Beehive Retail Park - a seven hectare site - is currently fully occupied by large retail units, however changes in the retail market (as a result of the pandemic and reflecting long term trends) and the growing and evolving Cambridge economy have created the potential for redevelopment: there is a need for purpose-built technology and life science workplace buildings within the city. The aspiration is that this site becomes a place that also supports local communities to socialise and spend time, by providing a range of new spaces and places that will strengthen the local community.

This project is based on primary research carried out in April and May 2022, including street surveys in and around the retail park, to capture the perceptions of local residents and users of the site. Key local stakeholders have been interviewed including community organisations, local resident network, councillors from the three wards the site touches on Abbey ward, Romsey ward and Petersfield ward.

Social infrastructure covers a range of services and facilities that meet local needs and contribute towards a good quality of life. Our research has found that there is a dynamic and interdependent relationship between “formal” and “informal” provision, and tangible “hard” provision and “soft” support.<sup>1</sup> Through understanding how different sorts of provision reinforce each other we can understand what is missing, what is working well, and how change - through regeneration or new development - can both benefit existing communities and users of the space, and people who are new to the place.

This focus on social infrastructure will embed a firm focus on social sustainability within the early stages of the project, complementing thinking about environmental and economic sustainability. The aim of this assessment is to understand how existing places, spaces, services and facilities are used by people living in and working in the area, as well as by people from further afield. This has involved looking beyond the red line of the site to understand how the place that the site sits within functions. A key element of social value will be in the way that the development enhances quality of life, opportunities and social infrastructure for the wider area. Our work will help scope the potential of this development to contribute social value to its commercial occupiers and their employees, and also to the wider Cambridge community, especially residents living nearby the site.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.social-life.co/publication/connective\\_social\\_infrastructure/](http://www.social-life.co/publication/connective_social_infrastructure/)

This report is the first stage of the assessment. It includes:

**1 Street interview and stakeholder findings** discussed under three main themes: Places, People and Change. These findings combine the quantitative data collected with the street survey with the qualitative findings from the stakeholders' long form interviews. It provides a picture of local perceptions and use of the area and compares them to the community dynamics benchmarking outlined in the first report (October 2021).

**2 Maps and spatial analysis** which is key in understanding the implications for the design of the new development. This will help explore the potential of redevelopment to provide new places and spaces that boost wellbeing and community capacity.

Next steps include:

**3 Carrying out a workshop with the development team**, and further discussions, to embed these findings into the plans for the redeveloped site

**4 Outlining the final social sustainability plan** combining input from the workshop into a concluding report.



## 2 Key findings

The ward boundaries of Abbey, Romsey and Petersfield wards follow natural geographical boundaries - railways, roads - and therefore broadly reflect the area's "natural neighbourhoods". These are the areas that describe how residents experience their neighbourhood, they are key for understanding use and potential for social infrastructure. We have used ward boundaries as a structure to understand what is emerging from this research. In many areas ward boundaries are more artificial administrative constructs, in this part of Cambridge they appear to reflect everyday experience.

The Beehive Centre is an exception to this, as it sits in Abbey ward but is more used and valued by Petersfield residents because of location and ease of access. At present, The Beehive is most important to people living in Petersfield and Romsey wards, offering low-cost food and services. Residents in Abbey ward use it less for everyday shopping, as this lower income area has other affordable shops. Other community supports, spaces and places are lacking in Abbey ward, conversely in Petersfield and Romsey there is a bigger range of existing social infrastructure.

### PLACES

#### About the Beehive retail park:

1. The Beehive Retail Park is currently well used and valued in the area. Petersfield and Romsey ward residents depend on it to access affordable food options, as well as larger lower cost shops like TKMaxx and BNM.
2. Two in five street survey respondents use the Beehive once a week, a similar number use it more than once a week. The main reason for visiting the Beehive is to shop for everyday items and to buy clothing.
3. The physical divide between the wards is accentuated by the Beehive Retail Park site, which compounds the social divides that exist between communities. Abbey ward feels less connected to the retail park with no easy access unless by car or other motor vehicle.
4. The congestion and traffic around the Beehive is a safety and health problem for people living in all three wards. There is poor pedestrian access and a lack of cycle routes through the site.

#### About local social infrastructure:

5. 75% of people interviewed said they strongly agree that local places or facilities are important to their social life.
6. The most frequently used places and spaces in the local area were green spaces, followed by health facilities and "other" places including cafes and hairdressers. Green spaces were also the place that was perceived to be most important for spending time with people you know, followed by the "other" category (mainly cafes), sports and exercise facilities and schools and nurseries.
7. When asked "are there any places, facilities or groups you think are missing in the area?" more than one third of people (38%) interviewed said they thought nothing was missing. Among those who had a view about what is needed the most common responses were more community spaces, more green spaces/trees and more children's facilities.

8. Stakeholders from the three different wards share the view that there is a lack of accessible green spaces and amenities for young people.
9. Stakeholders stated that different spaces and places are valued by local residents in each ward. There is a common thread on churches and green spaces as places that bring people together but little overlap in use between people living in each ward.
10. The lack of night-time economy in Abbey ward is associated with low perception of safety and there is no safe access from this area to the night-time amenities in Petersfield. Stakeholders report that these are not affordable for most Abbey residents.

## PEOPLE

### About the community:

11. There is strong sense of social integration with 89% of people who took part in street interviews agreeing that “this is a place where people from different backgrounds get along”.

### About their engagement:

12. 35% of respondents are involved in local groups in the area. Their involvement varies greatly and there is no overlap in what they are engaged with.
13. Street survey respondents disagree they have influence over decisions locally - 70% said they tended to or definitely disagreed with the statement “I feel I can personally influence decisions affecting the area”.
14. Stakeholders felt there is fatigue about consultation and engagement in development. This is linked to a perception that recent developments in the area have provided few community benefits.

## CHANGE

### About perception of change:

15. 64% of the people who took part in street interviews believe that change in the area is benefitting residents. However, stakeholders felt more negative about recent change to the area, particularly towards development on Newmarket Road which provided no community benefits.
16. There is no straightforward consensus on the change respondents want to see in their local area as different wards have different priorities. Abbey ward stakeholders felt they needed something to put them more on the map more, while Petersfield stakeholders are more interested in preserving the character of Mill Road and the convenience of the Beehive.

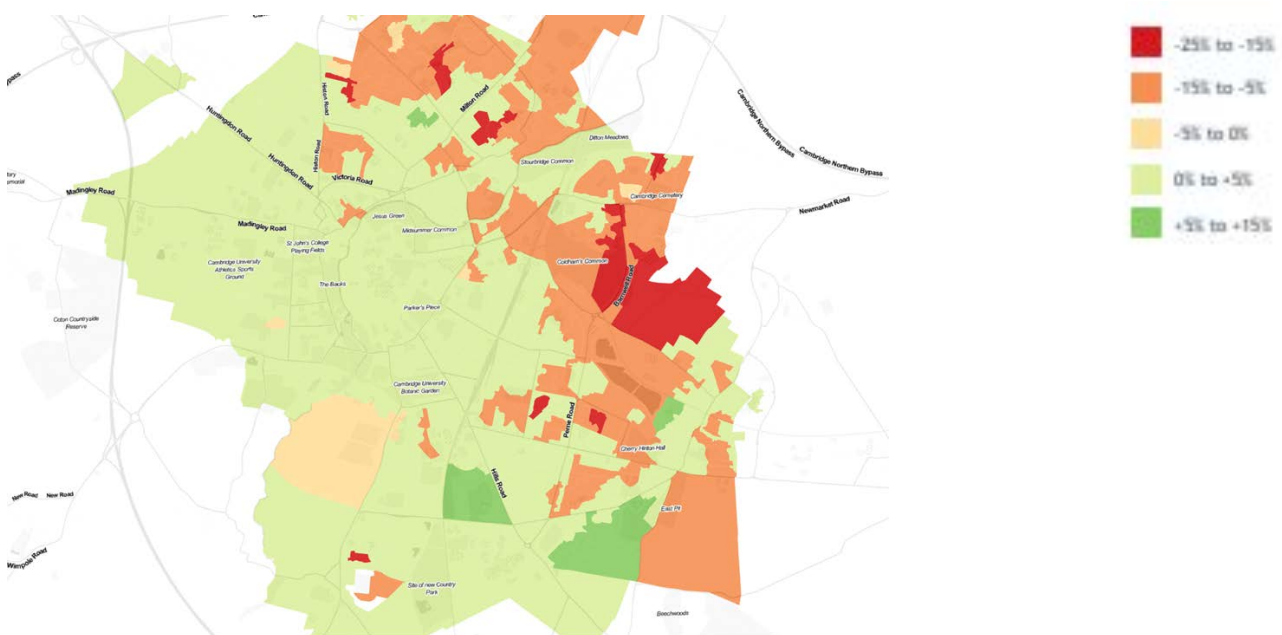


## Comparing community dynamics benchmarks to the data

Social Life has devised a way of predicting how people feel about their local areas using questions derived from national surveys. The sample sizes of these surveys are not large enough to allow us to disaggregate responses directly to small local areas. However, we can match this data to small areas using the ONS' (Office for National Statistics) "Area Classifications" categories at "Output Area" level. This enables us to see how residents of small areas are likely to feel. Area classifications have been developed by ONS to understand social attitudes in local areas. Community Dynamics data is predictive data, not a robust portrait of a neighbourhood. It is useful as a benchmark to compare with primary research data, because it tells us what residents of the area are likely to perceive. Where a score is higher than the average it suggests that there are strengths in the area that mean it is outperforming what would be expected; where scores are lower there is a suggestion that there are weaknesses.

### Comparing street interview data with community dynamics benchmark (See appendix for comparative table)

- A larger proportion of survey respondents plans to remain resident of the area for a number of years than would be expected in comparable areas.
- Feelings of belonging are higher among survey respondents than would be expected in comparable areas.
- Sense of influence over decisions affecting the area is similar among people surveyed than would be expected in comparable areas.
- In Romsey and Abbey ward, people feel more positive about relationships between people from different backgrounds than in comparable areas (in Petersfield perceptions were similar)



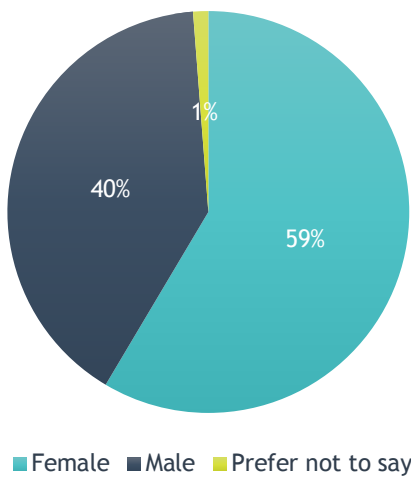
Map showing predicted responses to the questions 'Do you think this is an area where people from different background get on with each other?' Survey responses demonstrated that people in Abbey and Romsey felt more positive about relationships than the predictive data. (See all maps in appendix)

# 3 About the research

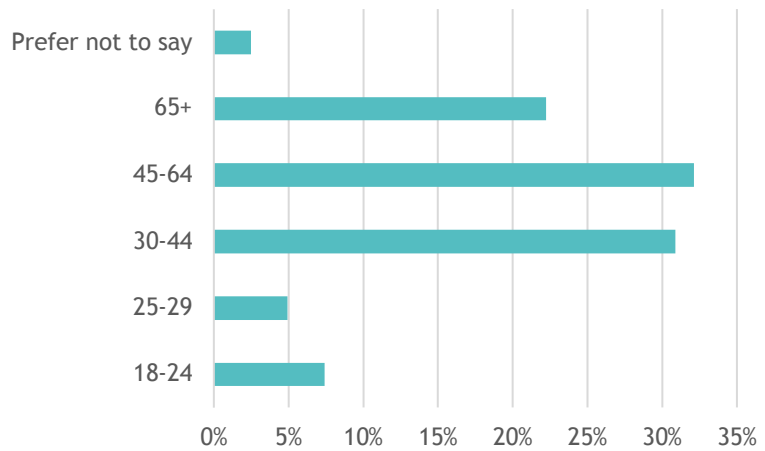
## How we went about it

- In April and May 2022, the Social Life team carried out 84 street interviews, asking people we spoke to about which spaces they use, what they value locally, whether they participate in any groups or networks in the area, any barriers they face to accessing spaces, and how they perceive change locally. People interviewed were over 18 years old and their characteristics were representative of the local population in terms of tenure and age.
- We spoke with fifteen local stakeholders from local groups and organisations and the council, this includes three group interviews with all the councillors from each ward. The interviews aim to build a better understanding of how social infrastructure is supporting local residents.
- We received three emails from residents engaged with local groups who shared their perspective on the area unprompted.

