

Land at Bannold Road, Waterbeach

Promotion of land at Bannold Road for Green Infrastructure and allocation as a sustainable residential extension to Waterbeach.

Prepared by Claremont Planning on behalf of [REDACTED]



CLAREMONT
PLANNING CONSULTANCY



Executive Summary

This Vision Statement has been prepared by Claremont Planning, on behalf of [REDACTED] to promote land south of Bannold Road, Waterbeach (the ‘Site’ – shown edged red on the adjacent plan) as a residential development site. The Site can deliver a high quality housing development of approximately 200 dwellings and a substantial area of Green Infrastructure. The Site covers approximately 14 hectares and is enclosed by the Fen Line Railway on the eastern boundary of Waterbeach. Approximately 50% of the Site is proposed for development with 50% being permanent new Green Infrastructure providing a significant gain in biodiversity.

Key

- Green Belt
- Settlement Boundary
- Site Allocation
- Waterbeach New Town

The Site is suitable and available and can quickly deliver new homes to assist in meeting housing needs. Waterbeach is already recognised in the adopted Local Plan as being a sustainable area for housing growth.

Development of the Site would provide;

- Approximately 200 homes (circa 80 of which will be affordable) outside of the floodplain and within walking distance of all facilities
- A coherent urban edge providing a new defensible Green Belt boundary that can be developed as intended without affecting any environmental designations, any cultural asset, any visual asset or any landscape character.

- Significant new Green infrastructure throughout the development and approximately 7 Hectares of recreated Fenland.
- Contributing to the essential route for a new footway and cycleway required under the Greenways Initiative to link the new railway station to the national cycle and footpath network
- Providing a significant part of a new bridleway in one of the only locations in the Parish that it is appropriate to extend equestrian routes
- A new managed area for public recreation
- Incorporating 1 hectare of land that is not designated Green Belt, thereby making best use of this land.



Fig.11 Proposed Site South of Bannold Road.

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1 Site Promotion

1.0 Introduction

The land off Bannold Road, east of Waterbeach (the “Site”) provides an opportunity to deliver a high quality housing development of approximately 200 dwellings with approximately half of the Site accommodating a substantial area of new Green Infrastructure.

This document sets out the justification for the Site to be considered as a suitable option to expand the settlement of Waterbeach. Most of the Site (with the exception of 1 Ha) is recognised to be within the Green Belt, albeit poorly performing as explained below. This site provides a highly sustainable and logical extension to the settlement. Future residents will be able to access facilities within Waterbeach on foot and to the wider area by high quality public transport linkages.

- The Site is adjacent to the settlement boundary and provides a logical direction of growth at Waterbeach particularly given the proposed relocation of the railway station.
- The Site extends up to the established boundary of the Fen Line railway, which delineates the eastern limit of Waterbeach.
- The Site is bounded by existing residential development to the north, south and west, with properties along Pieces Lane, Burgess Road and Bannold Road, demonstrating that this site forms a coherent eastern extension to Waterbeach.

A Vision of how the site could be delivered to complement the existing settlement of Waterbeach and supplement the New Town delivery is set out below. Growth in this location will assist in the provision of housing to meet the growth of Greater Cambridge. The Site is suitable for release from the Green Belt due to its highly sustainable location and limited Green Belt function.

The areas of Previously Developed Land at Waterbeach were identified and allocated for development through the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018. As part of the Local Plan Review, the need to deliver further housing at Waterbeach will require Green Belt boundary revisions. It is proposed that the Site represents an area suitable for Green Belt release that could contribute housing early in the plan period to address local housing requirements.



Fig.1.2 Proposed Allocation of Land South of Bannold Road.

1.1 Landhold Capital

The Site is being promoted for development by [REDACTED]. The Company is an established UK based strategic promotion and land investment company focused on the acquisition and promotion of land through the planning system. The Company specialises in delivering residential development land to the open market and operates primarily within the Midlands and the South of England.

[REDACTED] are privately funded and have an established track record in achieving site allocations and delivering planning consents that provide sustainable residential communities through the identification of local needs, whilst delivering infrastructure requirements. They believe the UK's consistent failure to provide the quantum of family homes needed is best addressed through the provision of homes on sustainable sites, particularly where housing policy relies on large strategic scaled allocations which are often hindered by infrastructure delivery and delays. Smaller, well designed sites can ensure that the contribution to the housing supply from the sustainable strategic locations is maintained.

Based at [REDACTED] has been successfully delivering sites for over a decade. The [REDACTED] seeks to work in partnership with landowners, Local Councillors, Parish Councillors and Local Planning Authorities to deliver development the meets adopted policy and provides infrastructure at the appropriate time.



1.2 The Bannold Road Site

Located on the eastern side of Waterbeach, the Site covers an area of approximately 14 hectares, comprised of greenfield land between Bannold Road to the north and Burgess Road to the south

To the east, the Site is well defined by the embanked Fen Line railway that acts as a limit to the settlement, whilst to the west the site is defined by rear gardens of existing residential properties. The development of the Site would provide a logical extension of the existing development, using the railway line as a defensible limit to the settlement and distinction from the countryside beyond.

The majority of the Site comprises fields used for both arable farming and grazing. The fields are poorly delineated by sparse hedgerows with the boundaries within the northern areas of the site are largely undefined. The Site is not designated as best and most versatile agricultural land as it is qualified as Grade 3B through Natural England assessments.

Importantly, not all of the Site is allocated as Green Belt as shown on Figure 1.3. The current Green Belt extent is not currently distinguished by an identifiable or defensible boundary.

The Site is in a highly sustainable location and within walking distance of local facilities and public transport linkages, including a mainline railway station which provides frequent and rapid access to Ely, Cambridge and London. The potential vehicular access points to serve the site are identified by Figure 1.3, linking to the existing highways to the north and south.



'Burgess Road' and 'Bannold Road'

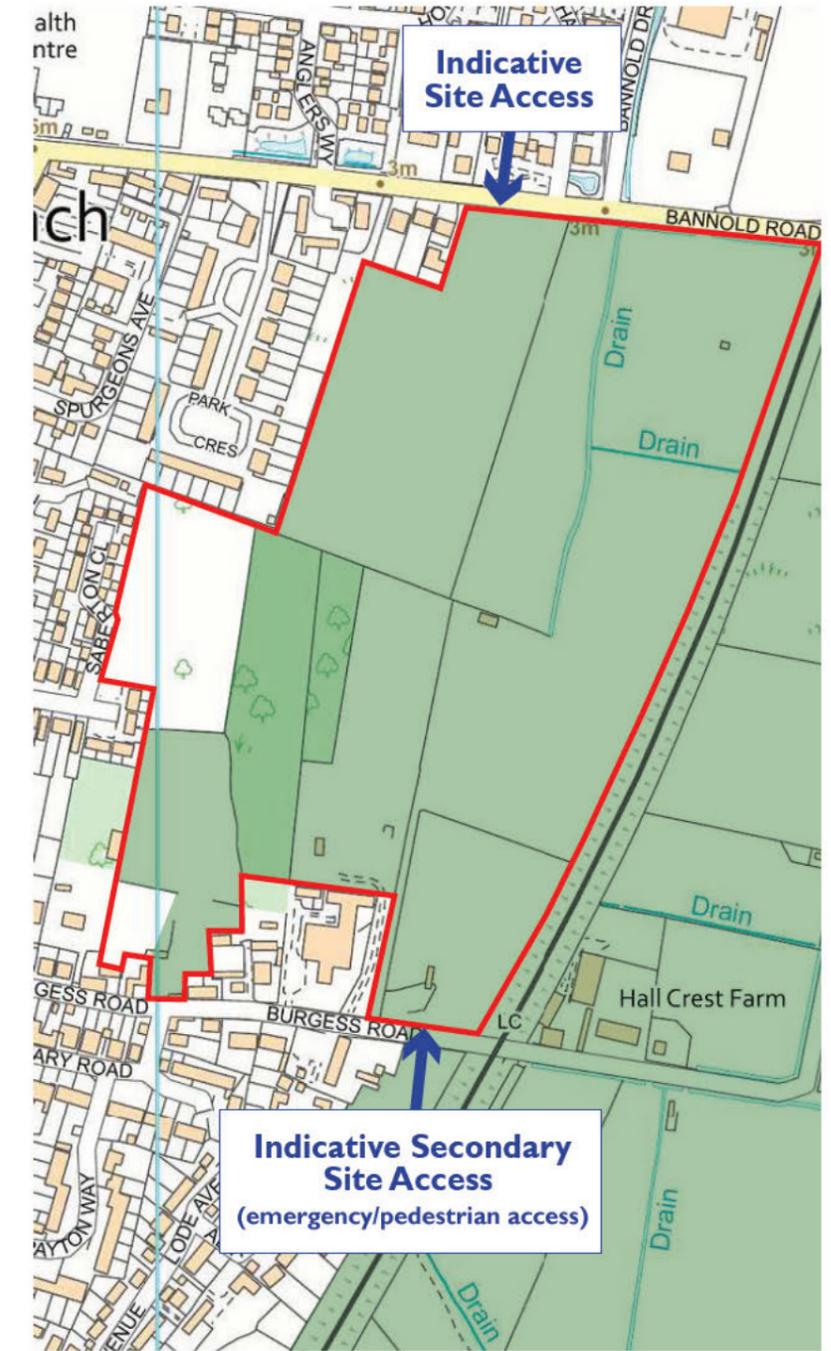


Fig.1.3 Site Plan with indicative access

1.3 Site Vantage Points

The viewpoints into the site from Burgess Road are largely restricted to glimpses between existing frontage dwellings as demonstrated by viewpoints 1 and 3. The viewpoint provided across the railway line at 2 is the most open aspect from Burgess Road, although rooftops defining the edge of Waterbeach are clearly visible.

It is clear that the site abuts residential development on Burgess Road and Pieces Lane whilst the extent of the Fen End railway line can be seen to provide a clear delineation to the east. As such the Green Belt boundary should be amended to reflect this and provide an identifiable limit to the settlement.



Fig.1.4 Viewpoints onto the site.



