

**LAND SOUTH OF
HATTONS ROAD,
LONGSTANTON
GREATER CAMBRIDGE
LOCAL PLAN -
PREFERRED OPTIONS
CONSULTATION 2021**

Quality Assurance

Site name: Land south of Hattons Road, Longstanton
Client name: Peterhouse, Cambridge
Type of report: Greater Cambridge Local Plan – Preferred Options Consultation 2021

Prepared by: John Dudding MPlan (Hons)



Signed

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Reviewed by: Anthony Child BPlan MRTPI MPlA AIEMA



Signed

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 These representations have been prepared by Bidwells on behalf of Peterhouse, Cambridge (hereafter ‘Peterhouse’) in response to the Greater Cambridge Local Plan Preferred Options, “First Proposals” 2021 consultation.
- 1.2 These representations follow those previously submitted in respect of land south of Hattons Road, Longstanton (hereafter “the site”) to the 2019 Call for Sites and 2020 Issues & Options consultations. These representations continue to promote the site for residential development through the Preferred Options consultation for the landscape-led delivery of up to approximately 120 dwellings and seek to give further certainty on the deliverability of the site. They also provide further clarification on technical points addressed in the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) proforma and respond to the following proposed policies in the Preferred Options consultation document:
- Policy S/DS: Development Strategy; and
 - Policy S/RRA: Site Allocations in the Rest of the Rural Area.
- 1.3 The representations are accompanied by an updated Preliminary Concept Plan (Dwg. No. UDS45881-A1-0102 Rev E), which responds to technical points in the HELAA proforma.

2.0 Spatial Strategy

Policy S/DS: Development strategy

- 2.1 Peterhouse support the principle of the proposed development strategy for Greater Cambridge and the approach to directing development to locations where active and new public transport is the natural choice, where green infrastructure can be delivered alongside new development, and where jobs, services and facilities can be located near to where people live. This approach is consistent with the NPPF, which at paragraph 11.a) states that all plans should promote a sustainable form of development.
- 2.2 Peterhouse supports the principle of including allocations for housing and employment in the rest of the rural area as part of the proposed development strategy. The Local Plan should seek to allocate a component of its housing needs towards growth at existing villages. Sustainable development in rural areas makes an important contribution to ensuring the vitality of villages and supporting existing rural services and facilities.
- 2.3 This approach is supported by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which at paragraph 79 states that to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services.
- 2.4 Notwithstanding this clear direction in national policy, the emerging Local Plan makes very few additional allocations in the rural area and Peterhouse objects to this approach. This approach threatens the vitality of villages within the rural area and stifles opportunities for further growth and supporting local services. The allocation of additional small to medium sized sites in the rural area will also help to ensure that the housing supply for the Local Plan is balanced and robust, reducing the reliance on strategic sites and the limited allocations in villages. As such, the Development Strategy should include for further allocations in the rural area to ensure that a sound spatial strategy is developed and delivered.
- 2.5 It is important that any additional allocations accord with the principles of the proposed development strategy. Land south of Hattons Road, Longstanton accords with the proposed development strategy as follows:
- Directing development to where active and public transport is the natural choice:
 - Longstanton Park and Ride is located approximately 1.5km to the north of the site and provides residents with access to a high frequency service between Cambridge and St. Ives. The Park and Ride is within easy cycling distance of the site and would provide residents with access to sustainable modes of transport.
 - There is a footpath public right of way running along the eastern boundary of the site, which connects Hattons Road with School Lane and a footpath on the opposite side of Hattons Road. A tactile paving crossing point and footway could be created along the northern boundary of the site on the south side of Hattons Road to improve connectivity. A footpath link can also be created to the south to the existing footway on School Lane and the Citi5/5A/5C bus stop around 100m from the south eastern boundary of the site. This would provide the potential new residents with safe pedestrian access to services, facilities and public transport from within the site.

- Where green infrastructure can be delivered alongside new development:
 - The proposal includes multi-functional public open space including parklands, woodlands and nature reserves which are connected by green corridors to enhance and build upon existing corridors in the surrounding landscape. A total of 5.89 hectares (approximately half of the site) is proposed for open space, including a continuation of the public open space allocated in SC/1(b) to create a meaningful green spine through Longstanton.
 - The site is predominantly agricultural land and can currently be considered to be of low ecological value. Through enhancements the proposals present an opportunity to deliver a biodiversity net gain of at least 10%.
- Where jobs services and facilities can be located near to where people live:
 - Locating residential development in a sustainable location, within close proximity to existing and proposed services, facilities, infrastructure and employment opportunities. The site is located approximately 150m from the village High Street, located near to Northstowe, which will provide a wide range of town centre uses, and is well within cycling distance of the Longstanton Park and Ride. The site is therefore well placed for future residents to be able to walk and cycle, rather than travel by private car, to meet their daily needs.