## Street interview demographic breakdown

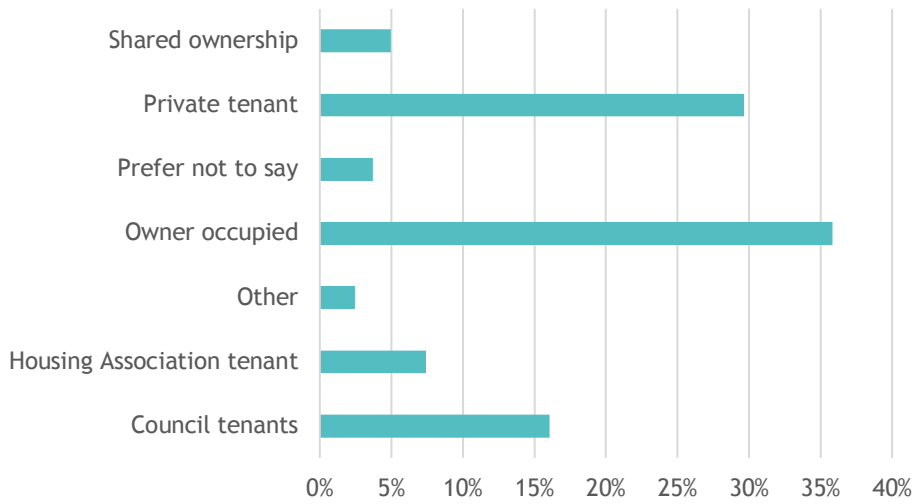


Gender breakdown (N=82)

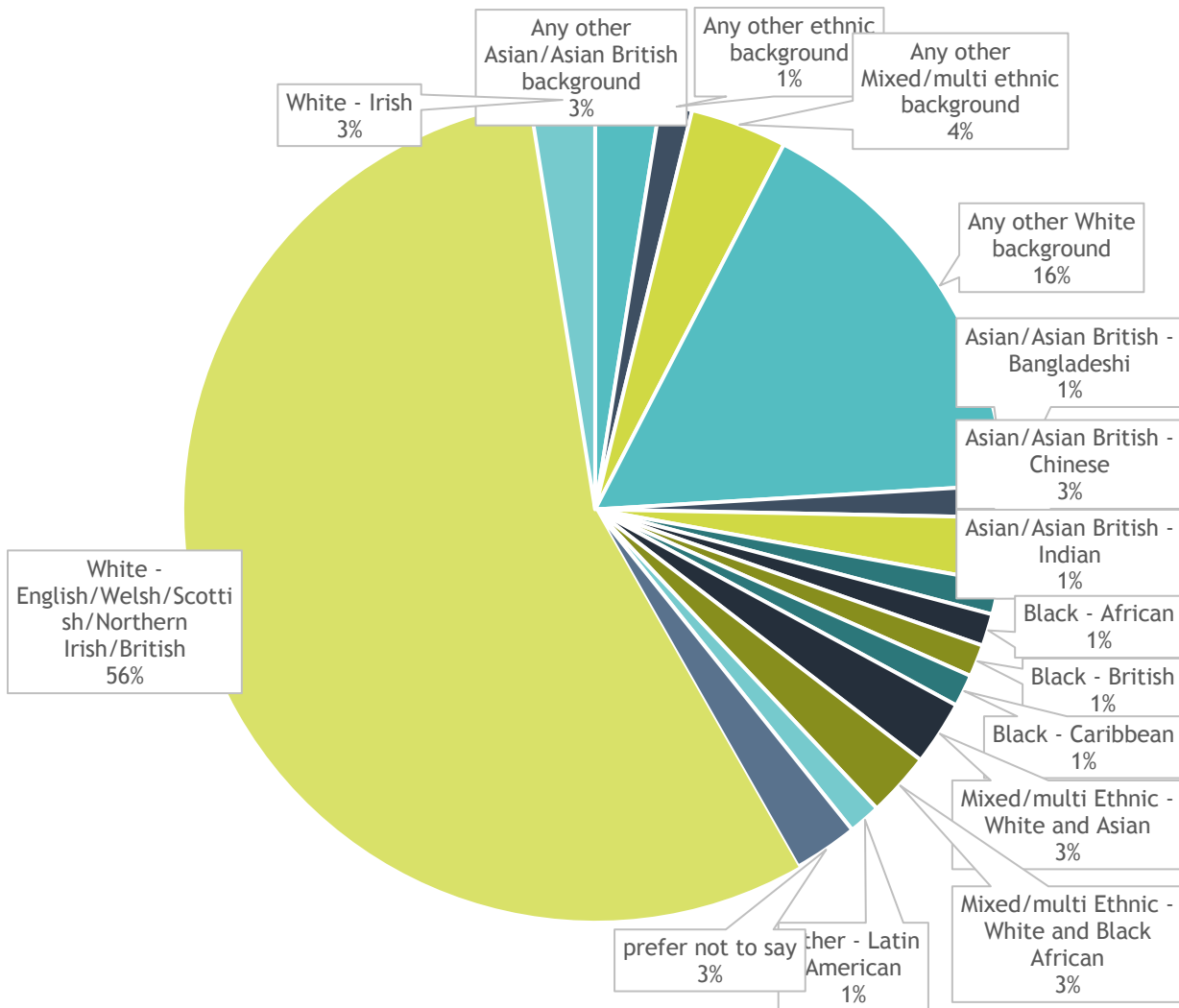


Age breakdown (N=81)

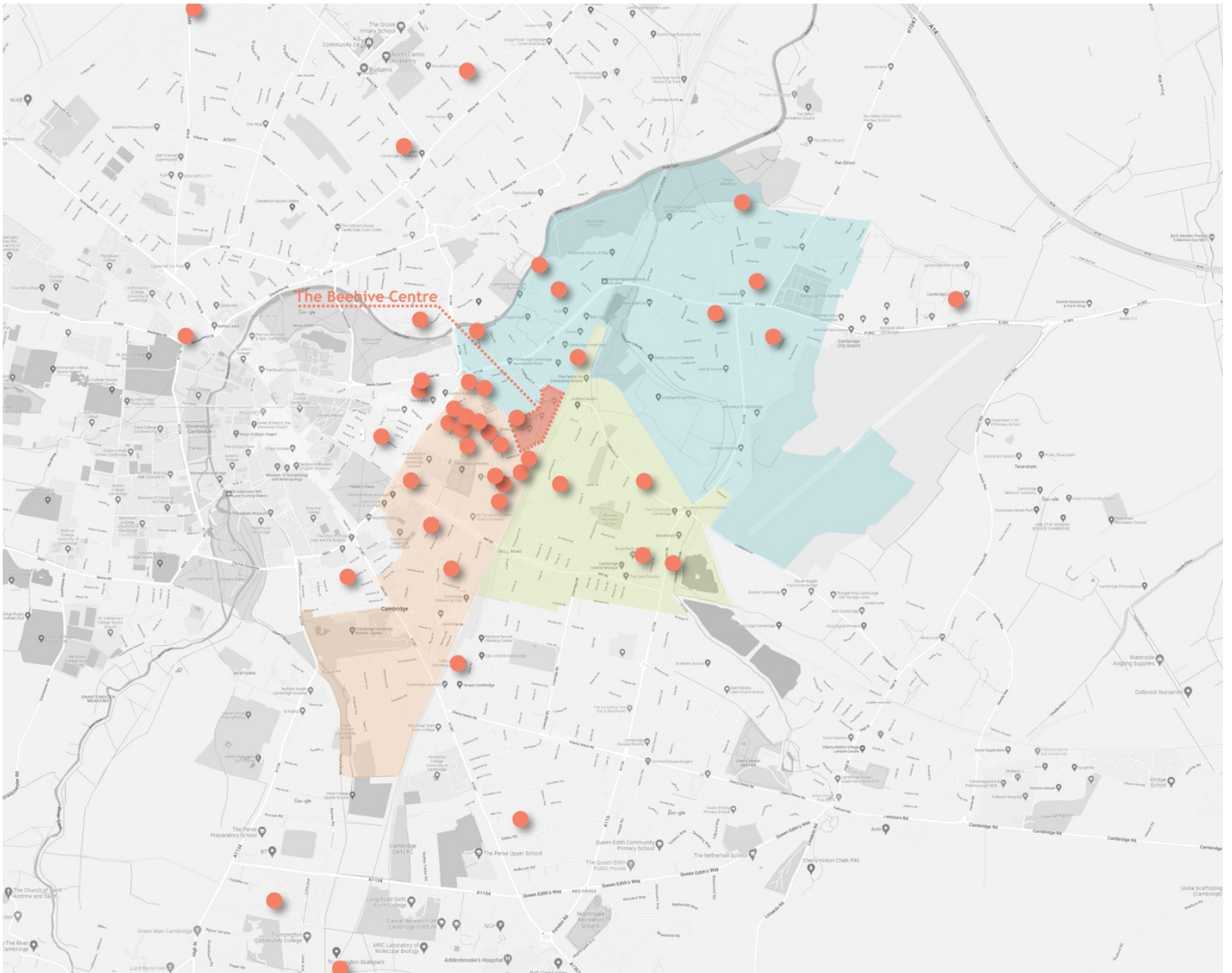




Housing tenure breakdown (N=81)



Ethnic group breakdown (N=79)



Map showing street interview respondents' postcodes. Most respondents live in Petersfield ward close to the Beehive Centre, Abbey and Romsey respondents travel from significantly further away to access the centre's amenities.