1.4 Sustainability

The Sustainability of Waterbeach in the context of Greater Cambridge is recognised by the allocation of the Waterbeach New Town to the north of the village. Waterbeach is identified as a Tier 2 settlement (Minor Rural Centre) within the adopted settlement hierarchy, so is considered suitable for further expansion. Within the settlement the Site is adjacent to the existing built up area with excellent access to services and neighbouring urban centres through public transport and the well-connected local road and rights of way network.

Waterbeach is a large village with a wide and established service base. These facilities include a primary school, multiple public houses, a post office and various village stores, all of which are within walking distance of the Site. Furthermore, the delivery of the New Town will introduce new services to support both the new population and to benefit existing residents. Implementation of a wider service base will enhance the sustainability and appropriateness of Waterbeach as a location to accommodate growth for the period that the emerging Greater Cambridge Plan will cover. These existing and additional, new services will also increase the settlement's catchment in providing amenities to the surrounding rural communities.

The wider context as illustrated at Figure 1.5 demonstrates the site's relationship to the village and the Waterbeach New Town allocation. This is especially relevant considering the relocation of the train station and the Site's relevant connectivity. The train service from Waterbeach offers regular direct services to Ely, Cambridge and London. The direct train service to London Kings Cross takes just over an hour. The nearest bus stop is on High Street which offers regular bus services to Ely and Cambridge. The location of the settlement means that Cambridge can be reached easily by car, bus and train, with journeys by rail taking 10-minutes.



Fig.1.5 Context Plan



Sustainability Assessment

The Site is in a sustainable location for new residential development as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework as well as the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan:

- **Accessibility:** The Site benefits from close proximity to established services that are within walking distance. These include the existing rail station to the south east of the settlement and the proposed relocation of the railway station to the north. The village also has several shops, a pharmacy, post office, public houses, medical centre, library, social club, Primary School and nursery. As illustrated by Figure 1.6 – Facilities Map, the Site's location provides a high degree of accessibility to local services, limiting the need to rely upon non sustainable means of transport such as private car use. The Site will provide an essential part of the footway and cycleway route that is required in order to meet the aims of the



Greenways Initiative following the relocation of the railway station. This route will be supervised for safety by the new homes.

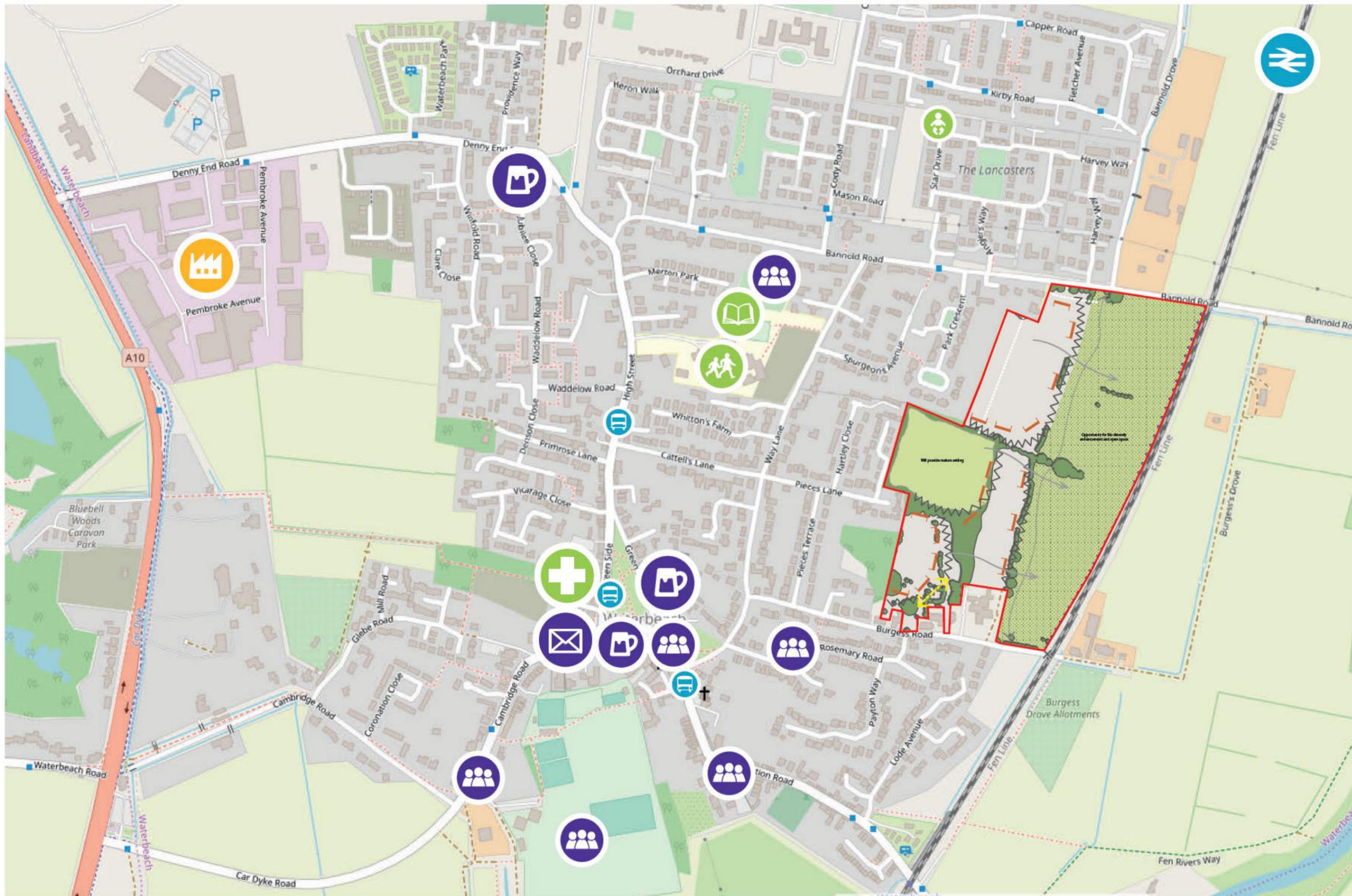
- **Economic Sustainability:** Delivery of the Site will provide a range of homes that will enhance economic competitiveness. This is particularly significant given the rapidly growing sub-regional economy. Delivery of the Site will implement direct improvements including new jobs and supply chain investment through the construction process and increased local Council Tax revenues.
- **Social Sustainability:** Against the context of a significant lack of affordability within the local housing market, the delivery of the Site will provide much needed affordable housing. Through the extensive



provision of public open space for the enjoyment of new and existing residents, development of the Site will enable a positive social contribution to the local community.

- **Environmental Sustainability:** The Promotion Site will establish a substantial (7 Ha) area of public open space, thereby enhancing the landscape and significantly enhancing local biodiversity. Landscaping will enhance the setting of Waterbeach and soften the settlement edge. As approximately half of the Site will be reserved for open space, it is considered that implementation of the Site will deliver significant environmental improvements locally and demonstrate a net gain in respect of biodiversity.





- Key
- Site
 - + Pharmacy
 - 👶 Nursery
 - 👦👧 Primary School
 - 📖 Library
 - 👥 Community Facility
 - ✉️ Post Office
 - 🏭 Industrial Area
 - 🚏 Bus Stop
 - 🚉 Relocated Rail Station

Fig.16 Location of site in relation to Waterbeach

1.5 The Site Promotion

The Site is suitable and available for residential development. The Site exhibits low functionality in regard to Green Belt purposes, occupies a sustainable location within Waterbeach and lacks any constraints. Promotion of the Site through the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan and Waterbeach Neighbourhood Plan, will seek to establish the allocation of the Site for residential development.

The Site is promoted to demonstrate its suitability for residential development. Through the single Promotion Agreement made with a number of landowners, delivery can be assured following the Site's allocation and subsequent planning consent. [REDACTED] are committed to early delivery of housing sites. This means that the Site can be delivered earlier within the Plan period and can mitigate any delays in the delivery of the strategic sites that have been identified in the adopted Local Plan. The Site will contribute towards maintaining a robust housing supply and support the delivery of affordable homes alongside boosting housing provision as encouraged by national policy.

The masterplan that has been produced indicates that the new homes will not protrude into the open countryside and instead will form a defensible urban edge. The development can be delivered within an efficient time frame and contribute to immediate housing delivery

The Site and its surroundings were assessed by South Cambridgeshire District Council in its 2002 Green Belt Study. Although the focus of this study was very much based upon urban expansion, the study examined the District as a whole and produced maps which covered the Waterbeach site. The relevant plan extracts are reproduced here:



Fig.1.7 Nature Conservation Zone

The Promoted Site is not covered by any environmental designation, with the Nature Conservation Zone (shown in purple hatching) is clearly following the line of the railway and does not extend onto the site.

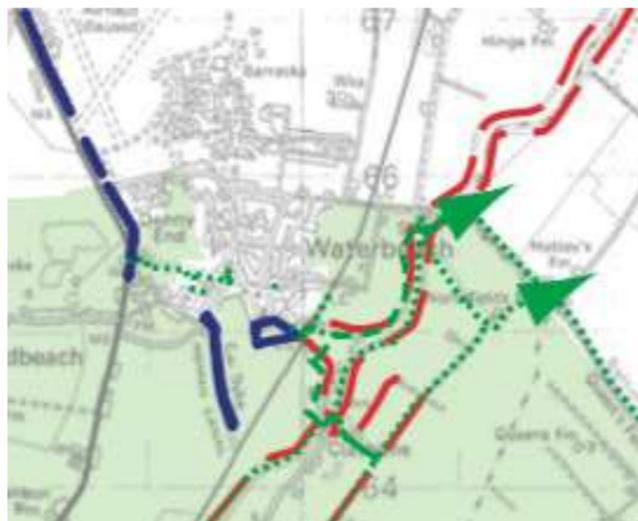


Fig.1.8 Heritage Assets

Figure 1.8 clearly identifies that the Site is not affected by any heritage designations, with Scheduled Ancient Monuments shown in navy to the west of the settlement. Potential to provide enhanced accessibility is demonstrated by linkages to public footpaths as shown in red.



Fig.1.9 Landscape Character

The Study considered the landscape context of Waterbeach and identified that the Waterbeach Lode Fen was prevalent to the east of the settlement. Through the site assessments undertaken it has been assessed that in terms of landscape character the Site is physically separated from the character area by the railway and is enclosed by existing development. The contribution that the site makes to the wide open Lode Fen is therefore severely restricted. The Site Promotion seeks to address this directly through the recreation of approximately 7 Hectares (amounting to 50% of the Site) of Fen Edge as a substantial area of green infrastructure. This provision will seek to strengthen the contribution that this part of the Site will have to the area of landscape character in which it is set.



Fig.1.10 Visual Impact Study

In terms of visual impact assessment there are no identified viewpoints toward Cambridge that required safeguarding, no landmarks to consider, no ridgelines and no distinctive or memorable features to take account of.



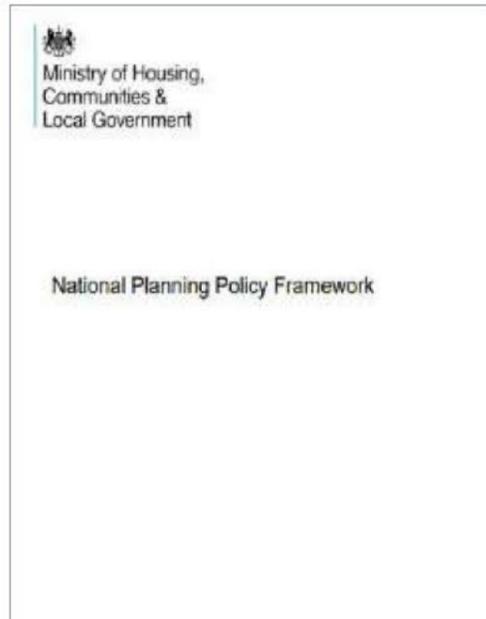
Fig.1.11 Townscape Analysis

The townscape analysis recognised the railway line as a strong urbanising feature. The promotion Site is set in an area where distinct views of the city are "scarce or absent", whilst the map does not identify any 'Special Qualities to be Safeguarded' at Waterbeach.

2 Planning Policy

2.0 Planning Policy

The relevant planning policy background will be considered within this Promotional Document. This relates to the NPPF and the Green Belt policies within the national framework along with the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, Waterbeach New Town Supplementary Planning Document and the emerging Waterbeach Neighbourhood Plan:



National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published with further revisions in February 2019 and provides overarching planning guidance for England. The Site's relevance to housing delivery is illustrated by Paragraph 68 of NPPF, which states that small and medium sized sites can robustly contribute to housing numbers given their relatively rapid build-out times. The Site is considered to be a medium scaled in size that would satisfy this requirement. By incorporating a broad range of sites, housing delivery can be boosted when larger strategic sites are delayed. This ensures a robust housing supply and boosts delivery to address local requirements.

Green Belt Considerations

Section 13 of the NPPF establishes the overarching aim of the Green Belt in terms of its strategic purposes and objectives in protecting the openness and intrinsic value of the countryside. Approximately 92% of the Site is designated as Green Belt, although it does not demonstrate highly functioning or strategically functionality given existing urbanising influences that are present and the enclosing characteristics of the urban form. Paragraph 136 of the NPPF asserts that strategic policies should establish new settlement boundaries with permanence, which the Fen Line Railway exhibits.

Paragraph 137 of the NPPF asserts that the Local Plans are required to demonstrate that all other reasonable means have been exhausted in identifying sufficient land to meet their requirements to establish that exceptional circumstances exist to make changes to the Green Belt. The emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan has recognised that these circumstances exist to review the Green Belt against the context of a re-assessed spatial strategy. The re-assessment should consider the removal of the Site from the Green Belt as the function of the Green Belt at this location is undermined by urbanising influence in its wider context as well as its enclosing boundary features.

The Site exhibits the requirements as set out in the NPPF at Paragraph 139 to justify an amended Green Belt boundary:

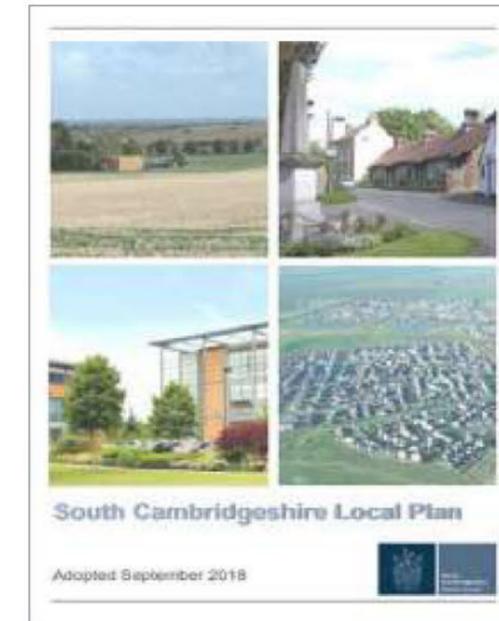
- a. Ensure consistency with the development plan's strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development - The Site is located in a sustainable location that expands upon the direction of growth at Waterbeach as established through the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan.
- b. Not include land which is unnecessary to keep permanently open - The Site is not open and recognised as a significantly influenced by urban form and linear development.
- c. Where necessary identify areas of safeguarded land between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet the longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the Plan period - Safeguarding the site is not preferable as it would restrict delivery of housing until beyond the Plan period and would not allow realisation of development that can meet local objectives.
- d. Make clear that the safeguarded land is not allocated for development at the present time - Safeguarding the Promotion Site would not achieve development that is able meet the residential needs of the Plan period and overcome the identified pressures in requisite growth that need to be addressed.
- e. Be able to demonstrate that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the Plan period - Revision of the settlement boundary will establish a defensible limit to the Green Belt and a logical extension to Waterbeach that will present an enduring boundary.
- f. Define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent. The embanked Fen Line railway will provide a strong and permanent boundary for the Green Belt, establishing a visual separation between the settlement edge and the countryside. This will establish a permanent and defensible settlement boundary.

2.1 Local Planning Policy Position

The South Cambridgeshire Local Plan

The South Cambridgeshire Local Plan was adopted in September 2018 and set out the levels of housing development that is to be provided up to 2031 and a strategy for meeting development needs in the most sustainable way. The spatial strategy recognises that Waterbeach is an appropriate location for substantial development as set out in a number of policies:

- Policy S/9 designates Waterbeach as a Minor Rural Service Centre within the second tier of the settlement hierarchy. It is considered that this confirms the sustainability and appropriateness of the settlement to accommodate new development, including the Site at Bannold Road.
- Policy S/6 establishes the overriding spatial strategy which includes the strategic allocation of 10,000 homes within Waterbeach New Town, with a range of new services delivered as part of the strategic allocation reinforcing the sustainability of the location.
- Policy NH/8 asserts that development in and adjoining Green Belt must mitigate adverse impacts to the rural character. The Site will include comprehensive measures to ensure that the contribution of the Site to the landscape in which it is set are enhanced.
- Policy S/13 triggered an early review of local policy in 2019, which has commenced as the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan. The Site is promoted for consideration through the preparation of this Plan, emphasising the suitability of Waterbeach in accommodating further growth that is complementary to the strategic allocation of Waterbeach New Town. The Site will provide a logical and sympathetic extension to the original village that will include extensive landscaping to establish an enhanced buffer alongside delivery of affordable housing.