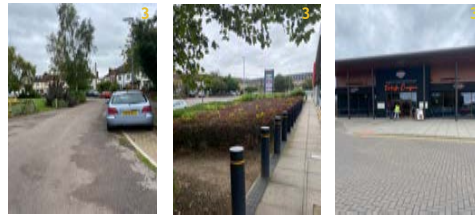
The Social Life fieldteam at work

**SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AROUND THE BEEHIVE SHOPPING CENTRE**

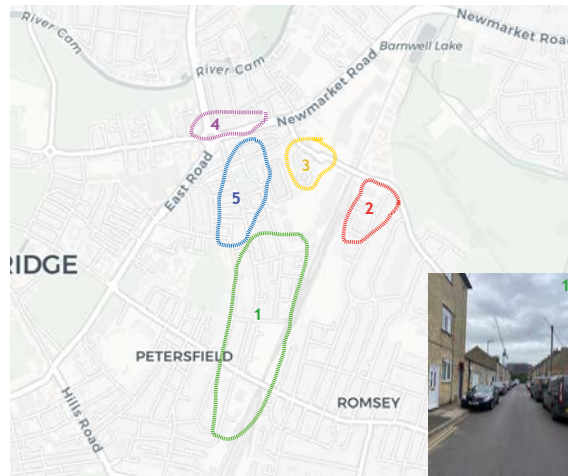


# 4 About the area

- The Beehive Retail Park is located to the east of Cambridge city centre, about 20 minute walk from the station. It sits within the boundaries of the Abbey ward, directly adjacent to the Petersfield ward to the south. The main traffic arteries including Newmarket road and Coldham Lane and the railway line that surround the site make the Beehive feel isolated from the adjacent residential neighbourhoods. However it is very well connected by road access to wider Cambridge.
- Three pedestrian pathways connect the site with the Petersfield area. Abbey and Romsey residents are less directly connected to the site due to distance to walk and large infrastructural boundaries such as Coldham’s Common, the railway lines and Newmarket Road.
- There are affluent residential neighbourhoods including period housing and a more recent development to the south of the centre in Petersfield wards. To the north is an industrial complex and Barnwell to the northeast in Abbey Ward is less affluent.



The Beehive Centre sits at the intersect of several different types of neighbourh  
 The Centre is isolated geographically by it design and hard boundaries, however its position near main roads and roundabouts makes it accessible to many parts of north Cambridge.  
 How the Centre serves these neighbourhoc and areas further away at present, and the potential for future social infrastructure w key questions for the next stages of this w



The areas adjacent to the Beehive Centre have different characteristics. On an initial visit we found five potential neighbourhoods to investigate further.

- Area 1 is around Devonshire Road, Kingston St & Ashworth St. This is a well established thriving area with good social facilities.
- Area 2 is across the railway down Coldhams Lane. Newer apartments and older semi detached homes.
- Area 3 including the retail and social spaces on Coldhams Lane and a pocket of housing on Silverwood Close.
- Area 4 is Newmarket Rd, with apartments, well established shops, student housing and much traffic.
- Area 5 is a quieter area around Abbey St and York St, older, green and well established with new homes around St Matthews Gardens.



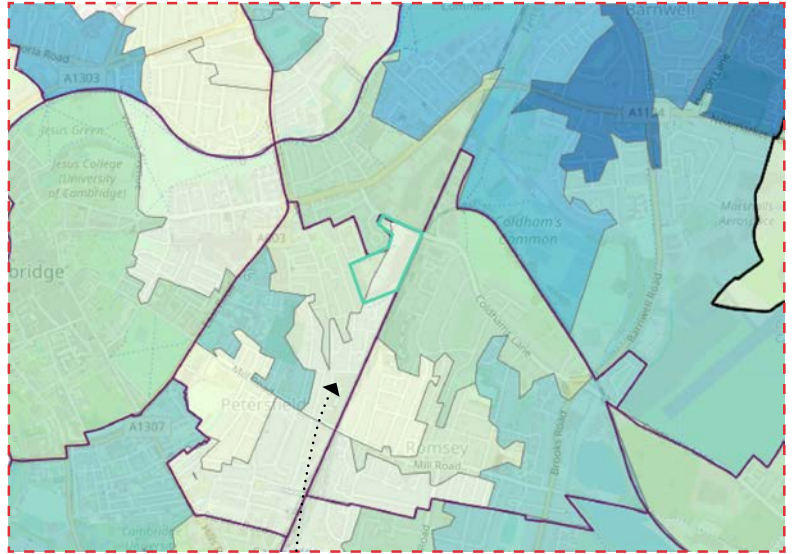
## Initial analysis of the neighbourhoods around the site

## Index of Multiple Deprivation (general IMD), 2019



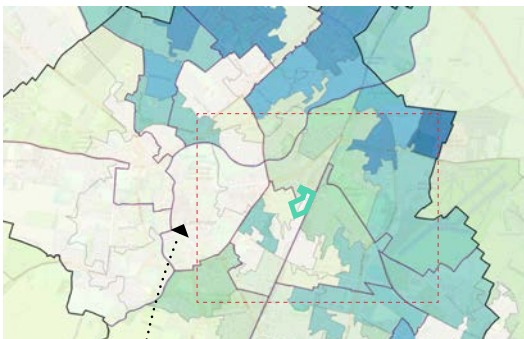
Cambridge

Some North and Eastern neighbourhoods such as Barnwell are amongst the top 20% **MOST** deprived areas in England.



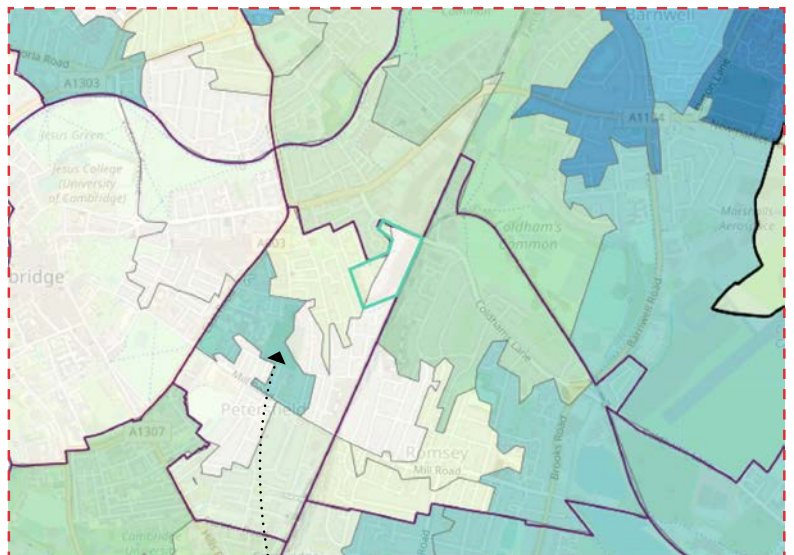
The area South of the Beehive Centre however is in the top 30% **LEAST** deprived, with this deprivation increasing gradually towards Coldham' Common and the North of Petersfield.

## Income Deprivation Domain, 2019



Cambridge

In terms of income, a large part of central and West Cambridge score better than any other domain, sitting in the top 10% **LEAST** deprived in England. Like the IMD however, Northern and Eastern parts of the city score worse, with some areas sitting in the bottom 20% such as parts of Barnwell and Fen Ditton.



Similar to the IMD, whilst the study area scores relatively well, surrounding areas score far worse such as neighbourhoods to the North of Petersfield which sit in the **BOTTOM 50%** of deprivation.





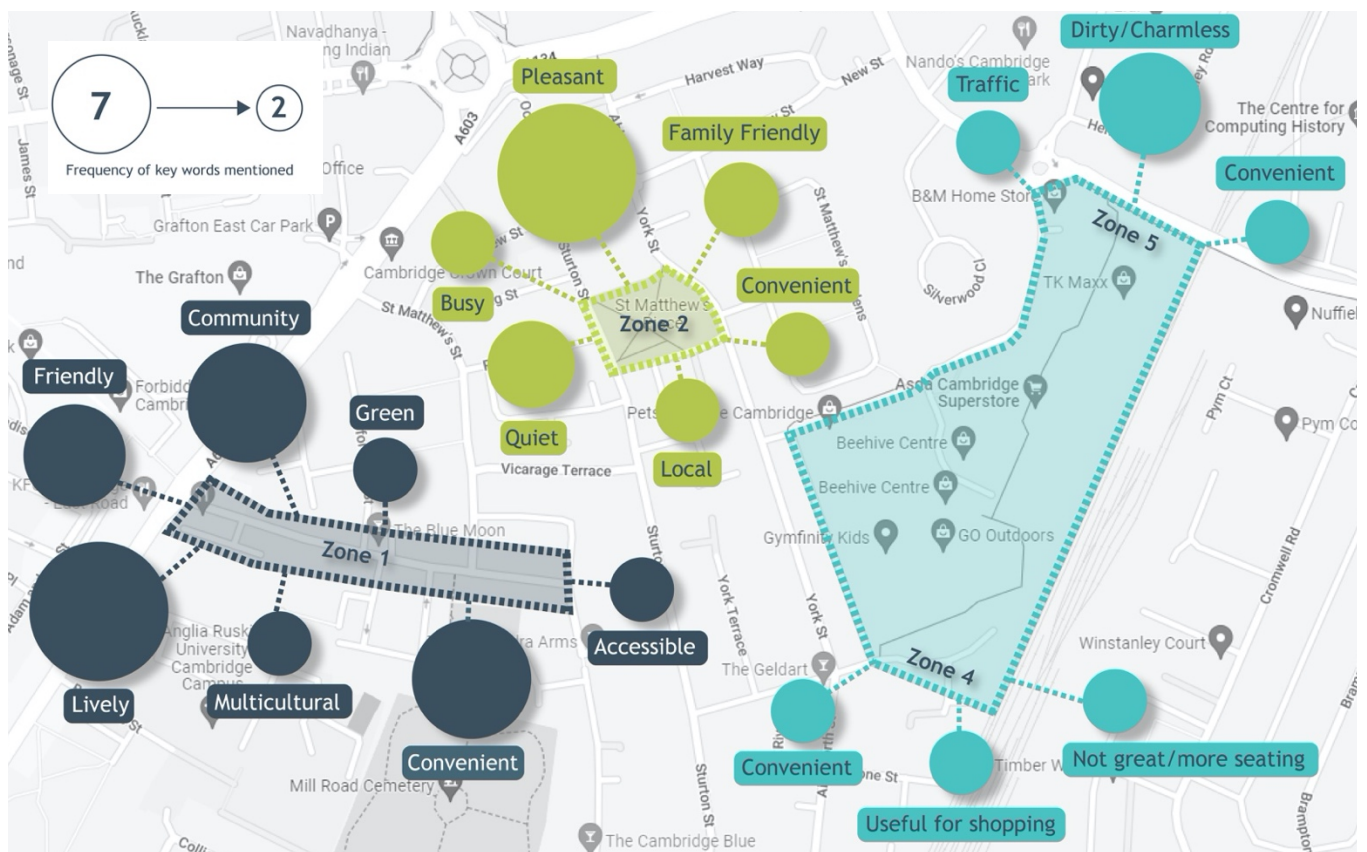
# 5 What we have found

## 5.1 PLACES

### Neighbourhood descriptions

The three wards are described very differently. The ward boundaries - roads and railways - divide neighbourhoods and these boundaries map onto how the area is perceived by the stakeholders interviewed.

- **Abbey ward** was described by stakeholders as the “forgotten ward” and the “hidden gem”, “the rough bit”, “peaceful, affordable and village-like”.
- **Petersfield ward** was described as “vibrant, exciting”, “no open space” and “extreme wealth disparity”.
- **Romsey ward** was described as “a middle-class area that is developing and getting more and more expensive to live in” with “a unique personality” and “a sense of community.”



Map showing most used words to describe the area from the street interviews mapped to the location (“zones”) they were carried out.