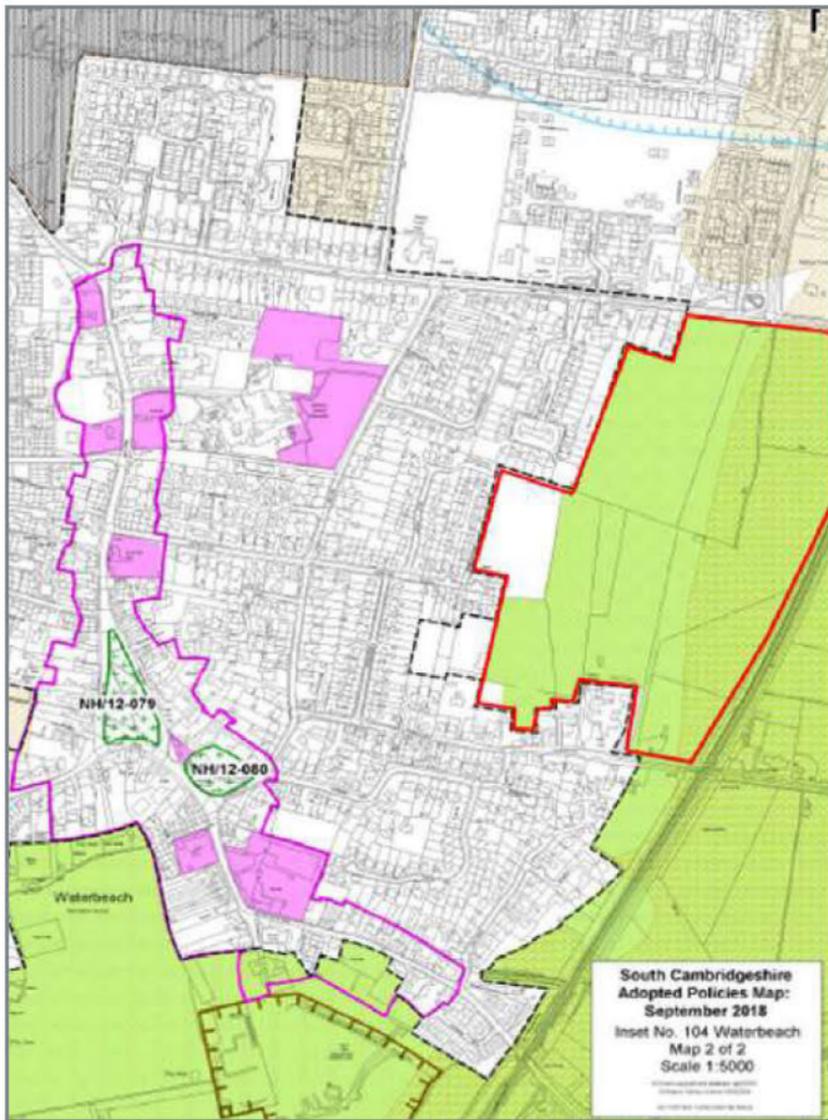


Fig.2.1 The Promotion Site and Waterbeach New town Allocation

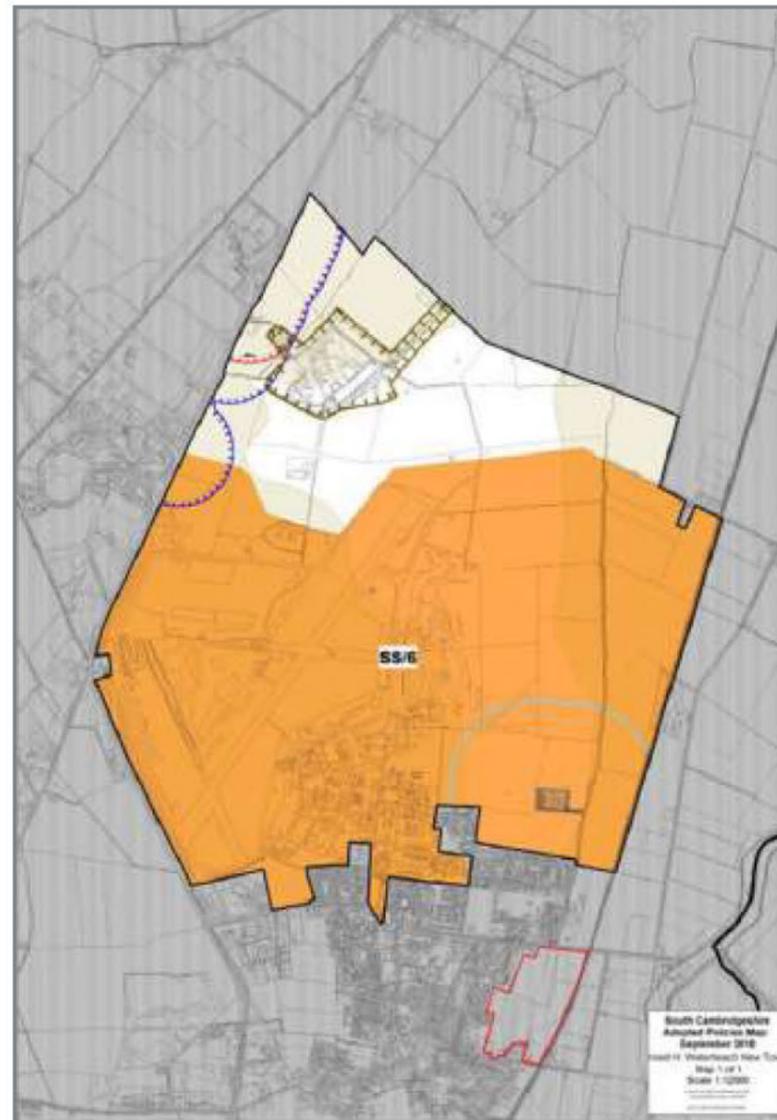


Fig.2.2 Masterplan for Waterbeach New Town

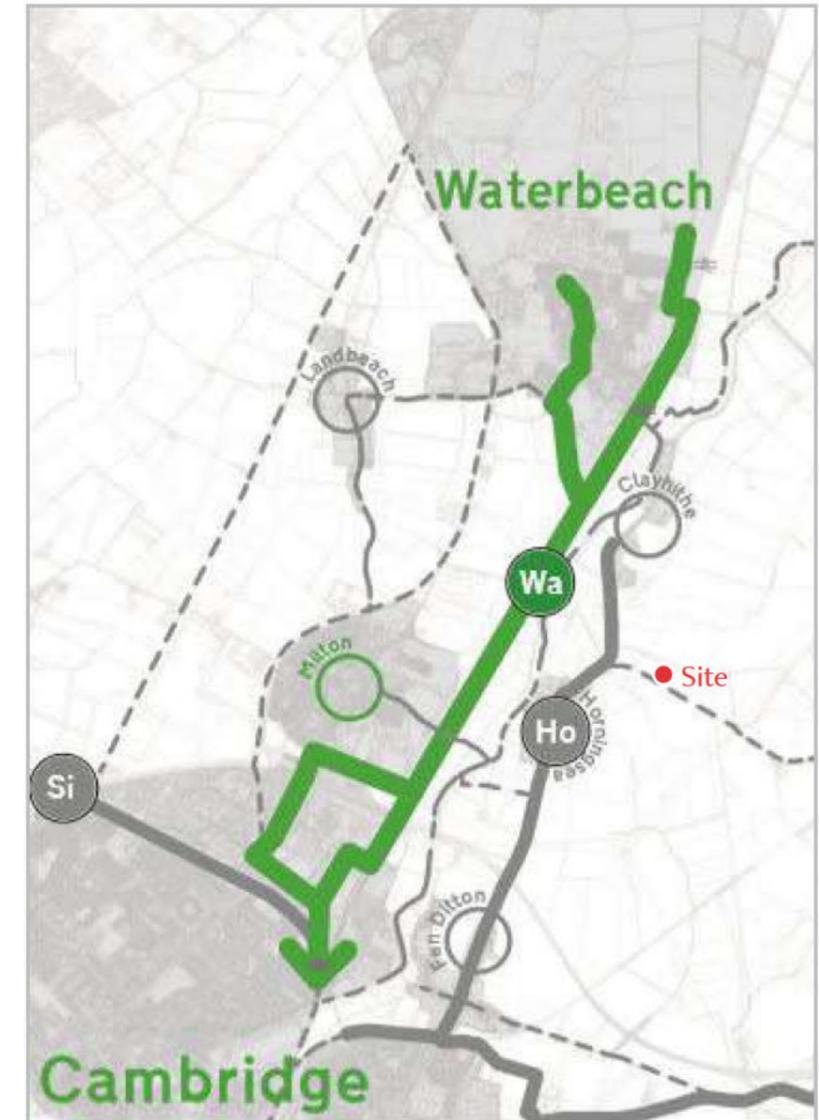


Fig.2.3 Illustrative diagram of Greenway Link to Waterbeach

The promoted Site is needed to provide an essential component of a new Footway/Cycleway under the Greater Cambridge Greenways Initiative. The provision of a route between the New Town and Cambridge has been assessed as a High Priority objective under the Initiative. This objective cannot be met without the Site which would provide the link and be delivered alongside the proposed residential development.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

The SHLAA, published in June 2012 and updated in August 2013 identified multiple parcels of land within the Site extent. These independent parcels of land are identified at Figure 2.5. Given that separate assessment of each parcel, they do not necessarily represent a comprehensive review of the Site's suitability for development. The assessment identified some parcels as being located within the Green Belt, whilst areas of woodland were noted as well as proximity to a listed cottage.

Overall, beyond the designation of Green Belt, the parcels of land were assessed as not constrained and so suitable for development. Notably, the function of the Green Belt was identified to be adversely affected by various features, with SHLAA Parcel 019 noted as having limited contribution to Green Belt given the presence of the railway line. The SHLAA assessment noted that the railway line could provide a new boundary feature, alongside appropriate landscaping, as a new edge to the Green Belt and settlement edge.

As a partial assessment of the Site, the SHLAA has established that the area is suitable and has potential for development.

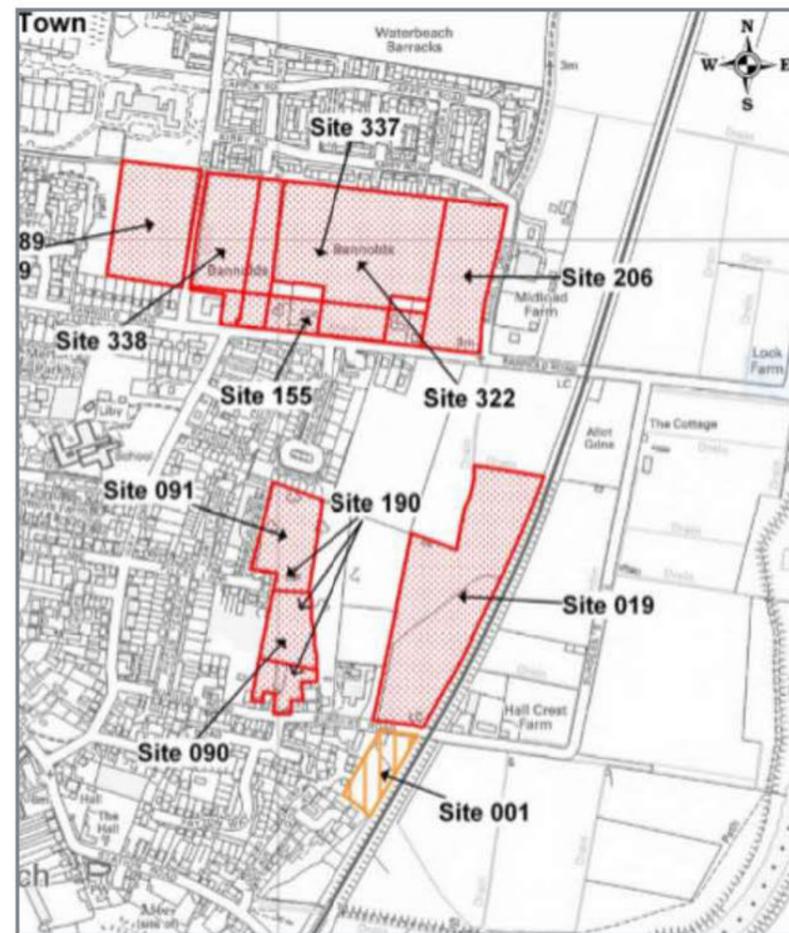


Fig.2.4 SHLAA Map Extract identifying sites considered

2.2 Waterbeach New Town SPD

A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for Waterbeach New Town was adopted in February 2019. The location of the strategic allocation is shown in Figure 2.3.

This document establishes a vision for the new settlement and strategic objectives for the new development:

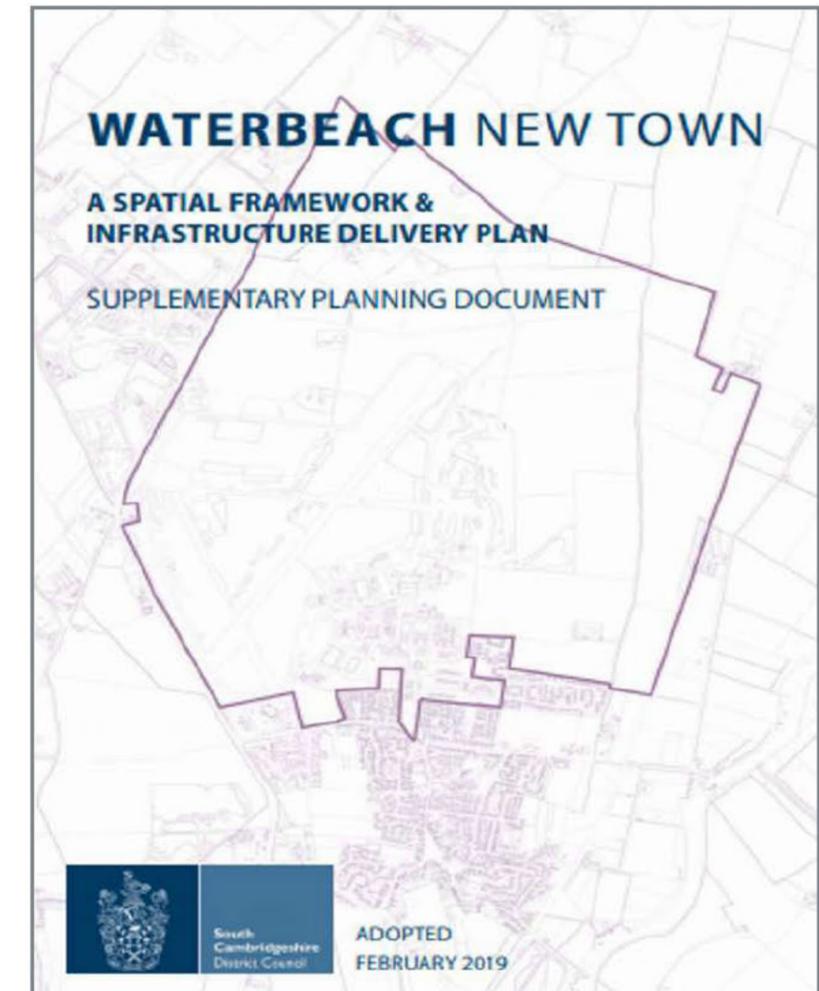
Provision of an accessible, sustainable and responsive development that reflects its wider landscape setting;

Creation of communities with social longevity and resilience to climate change that do not rely on the use of private cars and are within walking distance to services to satisfy everyday needs;

Preserve the rural and distinct character of the original Waterbeach village;

Ensure that new linkages maintain distinction but also provide accessibility between the two areas, particularly to allow residents of the original village to benefit from the new services delivered;

Figure 2.4 demonstrates the spatial framework for the strategic site, establishing connectivity within it as well as the relationships that are to be established to its context, particularly with the original village to the south. Although the Promotion Site falls outside the allocated area and relates directly with the original village, the development of the Site is able to support the objectives of the allocation. Provision of new linkages is a key aim and the Promotion Site is able to achieve new linkages in line with the assertions of the SPD. In particular, the delivery of the Site will allow for stronger north-south connections between the old location of the railway station and towards the area of its relocation. This will encourage better flows into the new development area, enhancing access potential to the new rail station as well as the services that are to be provided as part of the comprehensive delivery of the New Town.