- Areas directly around the Beehive centre have more negative descriptions such as ‘dirty’ and ‘not great’.
- The word convenient is used in all four areas. The more residential areas in Petersfield are described as ‘pleasant’, ‘friendly’ and ‘community’.

## Amenities and social infrastructure

75% of people interviewed said they strongly agree that local places or facilities are important to their social life. 18% said that they tend to agree with this statement.

The most frequently used places and spaces in the local area were green spaces (80%), followed by health facilities (56%) and “other” (52%) places including cafes and hairdressers.

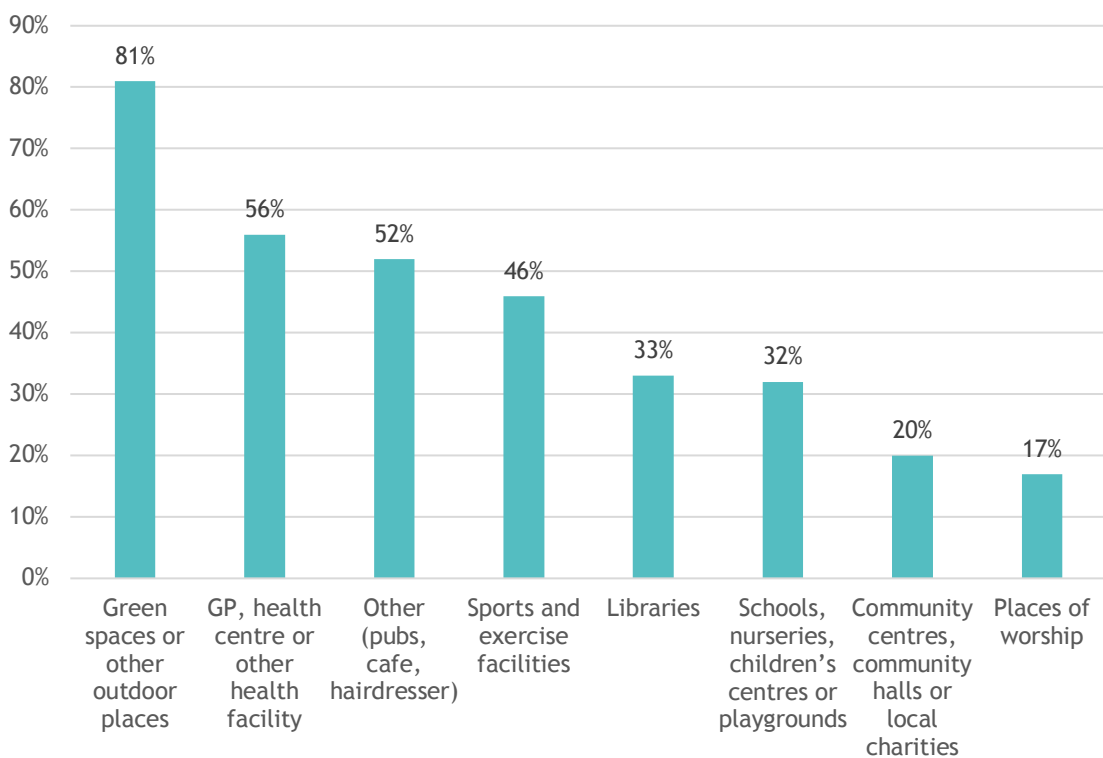
The most commonly used green spaces were St Matthew’s Piece (37 mentions); Midsummer Common (15 mentions); Coldham’s Common (13 mentions); Parkers Piece (9 mentions); and Stourbridge Common (8 mentions).

The most commonly used health facilities were the York Street Surgery (21 mentions) - all other health facilities were only mentioned once.

The most commonly used “other” facilities were the Costa Coffee at the Beehive and the Geldart (both 7 mentions) and the Blue Moon (4 mentions). 50 different other places were mentioned, but most only once.

Across the other categories, places and spaces that were mentioned more than five times include St Matthew’s Primary School (13 mentions); Cambridge Central Library (19 mentions); and the Nuffield Gym (8 mentions).

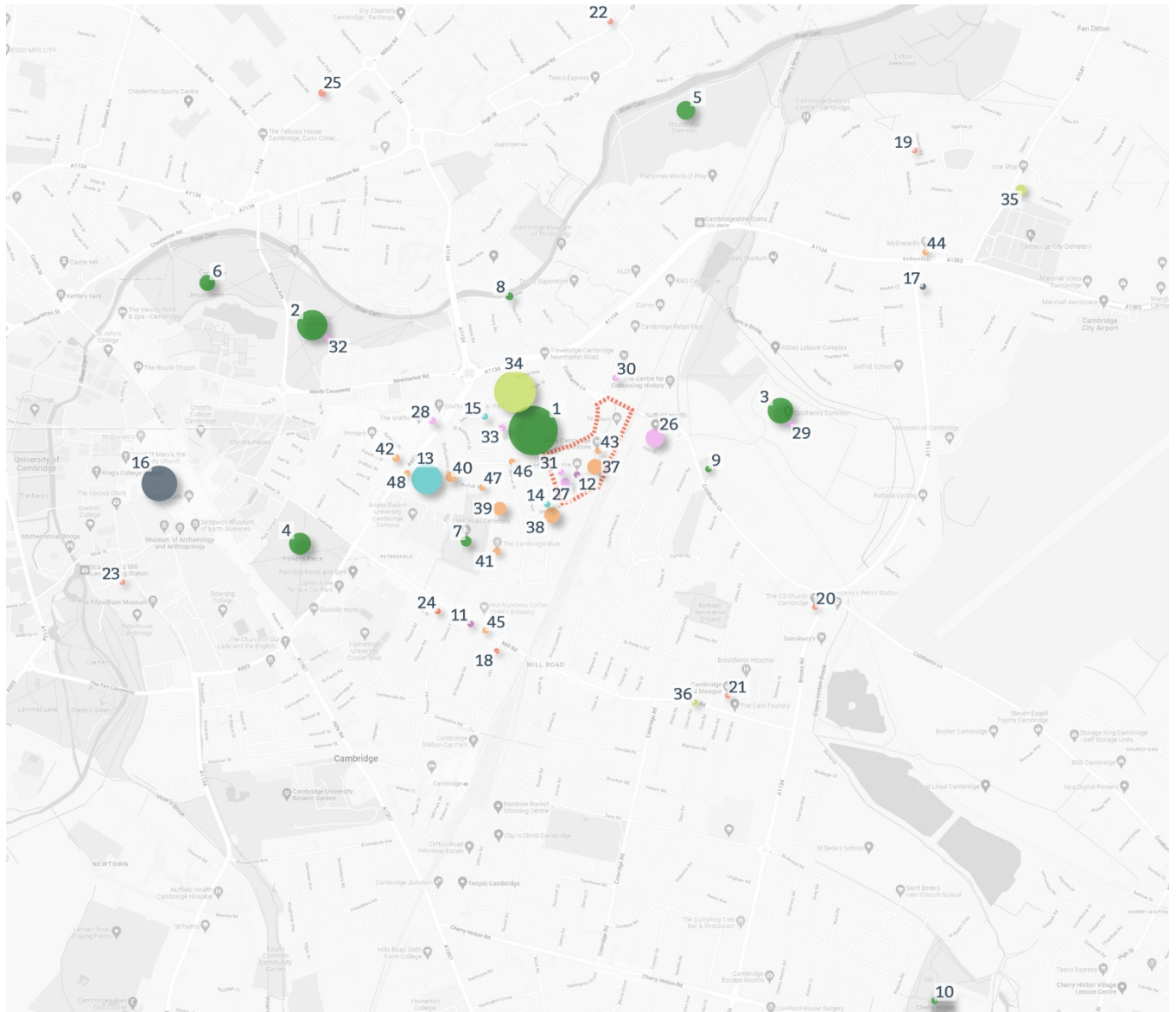
Street interview respondents overwhelmingly felt that green spaces were the most important to them (28 mentions), the main reason being for leisure (7 mentions) and socialising (5 mentions). The second most valued amenity are shops from the Beehive (7 mentions) all for convenience reasons (7 mentions).



Places in the local area that street interviewees had been to in the last month (N=284, more than one place could be named)



## Social infrastructure map



Map showing the spaces most used by respondent by frequency

**Green spaces or other outdoor places**

- 1 St Matthew's Piece
- 2 Midsummer Common
- 3 Coldham's Common
- 4 Parker's Piece
- 5 Stourbridge Common
- 6 Jesus Green
- 7 Mill Road Cemetery
- 8 Walk along the river
- 9 Coldhams Recreation Ground
- 10 Cherry Hinton Hall Park

**\*Community centres, halls or local charities**

- 11 Mill Road
- 12 The Beehive Centre

\*General areas of community centres, halls or local charities, given by participants.

Boundary of the Beehive Centre

Frequency of mentions

**Schools, nurseries, children's centres or playgrounds**

- 13 St Matthew's Primary School & Nursery
- 14 Sleaford Play Area
- 15 Brunswick Nursery School

**Libraries**

- 16 Cambridge Central Library
- 17 Barnwell Road Library

**Places of worship**

- 18 Masjid Al Ikhlas & Cambridge Islamic Centre
- 19 Barnwell Baptist Baptist Church
- 20 The C3 Church
- 21 Cambridge Central Mosque
- 22 Chesterton Methodist Church
- 23 Little St Mary's
- 24 Abu Bakr Jamia Mosque
- 25 St Laurence's Church