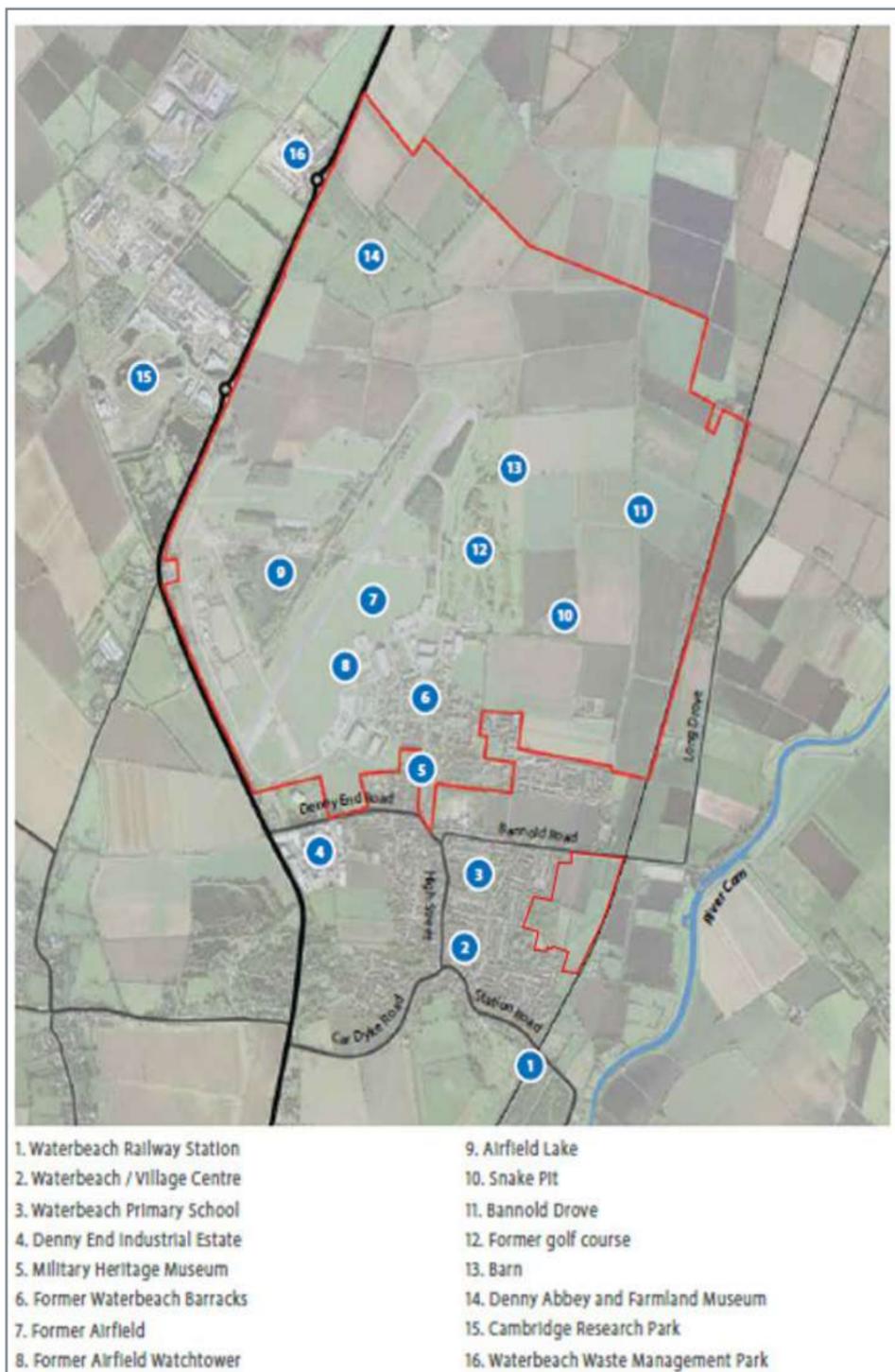


Fig.2.5 The Promotion Site and Allocation

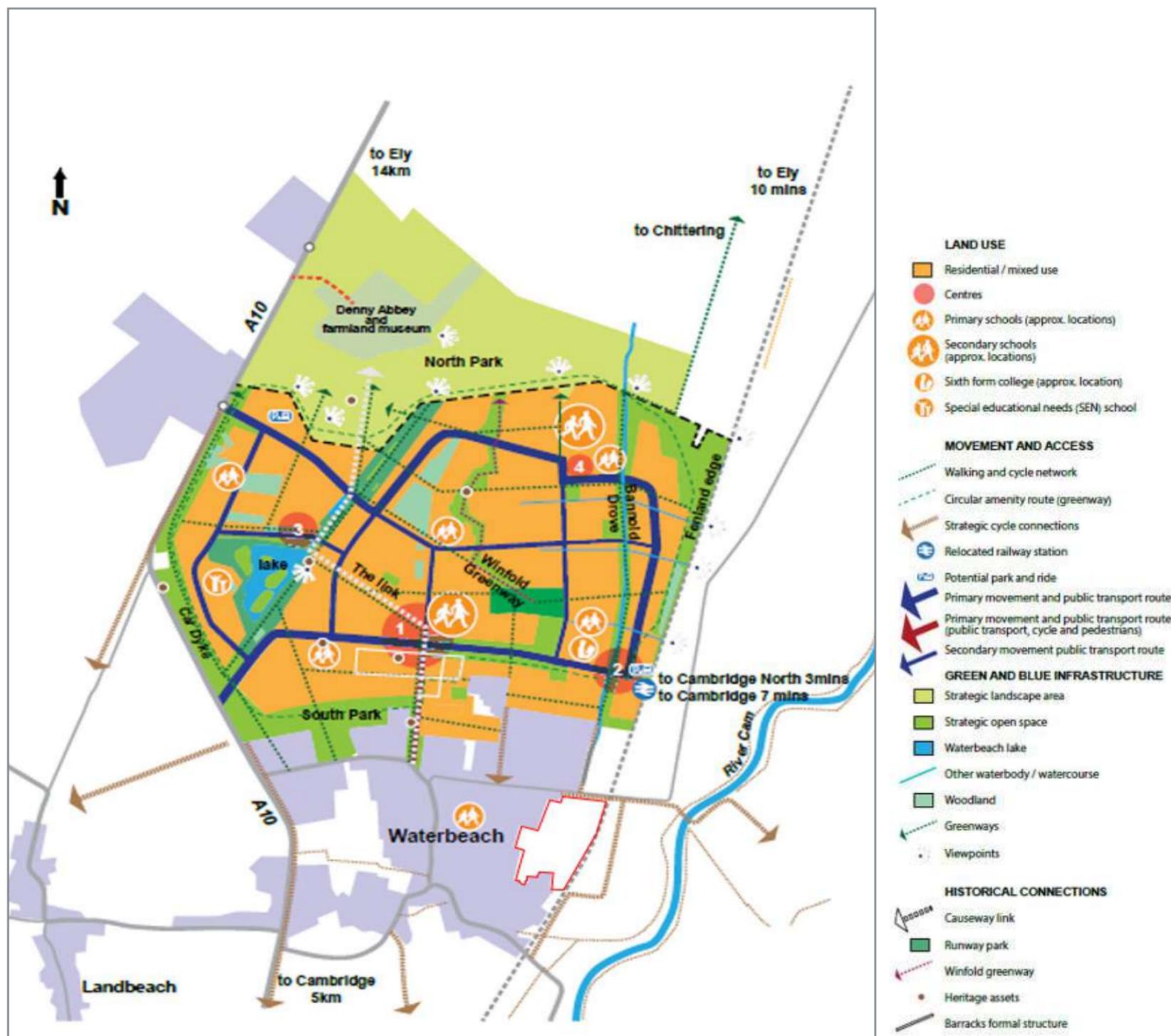


Fig.2.6 Spatial Framework diagram and key

Key

- Waterbeach Village
- Waterbeach New Town
- Green Belt
- Site Deleted from Green Belt
- New Housing Development
- Employment Allocation
- East Cambs District



Fig.2.7 Proposed amendment to the Green Belt boundary and proposed allocation for residential development

2.3 Greater Cambridge Local Plan

Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council are working together to produce a joint Local Plan for the areas, referred to as ‘Greater Cambridge’. The Greater Cambridge Plan is in the early stages of preparation and an Issues and Option Consultation, referred to as the “First Conversation” and representations for the Site have been made.

The Consultation was held against the backdrop of a rapidly growing economy, which has informed the focus of the emerging plan, with Big Themes identified to establish its basis. It is recognised that parameters focussing on climate change and environment are important, however they should not outweigh the delivery of sufficient homes for communities and satisfying strategic requirements. The Site responds positively to these themes:

Climate Change:

The Site’s development will respond to flooding and drainage considerations by ensuring that no development will be located in an area liable to flood including allowing for climate change. The Site will provide significant areas of flood storage that will ensure longevity and resilience to climate change as well as sustainable drainage methods.

Biodiversity and Green Spaces:

Over 50% of the Site will provide Green Infrastructure to enhance biodiversity and contributing towards new public green spaces. Existing areas of woodland will be enhanced, and public access afforded to improve linkages to the new Railway Station from Waterbeach Village.

Wellbeing and Social Inclusion:

The Site will deliver market and affordable housing to respond to housing needs and boost housing delivery and to improve access to housing for the community of Waterbeach village.

Great Places:

Against the context of the Waterbeach New Town, the Site will fund and deliver the enhanced pedestrian and cycle linkages between the new development area and the original village, in particular realising essential connections to the relocated Railway Station. The Green Infrastructure will also provide an extension to the bridleway network which is one of the few opportunities to do so in the Parish.

The strategy identifies that as a result of the substantial economic growth in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, it has exacerbated income inequality and housing costs. This has resulted in communities struggling to find affordable housing in locations that benefit from good access to Cambridge, such as Waterbeach. The strategy recognises that the without delivering the requisite housing numbers in line with the growth of the local economy, this will both stifle this and further increase housing costs.

The Promotion Site at Bannold Road is able to deliver affordable housing to meet demands of the local community at Waterbeach village;

Waterbeach is recognised in the housing strategy as a location that suffers from particular development pressures and increasing housing costs given its accessibility to Cambridge – the Site therefore is able to contribute towards alleviating that pressure;

Consideration of the Site will contribute towards achieving a deliverable spatial strategy that is able to deliver sufficient number of homes whilst simultaneously supporting the ongoing sub-regional economic growth.

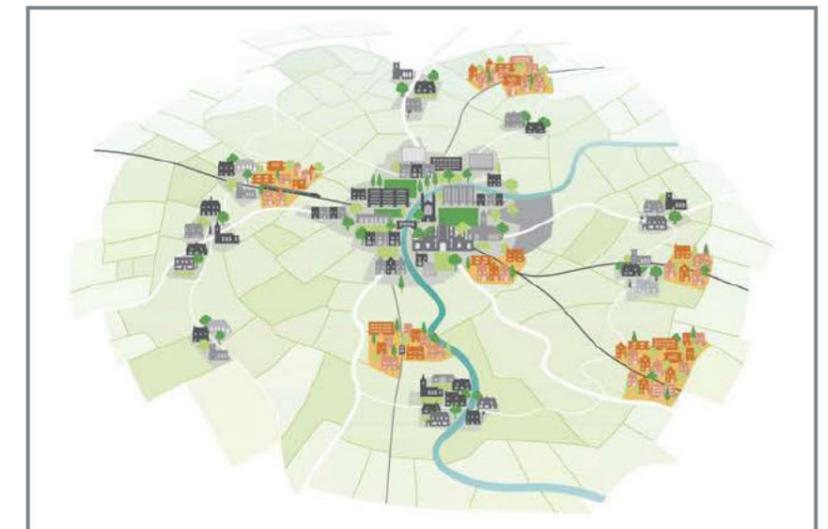


Fig.2.8 Spatial Strategies considered for Greater Cambridge include growth at Public Transport Corridors, recognising the potential for expansion at Waterbeach

2.4 Greater Cambridge Plan: Evidence Base

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review

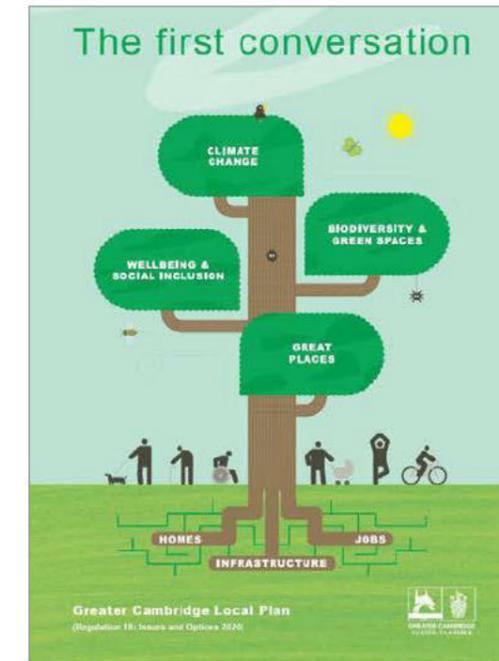
The objectives of Economic Review were to develop an authoritative evidence base on the economic performance and potential of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and to provide impartial advice and guidance regarding the ongoing growth of the economy in these areas. In particular, the report examines how best to execute the Devolution Deal and achieve the objective of doubling the GVA of the authority over 25 years.

The report identifies that economic growth in Cambridge and South Cambridge has been significantly above the national average. These growth levels have resulted in particular development pressures, such as housing demand. It identifies that the gap between demand and supply of housing within the Combined Authority area, including Greater Cambridge, has resulted in a significant deterioration in housing affordability. Continued high levels of growth are anticipated within the local plan area and as such an indicative increased housing requirement of 66,700 dwellings may be needed in the 2017-2040 plan period. A case therefore is present for increasing the housing requirement figures for the new Local Plan area and identifying sites for an additional 30,000 dwellings in the next Local Plan to account for continued economic growth in the area.

Homes for our Future: Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2019-2023

The strategy identifies that as a result of the substantial economic growth in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, it has exacerbated income inequality and housing costs. This has resulted in community's struggling to find affordable housing in locations that benefit from good access to Cambridge, such as Waterbeach. The strategy recognises that the without delivering the requisite housing numbers in line with the growth of the local economy, this will both stifle this growth but also further increase housing costs.

- The Promotion Site at Bannold Road is able to deliver affordable housing to meet demands of the local community at Waterbeach village;
- Waterbeach is recognised in the housing strategy as a location that suffers from particular development pressure and increasing housing costs given its accessibility to Cambridge – the Promotion Site therefore is able to contribute towards alleviating that pressure;
- Consideration of the Site will contribute towards achieving a deliverable spatial strategy that is able to deliver sufficient number of homes whilst simultaneously supporting the ongoing sub-regional economic growth



2.5 Waterbeach Neighbourhood Plan

Waterbeach Parish Council initiated preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan in 2016. The Parish are holding a pre-submission consultation exercise to gather commentary on a comprehensive Plan document prior to its submission to the District Council for Examination.



Waterbeach sign

Primarily, the Neighbourhood Plan's objective is to ensure that the rural character of Waterbeach is conserved in response to the strategic allocation at Waterbeach New Town, but also to best take advantage of the opportunities that delivery of the allocation will provide such as new services and amenities. The Site is able to contribute towards the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan through achieving deliverable residential growth and an enhanced urban edge.

- Preservation of the distinct rural setting of Waterbeach is a paramount objective of the Neighbourhood Plan as asserted in Policy WDCH14 and the Site is able to achieve this by providing extensive Green Infrastructure.
- Masterplanning of the Site will seek to enhance the designation of Midload Farm off Bannold Road (Policy WDCH15) as an identifiable settlement edge, with corresponding extensive Green Infrastructure along the railway line;
- The Plan seeks to promote new linkages between the village and the New Town in the north as required in Policies WT1 and WT5, so will enhance the accessibility of the new services within the strategic development and Waterbeach – the Site will provide these and a bridleway
- The Site will deliver an appropriate housing mix reflecting local need, alongside affordable housing as required by emerging Policy WH19;
- Enhancing linkages through the site will also contribute towards realising new routes to the relocated railway station, to deliver the requirements of proposed Policy WT2 and so ensuring accessibility to the new station is provided for the residents of the village;

Design and Landscape Principles

The Waterbeach Neighbourhood Plan includes a range of design requirements and principles to contribute towards the preservation of the rural character and landscape setting of the village.