**Sports and exercise facilities**

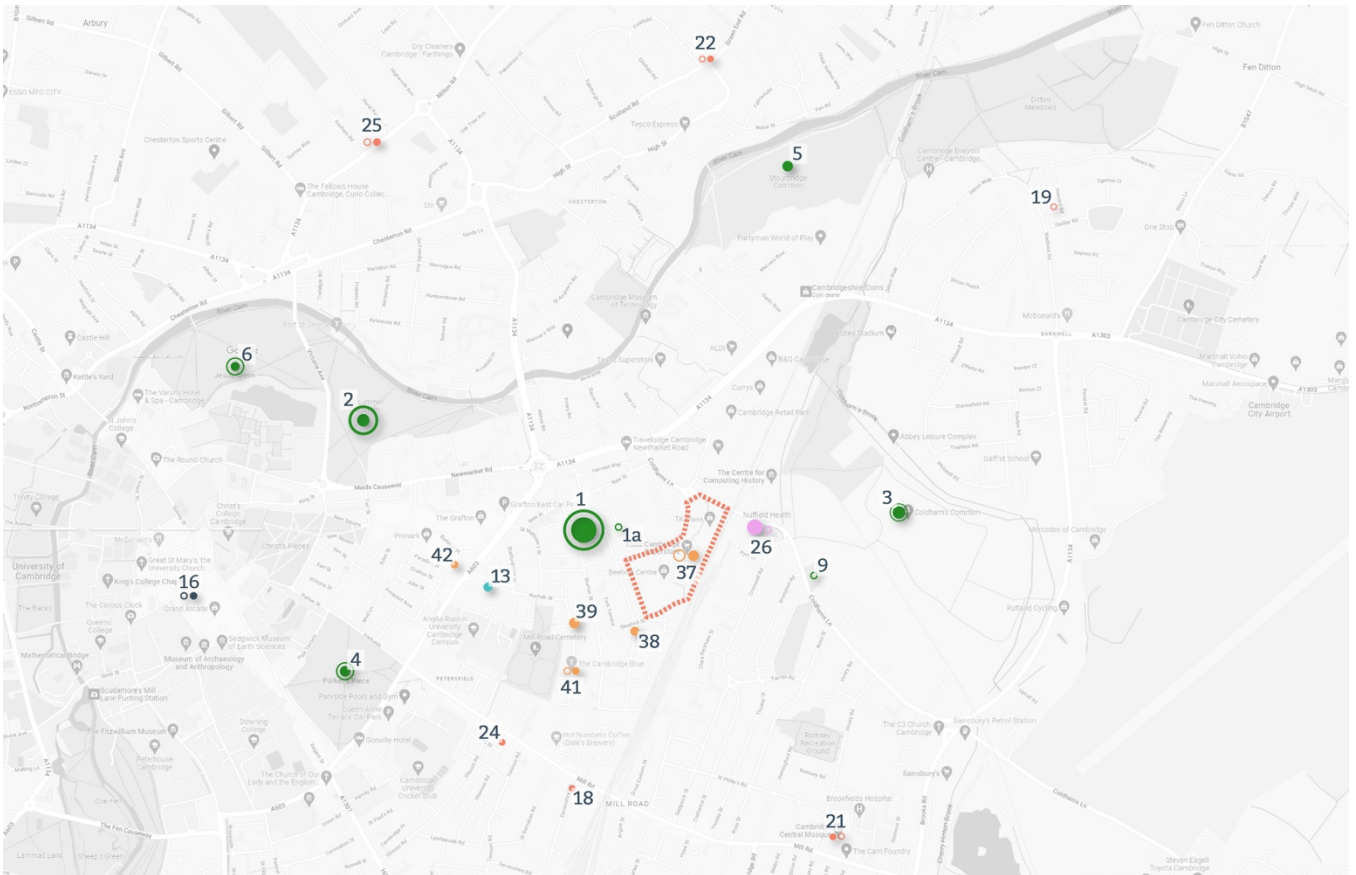
- 26 Nuffield gym
- 27 Everlast Gym at the Beehive
- 28 Pure Gym
- 29 Coldham's Common
- 30 Gym Group
- 31 Gymfinity kids at the Beehive
- 32 Midsummer Common
- 33 St Matthew's Piece

**GP, health centre or other health facility**

- 34 York Street GP Surgery
- 35 East Barnwell Health Centre
- 36 Mill Road surgery

**Other (pubs, cafe, hairdressers)**

- 37 Costa at the Beehive
- 38 The Geldart
- 39 The Alexander Arms
- 40 The Blue Moon
- 41 Cambridge Blue Pub
- 42 Charlies Coffee company
- 43 Asda
- 44 McDonalds
- 45 Mill Road Shops
- 46 The Dobbler's Inn
- 47 The Norfolk Street Bakery
- 48 Thirve Cafe



Map showing the most important spaces used for social contact by frequency

○ Places which are most important to you for spending time with people you know?

● Places you spend time with people from a different background to you?

**Green spaces or other outdoor places**

- 1 St Matthew's Piece
- 1a St Matthew's Garden
- 2 Midsummer Common
- 3 Coldham's Common
- 4 Parker's Piece
- 5 Stourbridge Common
- 6 Jesus Green
- 9 Coldhams Recreation Ground

**Schools, nurseries, children's centres or playgrounds**

- 13 St Matthew's Primary School & Nursery

**Libraries**

- 16 Cambridge Central Library

**Places of worship**

- 18 Masjid Al Ikhlas & Cambridge Islamic Centre
- 21 Cambridge Central Mosque
- 22 Chesterton Methodist Church
- 24 Abu Bakr Jamia Mosque
- 25 St Laurence's Church

**Sports and exercise facilities**

- 26 Nuffield gym

**Other (pubs, cafe, hairdressers)**

- 37 Costa at the Beehive
- 38 The Geldart
- 39 The Alexander Arms
- 41 Cambridge Blue Pub
- 42 Charlies Coffee company

**Community centres, halls or local charities, mentioned fewer than twice (not mapped):**

- The community hall in St Matthews Church
- East Barnwell Community Centre
- Cambridge Women's Resource Centre
- The C3 Church
- University Of The Third Age

Boundary of the Beehive Centre

Frequency of mentions

- Generally, the spread of responses is wide however the maps highlight that green spaces are the most used spaces and valued for socialising.
- St Matthews Piece is the most used amenity for socialising.
- The York Street health facility and Nuffield Gym are also mentioned repeatedly as essential spaces to the area.
- Finally, several of the pubs in Petersfield are important social spaces.

The survey asked people to say where they go to spend time with people they know and where they go that brings them into contact with people from different backgrounds.

Green spaces were the place that was perceived to be most important for spending time with people you know (58% of people interviewed reported this) followed by the “other” category (34% of people interviewed), sports and exercise facilities (12%) and schools and nurseries (11%).

When asked about spending time with people from different backgrounds, green spaces and “other” places and spaces were also important (mentioned by 33% and 23% of people interviewed). Sports and exercise facilities (9%), schools and nurseries and community centres (8%), community halls and local charities (8%) were mentioned by people interviewed as places that brought them together with people from different backgrounds.

Stakeholders reported that people living in Abbey and Petersfield wards use distinctly different spaces and that few amenities are used by people from different wards.

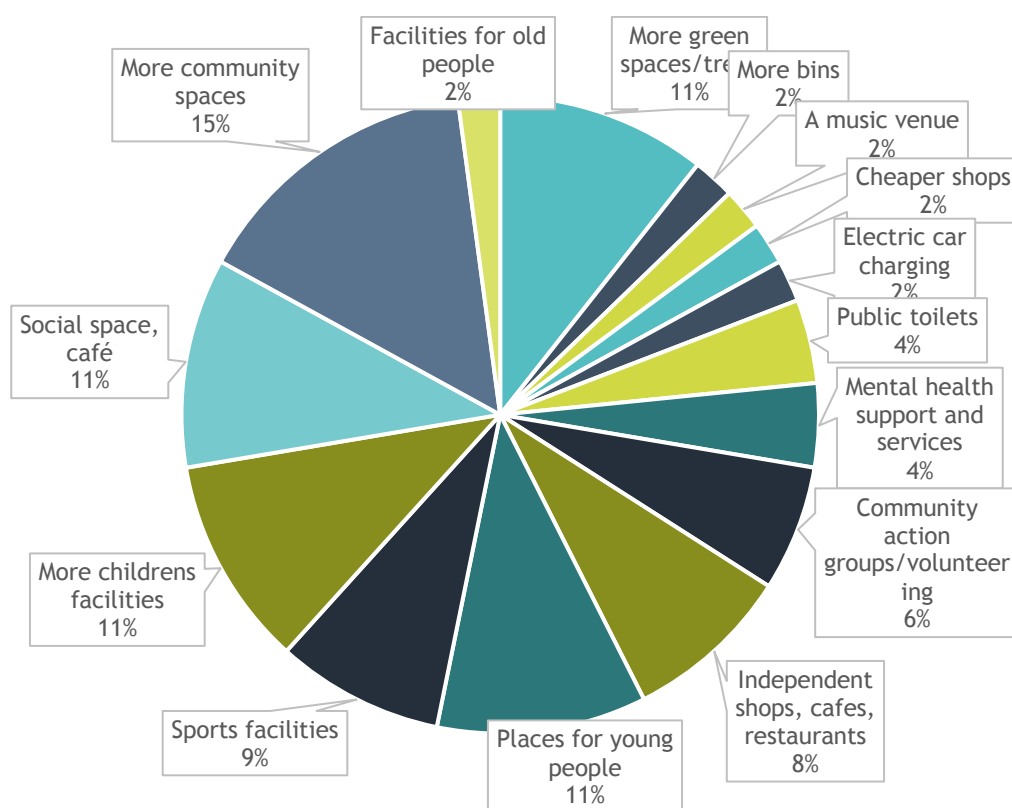
- Churches across both wards play a significant role in bringing local people together - churches in Abbey ward cater to the large elderly population. Barnwell Baptist Church is a community pantry and serves meals on occasions and is an important community hub for local people.
- Abbey pool is an important asset for young people in Abbey.
- The events organised by Abbey People bring local residents together and the organisation is an important local asset.
- Abbey allotments are an important resource and local groups who have access to some plots as well. Its use greatly increased during the pandemic.
- The numerous pubs in Petersfield are the main places Petersfield residents socialise as well as St Matthews Piece.
- Mill Road is described as being key to community life for people living in Romsey ward.
- There are some places particularly for vulnerable people: the Salvation Army in Petersfield ward provides support for homeless people; Edge Cafe in Romsey supports people with addictions and is a community café.
- The new station is valued by stakeholders from Petersfield. Stakeholders from Romsey and Abbey wards mentioned the new Chisholm trail as a good new option for cycling into Cambridge.

## What is missing locally

When asked “are there any places, facilities or groups you think are missing in the area?” 29 people or 38% said they thought nothing was missing.

The most common responses were:

- more community spaces (7 mentions)
- more green spaces/trees (5 mentions)
- more children’s facilities (5 mentions).



### Perceptions of what is missing locally (N=47)

- Most stakeholders agreed that there is a lack of accessible green space in the area. Abbey ward has access to Coldham Common but that is a large area that is not accessible to all - it is not used by families or elderly people for short walks. Petersfield has the lowest per capita square foot of green space across Cambridge and all respondents agree this is a major issue for the very densely populated ward.
- Stakeholders from across the area also agree that there is a lack of facilities for young people. There used to be a library in Petersfield that hasn’t been replaced.
- They reported that Petersfield currently lacks a community centre but one is promised as part of the Iron Works development. There is an agreement to use this space primarily for young people



and children's activities. Abbey ward has a community centre that is described as underfunded and under-used.

- Stakeholders perceive Abbey ward as lacking night-time activity, which effects people's perception of safety. Most respondents would not walk or cycle across the common at night to use venues towards the centre of Cambridge. They also commented that Abbey ward lacks cafe spaces, and places to linger.
- Romsey ward is described as lacking a library, benches to socialise, a community centre that is welcoming to everyone, and more capacity in the primary schools which is full.

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*What's missing? "More green spaces, more kids' playgrounds, more community spaces" (street interview)*

*What's missing? "I want to open a community cafe, which plays international/world music. A place for single mums like me where we can bring children and socialise. Somewhere that is open three times a week, after school, where people can discover about different cultures. A shared community space, kids can feel free, listen to music and dance. No alcohol, maybe serving tea and cakes. A place for mums and children to go after school, not Costa, a local (independent) place, not a chain." (street interview)*

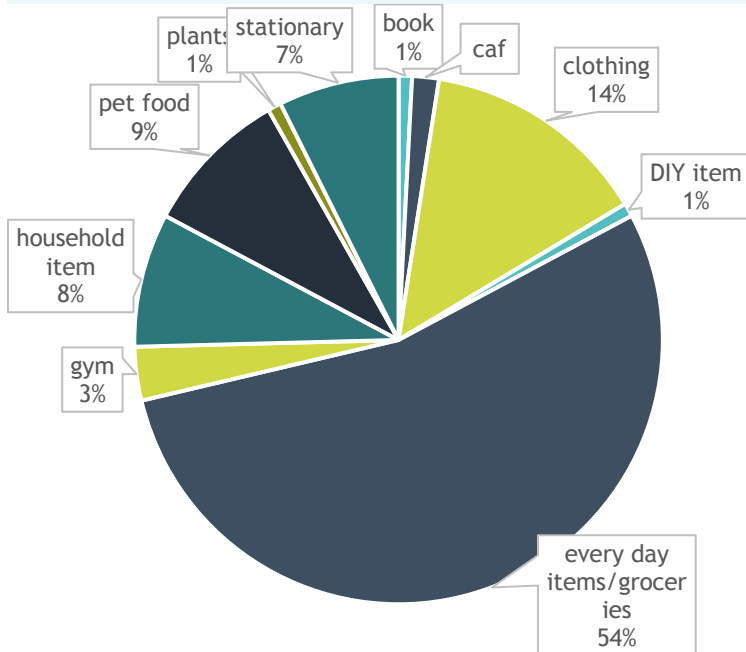
*"Youth facilities are missing. Older teenagers will not engage if it is not theirs. There is no day centre for older people. There is no mother and toddler centre – there used to be one at the Fields Children's Centre. The GP surgery no longer has breastfeeding support. There is no secondary school and so no evening classes and no sports facilities. Young people fall through the gaps. There are no local social places except for McDonalds. The library isn't open much since Covid but even before Covid it was only open three days a week." (stakeholder)*

*"It would be good to have a mixture of lower costs chain stores, but then also have room for independent stores as well. Romsey has a culture of having lot of independent stores. It would be good to have the balance." (stakeholder)*

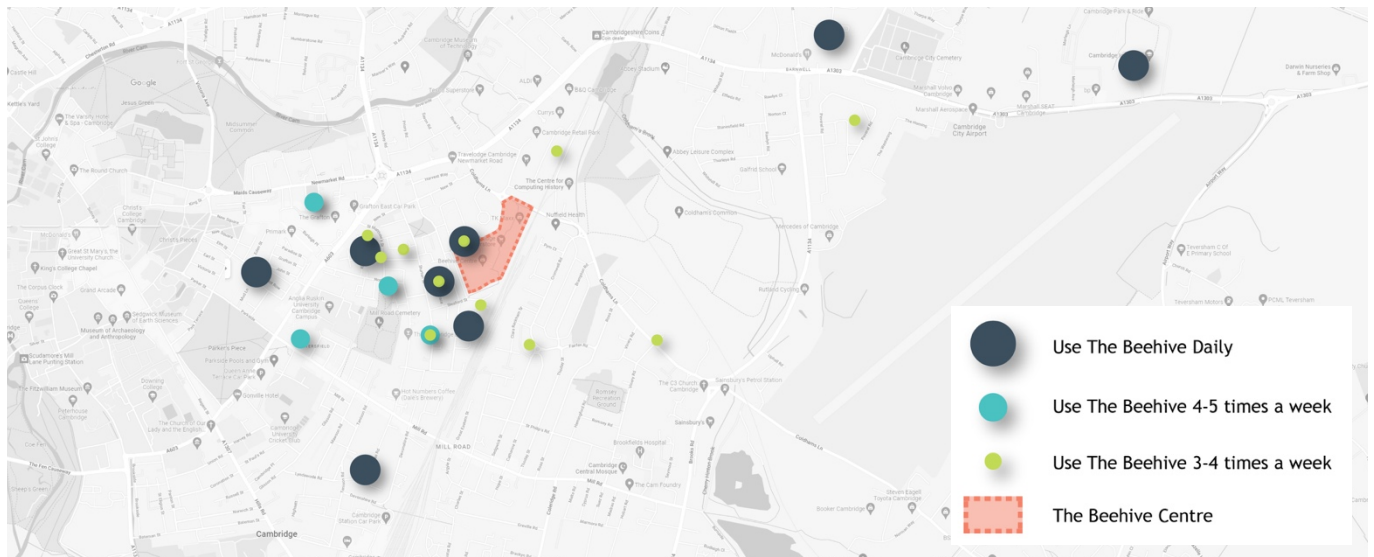
## Use and perception of the Beehive Retail Park

Most street survey respondents use the Beehive once a week (41%) and 38% use it more than once a week.

The main reason for visiting the Beehive is to shop for everyday items (54%) and the second most listed reason is to buy clothing (14%).



## Reason for shopping at the Beehive, by number of responses (N=122)



Map showing respondents that come to the Beehive centre more than once a week.

- This highlights that although most are local to the area, some residents from further away travel to the retail park daily for its amenities.



- Abbey and Petersfield stakeholder responses have distinct perceptions about the use of the Beehive Retail Park. Petersfield stakeholders value the Beehive as their only source of affordable food shopping in the area. Most mentioned they use it daily and describe it as very convenient.
- In Abbey ward, there are many other affordable options and so the retail park is mainly used for specific purchases. Abbey ward respondents feel the site is quite far and inaccessible unless driving for residents of the ward and acts as a barrier to access other parts of Cambridge.
- Petersfield respondents agree the gym is an important amenity and report that at weekends, young people congregate there.
- Romsey residents are said to rely on Asda and some of the shops at the Beehive, these shops were described as “a lifeline”.
- There is a strong agreement across the area that the retail park lacks safe pedestrian access to and that the level of traffic and congestion around the site has become increasingly problematic. Navigating the site by foot is also complex and there is not enough signage or pedestrian crossings.
- The current design of the Beehive is not integrated with the surrounding neighbourhoods. As one respondent mentioned it as if the site has “turned its back” to the surrounding areas. The design of the site was described by one as “uninspiring”.
- One respondent raised safety concerns at night because of the lack of night-time activity.
- The stores and amenities that were repeatedly mentioned as valued are Asda, M&S and Costa Coffee.

## 5.2 PEOPLE: relationships and engagement

### Social integration

89% of people who took part in street interviews agreed that “this is a place where people from different backgrounds get along”.

- Stakeholders also felt there is strong social cohesion within each ward. Petersfield respondents all felt different groups had a good harmonious relationship. They also noted that Petersfield is quite a diverse ward and there is support amongst different ethnic groups.
- Respondents also noted there was a social divide between Abbey Ward and Petersfield ward residents created by access with the Railway line marking the divide and lack of public transport, but also a more social discomfort and price barrier for local Abbey residents in accessing Petersfield amenities.

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*“Abbey people don’t go to Petersfield” (stakeholder)*

## Perception of safety

The majority of people interviewed feel safe in the area (71%).

- Stakeholders told us that they generally feel safe but highlighted problems in the area along Newmarket Road near new hotels have been developed. They described anti-social behaviour and prostitution in this area.
- Abbey respondents agreed they would not walk or cycle in the evening across the common and one mentioned issues with drug dealing in residential parts of the ward.

## Local engagement

35% of respondents are involved in local groups in the area. Their involvement varies greatly and there is no overlap in what they are engaged with.

Street survey respondents disagree they have influence over decisions locally - 70% said they tended to or definitely disagreed with the statement “I feel I can personally influence decisions affecting the area”.

- The stakeholders interviewed highlighted that Petersfield ward has an engaged community and a number of organised networks supporting local residents, traders and local causes. Romsey ward was also described as engaged, with a strong community that was active during the pandemic.
- The redevelopment plans on St Matthews Piece brought the community together to challenge the proposals. There is an active group still engaging locally on proposed changes to the area.
- There is a sense that these local networks and community organisations are fatigued by participating in research such as this one without being remunerated from their time. They spoke of feeling that they had little knowledge of where the information is going and what impact it will have on the development proposal. This may reflect a general fatigue with consultation and perceptions that developments locally have not responded to local needs.
- Abbey ward has a very successful community organisation that supports local residents but there is less engagement at the individual level, mainly due to social barriers such as time to commit and volunteer.

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***“Main issues is that being poor is quite time consuming, so we don’t have rich volunteer resident groups” (stakeholder)***

***“The area is in the 2nd decile of deprivation for open spaces. For this reason the community rises to stop development that can potentially take away their open green spaces. The only open green space available is St Matthews Piece which is well used. There is a green space nestled in St Matthews***

*Gardens housing, however this space is not as welcoming and appears as if its private.” (stakeholder)*

## 5.3 CHANGE

### Perceptions of change

64% of the people who took part in street interviews believe that change in the area is benefitting local residents.

When asked if change in the area has affected any of the places mentioned as social infrastructure, 24 respondents saw no visible change.

17 mentioned Covid as having had an impact locally for different reasons such as making the area quieter (4 mentions), increasing their use of outdoor parks (4 mentions) and affecting people’s behaviours socially (3 mentions).

The next most common response were amenity and business closures with 16 mentions, these included cafes (African cafe and CB2 cafe), Mill Road Library, shops in the Grafton centre and community and children centre on Sturton Street amongst others. Decrease in affordability was also mentioned by five respondents as a negative change in the area.

The majority of stakeholders however felt more negative about the impact of change in the area.

- Developments on Newmarket road including the hotels and student accommodation were criticised by stakeholders as places that did not give anything back to the community. These developments were heavily challenged to no avail so there may be a sense of fatigue.
- Petersfield benefitted in the past from a local library and community centre which have both closed down and stakeholder reported that these are still greatly missed locally, especially by young people.
- There has been a demographic shift in Petersfield in the last 10 years with escalating rent; the student population has been replaced by young families. The ironworks development is providing new housing, half of this will be affordable. However, there are concerns that services, including schools and green spaces, have not expanded to meet changing demand.

### Future change

- Abbey ward stakeholders report a sense of being the “forgotten ward” in Cambridge and they seek a change that will directly benefit residents there. The increase in the cost of living is disproportionately affecting this ward so they want to see future change that supports local residents with this crisis.

- Petersfield ward stakeholders value the options in their area with Mill Road offering independent ethnic cuisine, Cambridge central market providing fresh groceries and the Beehive for everyday items. Respondents feel they want to keep this balance and not create competition to Mill Road. There is not a consensus on what the Beehive should be stakeholders generally perceive that it must include additional, accessible green spaces.

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*“We never get anything and no one ever comes, there is a lack of a catalyst for change” (stakeholder)*

*“It would be nice to have something of that space for the community to have a nice good looking urban space, that is well designed spaces used day and night from a safety perspective as well.” (stakeholder)*

### **Impact of Covid**

- Most stakeholders agreed that covid brought the community together and had a positive impact on local engagement. In Abbey ward over 100 volunteers helped out with food deliveries and managing food hub donations. Several mutual aid groups were reported to have started in Romsey ward to support vulnerable people.
- The Beehive has seen a few closures such as Dorothy Perkins and Burtons but otherwise the pandemic caused little change.

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*“People were looking after their neighbours” (stakeholder)*

## **6 Next steps**

- A workshop will be carried out with the development team and further conversations to understand how amenities could be delivered through the development
- A social infrastructure plan for the new development will be finalised, date tbc.

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# 7 Appendix

To understand the research findings, it is important to be able to put them in context, to see how the experience of people who live around, use, visit and work in the Beehive Centre compares to other similar neighbourhoods. Without this it is difficult to understand the meaning of the data, for example whether a seemingly high figure is positive or what would be expected in a similar area. When exploring perceptions of a place, it is important to be able to reflect the impact of context. We know that experiences of living in a city like Cambridge will be different from life in a dense urban centre or a rural village, and that attitudes towards crime, neighbours, social integration and belonging are likely to be affected by the nature of the place, as well as by specific local factors.