- Policy WHDC13 'Waterbeach Design Principles' - establishes the specific design requirements for development at the original village and how it necessitates response to location and settlement context. The Site is able to implement these emerging objectives, in particular relating to the materials palette that will echo the existing vernacular and ensure that any development assimilates with the village.
- Policy WDCH14 'Development and Landscape Quality' – the Site will be able to contribute towards maintaining the landscape setting and also enhancing the emerging designation of Midload Farm as an eastern landscaped edge.



Self-seeded woodland

3 Site Assessment

3.0 Availability, Suitability and Deliverability

The Government’s objective to boost housing delivery is asserted through the NPPF, which emphasises that sites need to demonstrate availability, suitability and deliverability to be considered for development. The Site is unconstrained and located within an established growth area so should be considered developable.

Availability

The Site is under the control of [redacted] via a Promotion Agreement with several landowners. Upon allocation and release from Green Belt, [redacted] will immediately seek to secure planning consent to ensure that residential development is achieved as soon as possible. [redacted] will then sell the land with the benefit of a permission on the open market.

Suitability

- The Site is not constrained with no risks from flooding.
- The Site is bordered on three sides by existing residential development and defensible boundaries form a logical and enduring limit to the settlement, with a defensible Green Belt boundary that ensures the strategic function is reinforced.
- Waterbeach is a sustainable settlement which will be improved through the delivery of the Waterbeach New Town, with associated new services.
- The Site will provide a logical extension to the village, providing new linkages and significantly enhancing the setting of the village.

Deliverability

The allocation of the Site for approximately 200 dwellings, will contribute substantially to meeting the strategic requirements of Greater Cambridge, as well as contributing more specifically to the local needs of Waterbeach. Given the economic growth and local requirements, delivery of the site is considered to be viable with substantial market demand to facilitate the Site’s development.



Fig.3.1 Southern view from the site toward Burgess Road demonstrating the built form that exists



Fig.3.2 North eastern views toward Bannold Road and park crescent demonstrating interaction with newly developed housing that enclose the site

3.1 Green Belt Assessment

Overview against national guidance

The Site is adjacent to the existing built form of Waterbeach and so resulting development of the Site would establish a coherent extension to the village. The boundaries of the Site align with adjacent residential boundaries, whilst development extent would not protrude beyond the village's established settlement form. A coherent settlement edge will be formed rounding-off to produce a new urban extent for the village. Contribution of the site to the wider function to the Green Belt is significantly undermined given the extent of urbanising influences from the village edge. The embanked Fen Line railway establishes a strong and physical disconnection between the site and the wider Fenland landscape, limiting the contribution of the site to maintaining openness and countryside character.

When assessed against the nationally established strategic purposes of the Green Belt as set out at Paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy, it is considered that the site demonstrates as follows:

A. To check unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

The Site demonstrates a weak contribution towards checking urban sprawl given the extent of urbanising influences and the containment provided by existing urban form. This includes linear development located along Burgess Road and Bannold Road, as well as the housing development at Park Crescent and Saberton Close

B. To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

The Site does not contribute towards the prevention of settlement coalescence given that there is no settlement to the east of Waterbeach, whilst the railway line presents a strong boundary to contain the Site from the wider landscape and limit the possibility

of visual coalescence with other built-up areas.

C. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

The Site is separated from the surrounding Fenland countryside by the embanked railway line, which will also prevent any development from encroaching into the countryside context and as such, restricts any contribution of the site's Green Belt to such function.

D. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Waterbeach is neither a town nor recognised as historic so the influence of this parameter is limited, nevertheless the effect of the proposed extensive Green Infrastructure through the proposed development is considered to be beneficial to the village.

E. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

It is considered that the site does not materially contribute towards the redevelopment of previously developed land. The Local Plan Review has identified that insufficient capacity exists within settlements to meet the strategic housing need.

The Site's Green Belt Context

The Site has been designated as Green Belt through the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan. A further Green Belt review is proposed through the Greater Cambridge Local Plan, with potential releases to deliver housing development, such as the Site. A Green Belt release at the Site's location is endorsed to provide for the delivery of local housing and to boost provision, alongside the ability to present a clearly defensible settlement edge at this location by utilising the railway embankment alongside the comprehensive landscape strategy.

The Council proposed at Local Plan submission stage to extend the Green Belt to include land between the former barracks and the Site. Shortly after the Plan was submitted for examination, planning permission was granted at appeal for residential development of this land. The Planning Inspector who decided the Appeal determined it was not necessary to extend the Green Belt to meet the objective of maintaining the separate identity of the village. The Local Plan Inspector agreed with the appeal Inspector and subsequently no revision was made to the Green Belt at this location.

A further Green Belt review is proposed through the Greater Cambridge Local Plan, with potential releases to deliver housing development such as the Site. Green Belt releases at the Site's location would provide for the delivery of local housing and would present a clear defensible settlement edge at this location by utilising the railway embankment alongside Green Infrastructure.

3.2 Technical Considerations

The technical assessments engaged on the promotional site have demonstrated that a significant area of the site is developable and would be able to accommodate an appropriate quantum of residential development. Where constraints have been identified, it has been established that mitigation is achievable.

The assessments which have been engaged include the following, and provide a high level technical context to inform the promotion of the site and its consideration at this current stage of the Plan's preparation:

- Ecological Assessment
- Arboriculture Survey
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Landscape and Visual Assessment

The technical assessments support the indicative Masterplan which has been prepared to show how the site could be sensitively developed with built form extending across a 7 hectare area.

Ecology

A preliminary Ecological Appraisal, including an extended Phase I Habitat Survey, has been undertaken by Southern Ecological Solutions. This assessment did not identify any ecological assets of value or concern to the development potential of the Site.

- The bulk of the Site is managed arable farmland which has limited ecological value. The Site contains areas of semi-improved grassland and small areas of semi-natural broadleaved woodland which have been assessed providing moderate value habitats, but with an overall ecological value that is limited. The Site also has hedgerows that have been assessed as 'species poor' with little contribution as commuting and foraging corridors.
- Any impacts derived from the development of the Site can be mitigated in line with relevant wildlife legislation. Additional surveys will be undertaken to ensure that satisfactory mitigation strategies will be provided, to ensure development results in positive impacts on local biodiversity and net enhancements.
- Provision of species rich planting will mitigate impacts of the Site's development, but also deliver ecological gain for the wider area. Such landscaped areas will link with Green Infrastructure to form a coherent network of green spaces, including the retained area of semi-natural broadleaved woodland adjacent to Saberton Close.

The opportunity for substantial ecological and environmental enhancements through the delivery of the Site is evident through comprehensive planting and provision of new habitats along green corridors. In particular, there is the opportunity for a large eastern area of open space to provide significant improvements to biodiversity. This ecological enhancement area could be identified through a designation as Green Infrastructure, with adjacent housing development providing connectivity and linkages to Waterbeach.

Arboriculture

Southern Ecological Solutions were engaged to assess trees both within and adjacent to the Site. This survey analysed the condition of the trees and identified 85 individual trees alongside woodland groups that have informed the Site's landscape proposals.

- The survey identified only a few trees of particular significance with most of the tree stock considered as relatively young and self-seeded. A mature Ash tree was identified as meeting the criteria of BS Category A2, located on the western fringe of the site. Other large trees, including two willow trees, were identified as being of only moderate quality, and suffering with long-term structural issues resulting in limited longevity.
- The areas of woodland identified in the Neighbourhood Plan to the rear of Park Crescent and Saberton Close, have been assessed and are not considered to be of arboricultural, ecological or recreational merit. The arboricultural assessment establishes that these areas are significantly affected by bramble, which limits the ability to act as effective areas of habitat refuge and diminishes the potential of the trees to properly mature.

The retained area of woodland will be incorporated into a wider Green Infrastructure scheme that will link with the proposed Green Infrastructure to the east, which will accommodate comprehensive landscaping and replacement planting. Overall, this will enhance the ecological value of the Promotion Site and sympathetically respect those trees of merit.

Technical Considerations

Drainage and Flood Risk

The Environment Agency Flood Map identifies that approximately half of the site lies outside of any flood designation. The balance of the Site lies within various flood zones, including defended flood zone 3, with formal flood defences formed by the banks of the River Cam. WSP have been appointed to determine the extent of flood risk across the Site. This has included hydraulic modelling to provide a detailed assessment of flood extents and identify what parts of the Site are available for development.

The modelling confirmed that the eastern limits of the Site are within defended flood zone 3, covering approximately 7hectares focussed within the western half of the Site. It is considered that the area of the Site affected by flood risk would form an extensive area Green Infrastructure to reinforce the settlement edge.

There is a network of drains and ditches across the site that will be incorporated into green corridors and actively used to drain the site sustainably. The implementation of this scheme will be detailed through a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy.

-  Defended 1 in 100yr plus 35% Climate Change Extent
-  Developable Land
-  Site Boundary



Fig.3.3 Potential developable Area beyond the modelled 1 in 100 year plus climate change maximum flood extent in defended scenario (WSP, 2019)

Technical Considerations

Landscape

Southern Ecological Solutions have carried out a preliminary Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVA) that outlines the principal landscape and visual constraints and opportunities as well as the contribution the Site has to its setting.

- The Site is not constrained by landscape considerations, with the area towards the west influenced by the proximity to the established settlement edge. The LVA recognises that the Site benefits from a sense of enclosure and containment:
- The western boundary is strongly influenced by built form, establishing an urban character.
- Existing buildings along Burgess Road and Bannold Road to the north and south enclose parts of the Site and provide effective screening that limits its visibility.
- The embanked railway line forming the eastern boundary is the most visually prominent boundary feature. The railway is clearly visible from local vantage points and provides a significant separation from the Fenland beyond.
- A developable area of 7 hectares has been identified within the western area of the Site which is well screened and not at risk of flooding (Flood Zone 1). The developable area does not contribute to the Fenland setting of Waterbeach, with existing housing immediately bounding the Site limiting its Fenland contribution.