## Community Dynamic

To give context to the data, we have explored data predicting how residents are likely to experience the area, based on Social Life's Community Dynamics data. This predicts how residents of an area are likely to feel about their home neighbourhood. This is a way of contextualising findings about perceptions of a place. This predictive data is useful as a benchmark to compare with primary research data, because it tells us what residents of the area are likely to perceive. Where a score is higher than the average it suggests that there are strengths in the area that mean it is out-performing what would be expected; where scores are lower there is a suggestion that there are weaknesses.

Community Dynamics data is taken from a method devised by Social Life<sup>2</sup> to predict how people feel about their local areas using questions derived from national surveys, including the Understanding Society Survey, the UK's largest longitudinal survey run by the research councils and funded by government, and the Community Life survey, owned by DCMS.

The sample sizes of these surveys are not large enough to allow us to disaggregate responses directly to small local areas. However, we can match this data to small areas using the ONS' (Office for National Statistics) "Area Classifications" categories at "Output Area" level. Area classifications have been developed by ONS to understand social attitudes in local areas. Area classifications can give powerful insights which can help inform and imagine place-based projects and interventions. They are based on a range of socio- demographic data for local neighbourhoods.<sup>3</sup>

Most of the areas to the around the Beehive Centre fall into the Output Area Classification 2a and 4a - these are typical of urban areas. A very small number of output areas fell into other OAC codes, 7a and 8d.

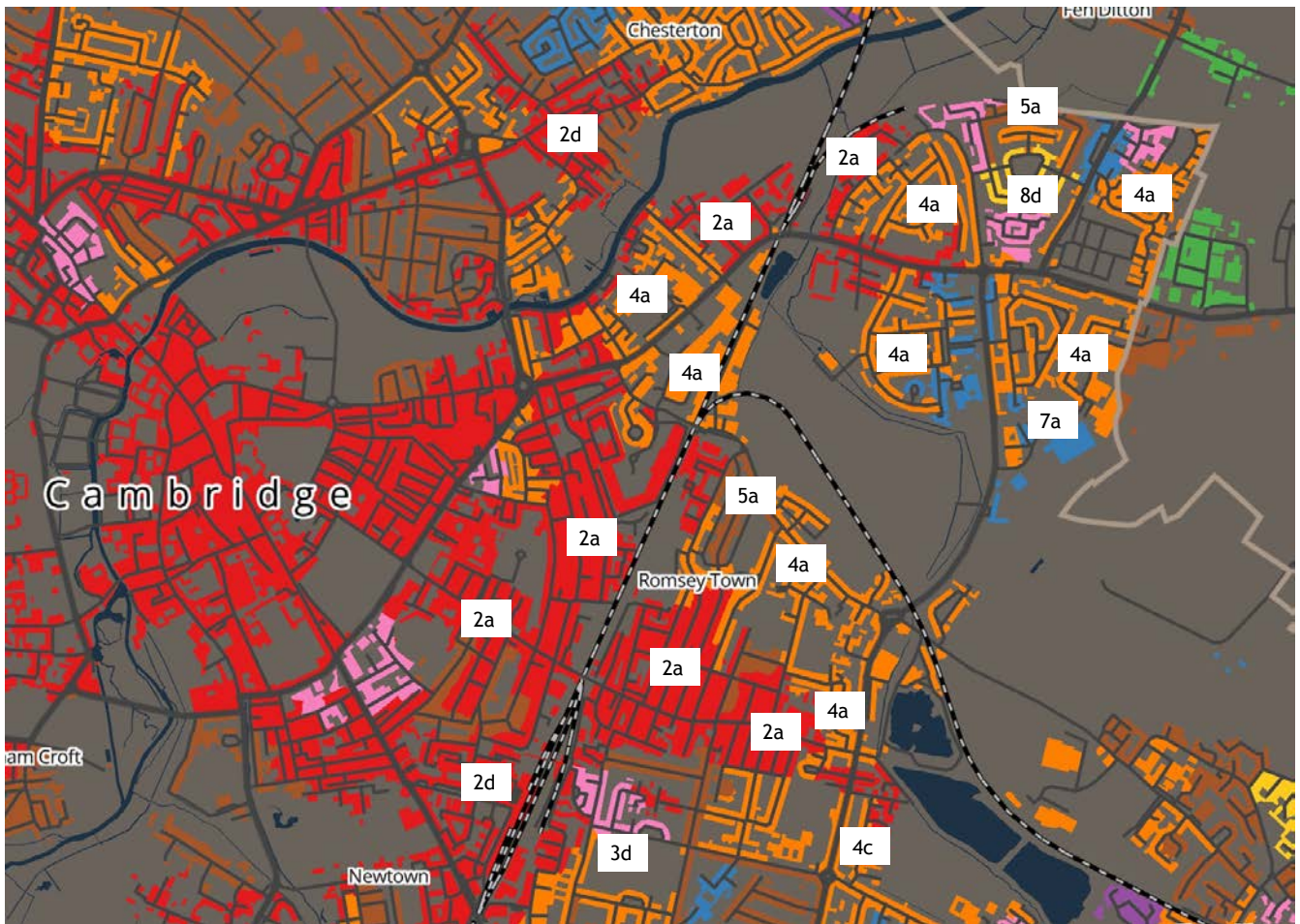
- Petersfield ward falls mainly into areas classified as 2a
- Romsey ward falls mainly into areas classified asm2a and 4a
- Abbey ward falls mainly into areas classified as 4a, 2a and 7a (+ very small areas of 8d)

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<sup>2</sup> Social Life (2016) Understanding Local Areas [http://www.social-life.co/publication/understanding\\_local\\_areas/](http://www.social-life.co/publication/understanding_local_areas/) <sup>7</sup>  
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/geography/geographicalproducts/areaclassifications>

<sup>3</sup> <sup>2</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/geography/geographicalproducts/areaclassifications>





Source: <https://mapmaker.cdrc.ac.uk/#/output-area-classification?h=2&lon=-1.5624&lat=51.5302&zoom=7.9>

The table below shows how the survey data compares to scores for the main OAC groups - 2a and 4a, and to the less frequent category 7a.

	2a	4a	7a	SURVEY
Plan to remain a resident of the area for a number of years.	49%	51%	56%	94%
Feel like I belong to the area.	52%	49%	52%	83%
Feel I can personally influence decisions affecting the area.	26%	27%	26%	29%
This is a place where people from different backgrounds get along	86%	76%	67%	89%
Feel safe walking alone in this area after dark	85%	75%	77%	71%
Satisfied with the area overall	76%	64%	62%	93%

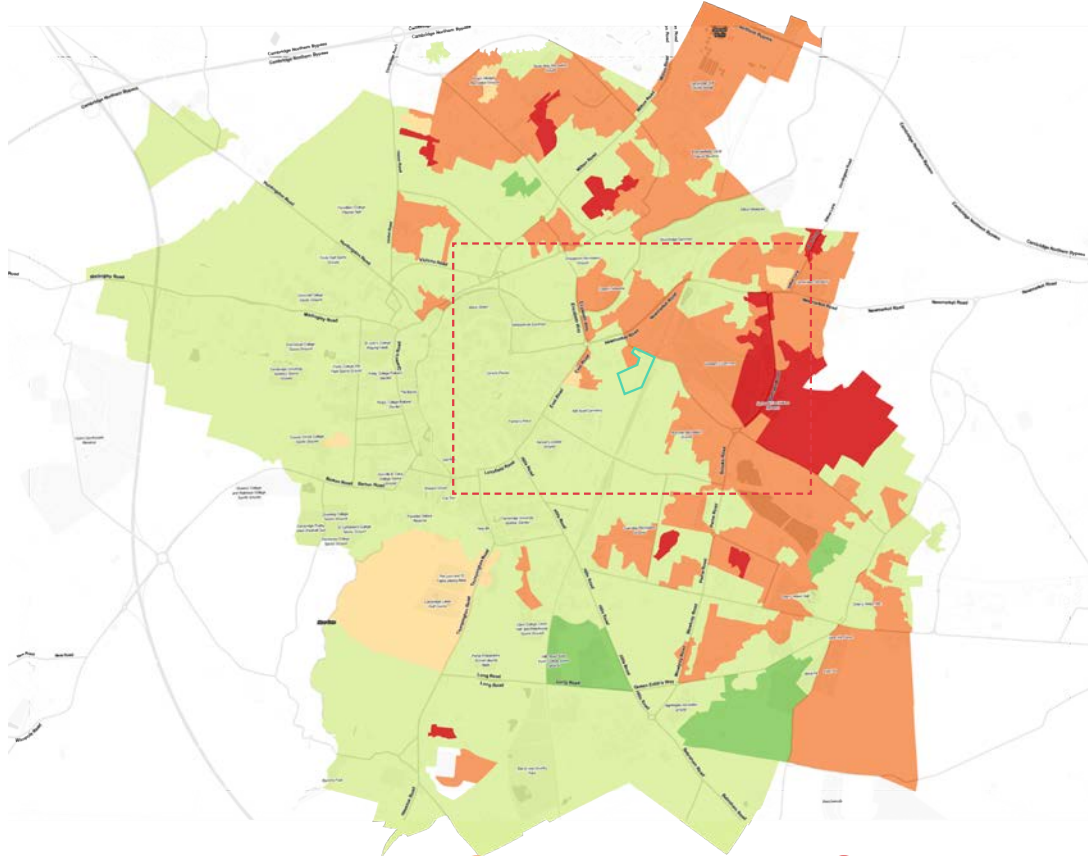


Comparison of this predictive data to residents' responses from the street interviews show that

- A larger proportion of survey respondents plans to remain resident of the area for a number of years than would be expected in comparable areas.
- Feelings of belonging are higher among survey respondents than would be expected in comparable areas.
- Sense of influence over decisions affecting the area is similar among people surveyed than would be expected in comparable areas.
- In Romsey and Abbey ward, people feel more positive about relationships between people from different backgrounds than in comparable areas (in Petersfield perceptions were similar)
- People who took part in the survey felt less safe than people in comparable areas.
- The people who took part in street interviews were more satisfied with the area overall than people living in comparable areas.

## Local social relationships

Cambridge



0% to +5% above comparable areas

-15% to -5% below comparable areas

-25% to -15% below comparable areas

-25% to -15%

-15% to -5%

-5% to 0%

0% to +5%

+5% to +15%

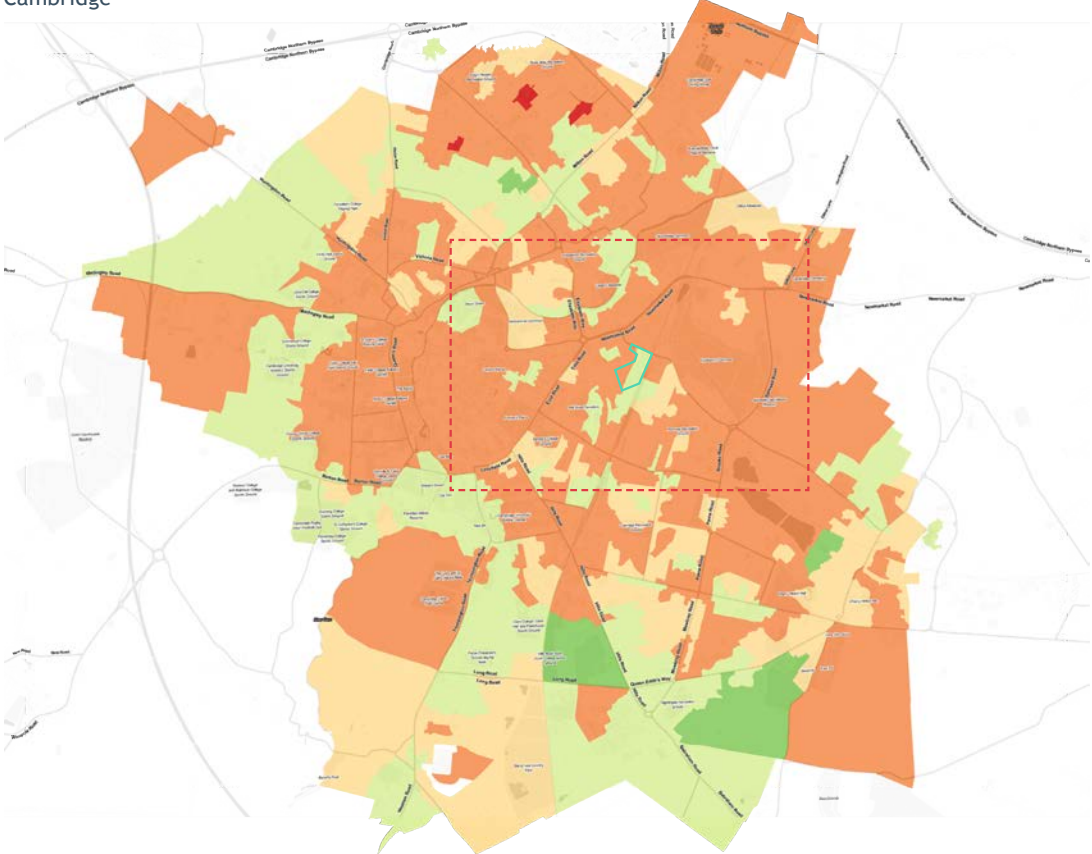
Surrounding area of the proposed site

Proposed site boundary



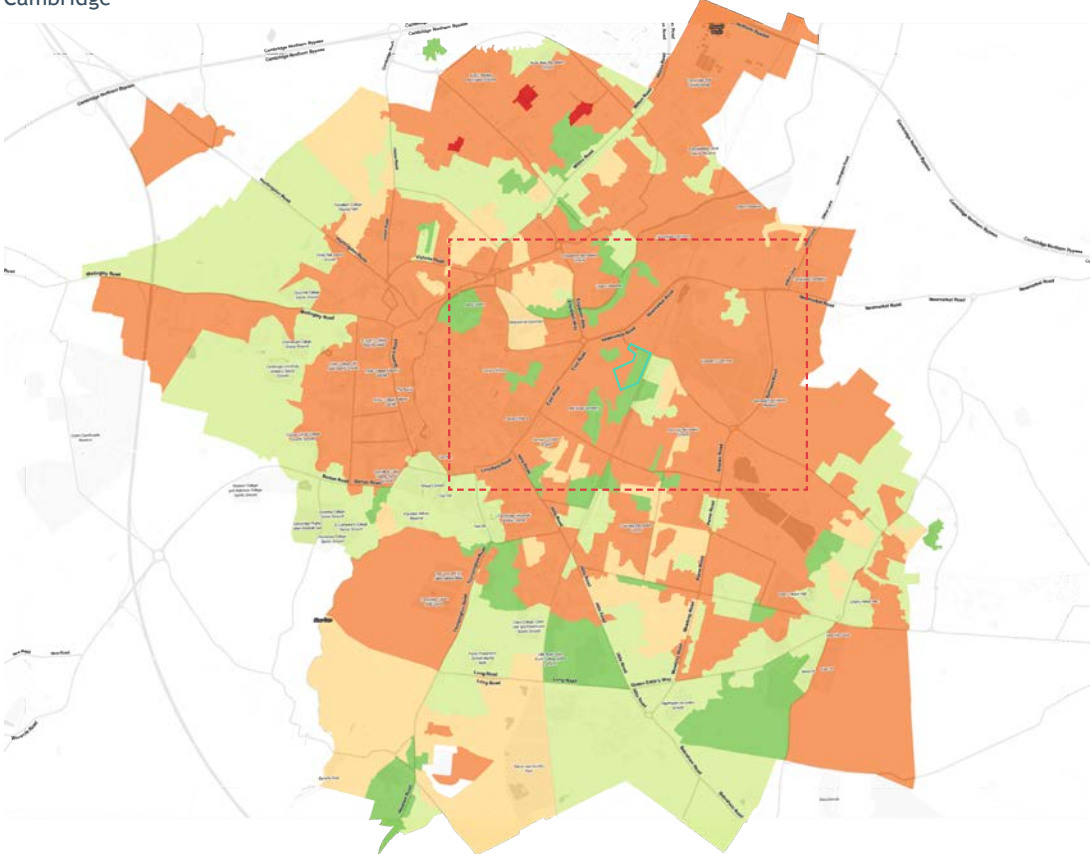
# Sense of belonging

Cambridge



# Feelings of Loneliness

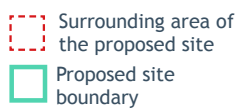
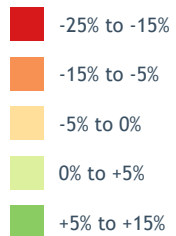
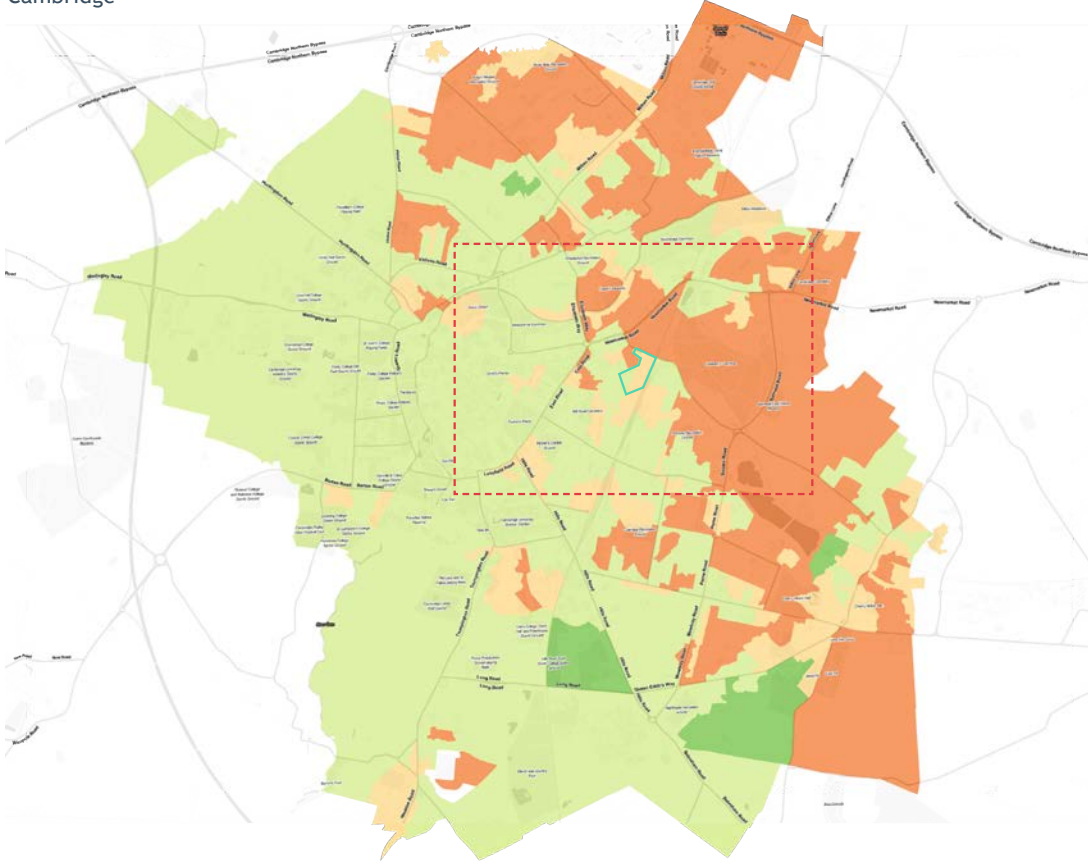
Cambridge





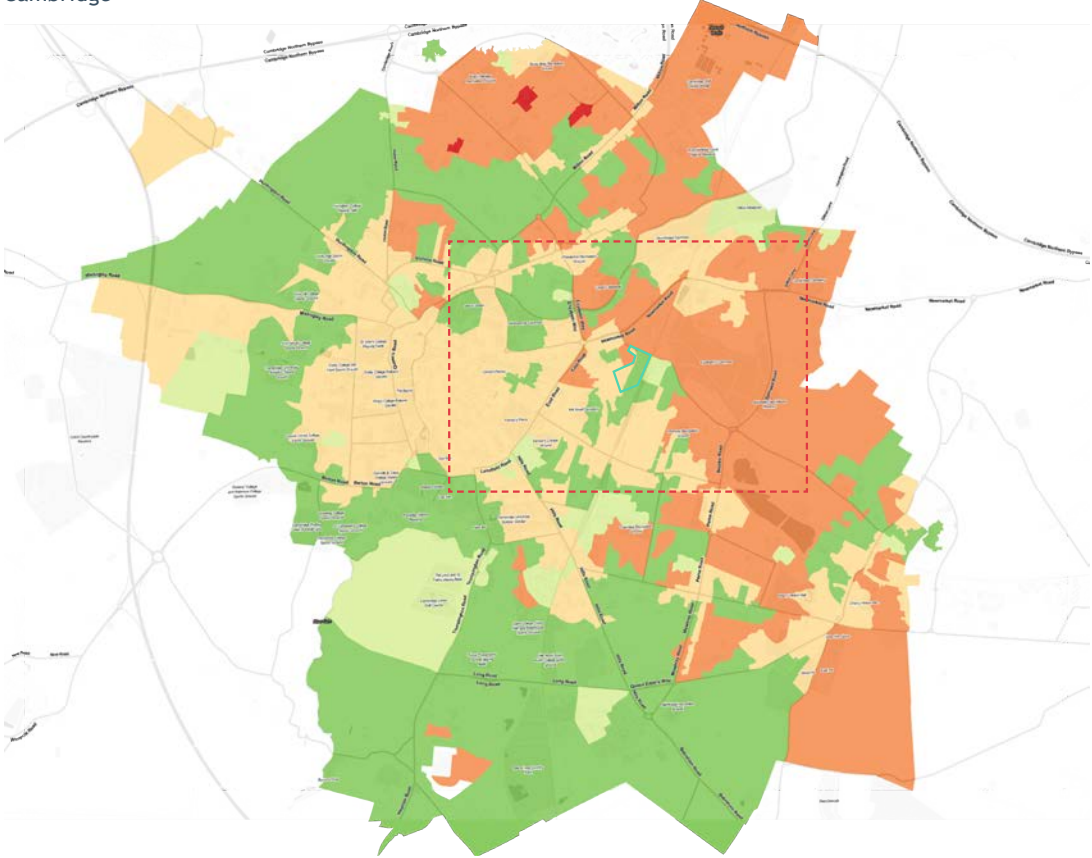
## Satisfaction with life overall

Cambridge



### Satisfaction with local area as a place to live

Cambridge



- -25% to -15%
- -15% to -5%
- -5% to 0%
- 0% to +5%
- +5% to +15%
- Surrounding area of the proposed site
- Proposed site boundary