The LVA has considered the relationship between the Site and the Grade II listed 31 Burgess Road, noting that the context of the listed building has been significantly altered by extant planning permission (S/3352/17/FUL) for the development of two dwellings immediately adjacent to the rear of the property; reducing the possible contribution of the Bannold Road Site to the setting of this listed building. As such, the development of the Site will not cause any detriment to the overall setting of the listed thatched cottage and the approval of infill housing at this location demonstrates the acceptability of the location for further development. The impact of the development on other recognised views across the site to St John's church in the east can be incorporated into the masterplan for the Site.

The LVA considers that the embanked railway line can create a strong enclosing feature with the adjacent land capable of providing a softened edge. This will lead to a more appropriate transition in landscape character from the eastern edge of Waterbeach into the wider Fenland beyond the railway line.

- The eastern half of the Site, will be set aside as an undeveloped area of Green Infrastructure to accommodate a comprehensive landscaped transition that responds to the considerations identified in the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that the eastern edge of Waterbeach more coherently ties into the Fen landscape beyond the railway line.

Key

-  Site Boundary
-  Potential Residential Development Parcels A & B
-  Potential Residential Development Parcels D (Lower Density / Settlement Edge)
-  Existing woodland retained and enhanced
-  Retained strategic vegetation (trees and hedgerows)
-  Development set back from setting of adjoining Listed Building (Grade II)
-  Enhance existing 'Gateways' between Waterbeach and surrounding Fen landscape
-  Strategic multi-functional Green Infrastructure / Open Space
-  Landscape butter incorporating existing / proposed strategic native vegetation to integrate new settlement edge
-  Strategic Green Corridors connecting open space / wildlife habitats & providing framework for development
-  Strategic Pedestrian / Cycle Routes
-  Existing Ditches to be incorporated into proposed SuDS network

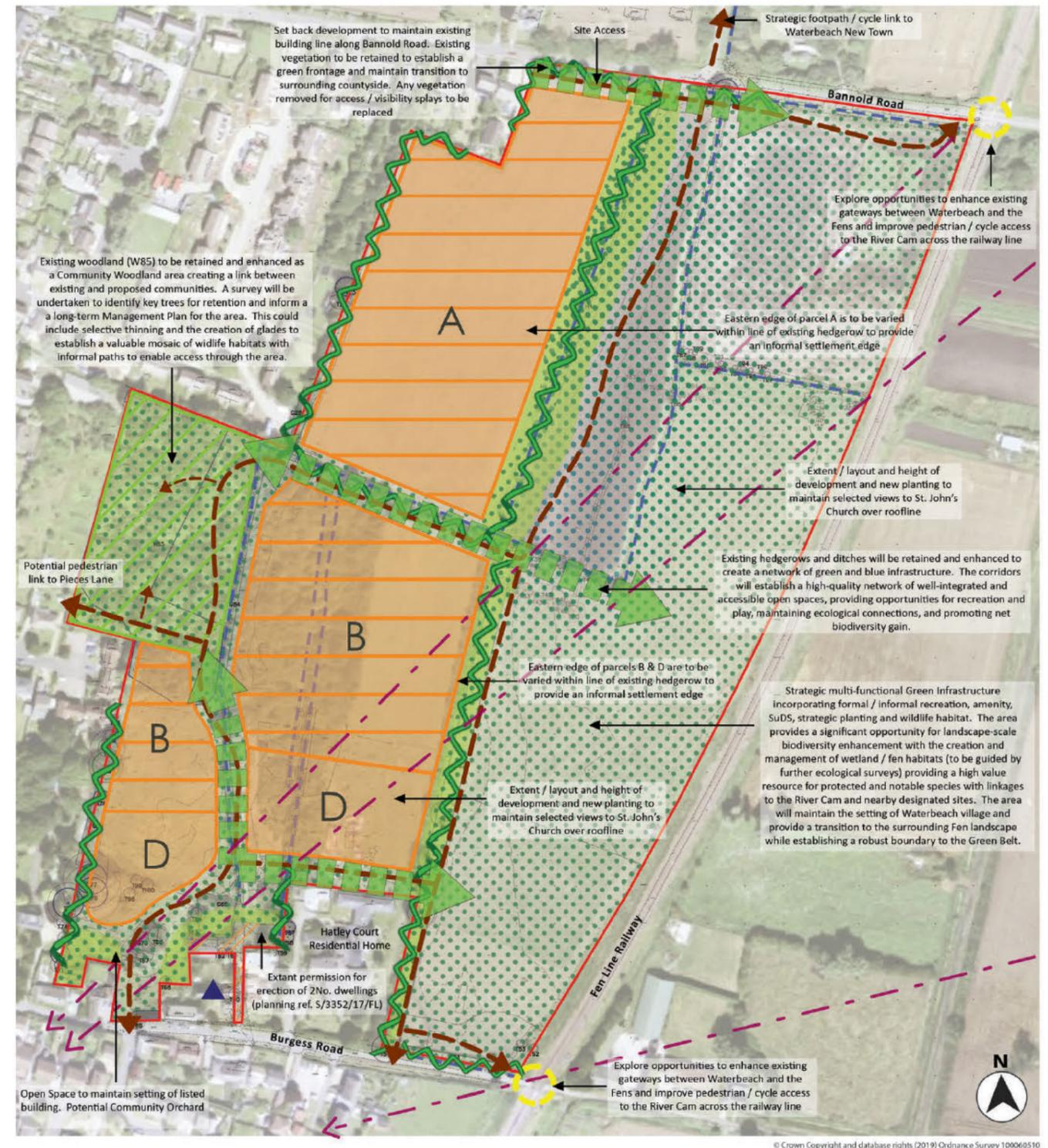
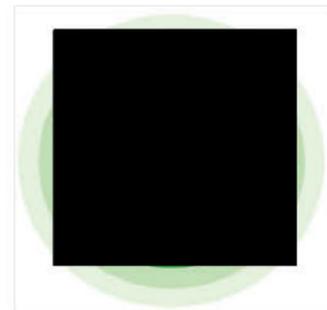


Fig.3.4 Landscape Appraisal

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4 Site Masterplan

4.0 Masterplan

The Masterplan for the site takes into account all of the technical considerations documented, whilst demonstrating how new linkages will be provided alongside substantial Green infrastructure. The resulting developable areas will accommodate 200 dwellings as part of a logical extension to the existing built up area of Waterbeach.

Key

-  The Site
-  Site Access
-  Primary Route (Boulevard Street)
-  Secondary Route (Shared Surface Street)
-  Tertiary Route (Narrow Lanes)
-  Built Form (Residential)
-  Marker Building
-  Views in and out inc. Church view
-  Views / Access to POS
-  Formal Pedestrian / Cycle Route Link
-  Informal Paths
-  Butter Planting
-  Buffer with Bridleway
-  Small Raised Embankment
-  Grassed Areas
-  Rustic Trim Trail / Play
-  Informal Bird Hide / Screen
-  Pond Area
-  Seasonal Pools
-  Boardwalks
-  Access Gates
-  Existing Ditch
-  Improved Fencing
-  Railway Line
-  Rail / Road Crossing
-  Interpretation Boards
-  Existing Hedgeline



Fig.4.1 Masterplan



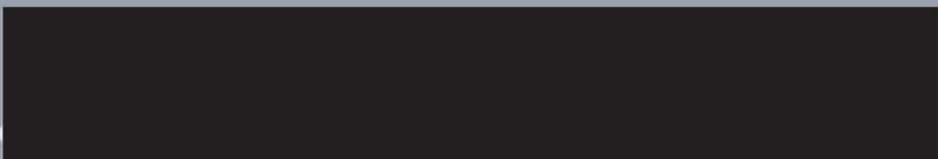
4.1 Conclusion

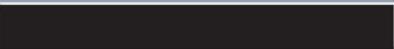
The Site at Bannold Road, Waterbeach should be removed from the Green Belt in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan to accommodate residential development, Green Infrastructure and essential connectivity to the new railway station

- The Site is available, suitable, developable and within a recognised sustainable location that benefits from proximity to an established and significantly growing service base. The mainline railway station provides a high level of accessibility to the wider area, including the expanding job market in Cambridge City.
- The Site is not highly functioning against the strategic purposes of the Green Belt and the opportunity should be taken to utilise the embanked Fen Line Railway as a new defensible limit to the settlement..
- Allocation of the Site would comply with the NPPF that non-strategic scaled sites are a critical component of the housing supply to ensure that delivery is maintained alongside that from complex strategic sites which can experience delays in both infrastructure and housing construction.
- Consideration of Waterbeach for further growth through the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan is inevitable given its position within the settlement hierarchy. The Site represents a sound and appropriate allocation to reaffirm the emerging spatial strategy.
- The Site has the ability to provide for some of the requirements of the Waterbeach Neighbourhood Plan, achieving primary objectives in deliver residential development that reflects the needs and character of the original village, whilst simultaneously facilitating enhanced linkages to Waterbeach New Town and the relocated railway station.
- The Site is not constrained by technical considerations and provides an opportunity to enhance biodiversity, the local environment and strengthen the landscape setting of Waterbeach and preserving the village's distinctiveness.

The release of the Site from the Green Belt would not undermine its wider strategic function within Greater Cambridge, whilst localised impacts would be limited. The Site does not demonstrate the requisite purposes of Green Belt in respect of conserving openness, preventing coalescence or restricting urban sprawl. The Site would however provide an appropriate and sustainable extension to Waterbeach that is in accordance with the strategic approach to distributing development. The Site's allocation will complement the delivery of the Waterbeach New Town by facilitating essential linkages to ensure that the benefits of the strategic development are better realised, and the relocated railway station is accessible to residents of the village on foot and by cycle. There is also the opportunity to enhance the network of bridleways

The release, allocation and development of the Site through the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan will deliver the quantity and type of housing that is needed within the District. It will also support the ongoing unprecedented growth of the sub-region, whilst also supporting the needs of the local community within a wider strategic context and deliver enhancements that will help achieve the objectives of the Waterbeach Neighbourhood Plan and realise sustainable growth.




Bannold Road, Waterbeach