Policy S/RRA: Site Allocations in the Rest of the Rural Area

- 2.6 Peterhouse supports the principle of policy S/RRA in allocating sites for homes and employment in the rural area. The Local Plan should seek to allocate a component of its housing needs towards growth at existing villages. Sustainable development in rural areas makes an important contribution to ensuring the vitality of villages and supporting existing rural services and facilities. This approach is supported by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which at paragraph 79 states that to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services.
- 2.7 Notwithstanding this clear direction in national policy, the emerging Local Plan makes very few additional allocations in the rural area and Peterhouse objects to this approach. This approach threatens the vitality of villages within the rural area and stifles opportunities for further growth and supporting local services. The allocation of additional small to medium sized sites in the rural area will also help to ensure that the housing supply for the Local Plan is balanced and robust, reducing the reliance on strategic sites and the limited allocations in villages. As such, the Development Strategy should include for further allocations in the rural area to ensure that a sound spatial strategy is developed and delivered.
- 2.8 To fully support the rural area and develop a sound spatial strategy with a mixture of deliverable and suitable rural allocations, Land to the south of Hattons Road, Longstanton should be identified as an allocation for residential development. The site is considered to represent a sustainable location for development which will help to meet the housing needs of Greater Cambridge in the next Local Plan period. The land is considered to be available, achievable and suitable and the development proposals will bring a number of tangible social, economic and environmental benefits to support the delivery of a sound and sustainable spatial strategy as part of the Local Plan, including:

- The opportunity to deliver a substantial amount of affordable housing to help meet the needs of Longstanton and the wider District, including the potential to possibly deliver an element of custom and self-build;
- Locating residential development in a sustainable location, within close proximity to existing and proposed services, facilities, infrastructure and employment opportunities. The site is located approximately 150m from the village High Street, located adjacent to allocations for employment development and an extension to the recreation ground and is well within cycling distance of the Longstanton Park and Ride. The site is therefore well placed for future residents to be able to walk and cycle, rather than travel by private car, to meet their daily needs;
- A landowner who wishes to work with the community in order to shape a proposal which meets the needs of and can provide wider benefits to the village;
- Delivery of a substantial amount of open space which would be accessible to new and existing residents and would provide connectivity with the allocated recreation ground extension;
- Supporting Longstanton's economy, including local shops and services; and
- Enhancing biodiversity levels across the site. The site is predominantly agricultural land and can currently be considered to be of low ecological value. The proposals present an opportunity to deliver a biodiversity net gain of at least 10%.

3.0 HELAA Proforma - Site Reference: 40518

- 3.1 An assessment of the site has been undertaken as part of the HELAA (Site reference: 40518). Overall, the HELAA assessment of the site is favourable, rating the site green on several technical matters including open space/green infrastructure, accessibility to services and facilities and air quality. A selection of items within the assessment are rated as amber and responses to those matters are set out below. These responses demonstrate that these matters can be rated as green, further evidencing the site's suitability and deliverability for a mixed-use scheme.

Flood Risk

- 3.2 **HELAA Comment:** The assessment for flood risk identifies:
- Flood zone: Partly in Flood Zone 2 (45%)
 - Partly in Flood Zone 3 (9%)
 - Surface water flooding: 2% lies in a 1 in 30 year event
 - 10% lies in a 1 in 100 year event
 - 26% lies in a 1 in 1000 year event
- 3.3 **Peterhouse Response:** The eastern half of the site is located within Flood Zones 2 and 3 as indicated by the Environment Agency's Flood Map. The western half of the site is located within Flood Zone 1 and therefore has a 0.1% chance (low probability) of flooding. As shown in the accompanying Preliminary Concept Masterplan, the proposed development is located in the western half of the site which features a low risk flood area and the eastern area of the site is proposed to be open space.

Landscape and Townscape

- 3.4 **HELAA Comment:** Lies within 10m of a TPO. National Character Area 88 Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands the area comprises a broad, gently undulating, lowland plateau dissected by shallow river valleys that gradually widen as they approach The Fens NCA in the east. The area is typical of the eastern edge of the NCA where the influence of the Fens becomes more apparent.
- 3.5 District Design Guide SPD March 2010 - The Western Claylands. As defined within the Character Areas the area comprises gently undulating arable farmland with, mostly, large fields and low trimmed hedgerows. Despite the presence of some major roads, much of the area has a relatively tranquil, rural character.
- 3.6 Landscape Character Assessment (2021) Landscape Character Area - 2A: Longstanton Fen Edge Claylands
- 3.7 The site lies on the western edge of Longstanton village. Although open and level, views to and from the site are limited, with local views restricted to the eastern part of Hattons road and from The Pathfinder PROW. The area immediately north of School lane has been allocated as employment land to the east and Public Open Space west. A lower density than proposed may

be achievable with landscape mitigation. The proposed 150 dwellings may be excessive for the village edge location, resulting in a density of over 30DPH.

- 3.8 **Peterhouse Response:** The Preliminary Concept Masterplan retains all TPO trees and existing landscape features, such as the significant tree buffers along the site's boundaries. Where limited views are available in the east of the site, the design response is to deliver significant open space (approximately 5.9ha), retaining these views and the openness of this part of the site. The open space is adjacent to the open space allocation to the north and would create a continuation of a meaningful green spine through Longstanton. This open space would be multifunctional, providing a key recreational asset for the village whilst also creating opportunities for biodiversity net gains.
- 3.9 With regards to density, the masterplan has been amended since the last submission and now proposes a total of 120 dwellings, reducing the density within the western part of the site. Alongside the reduction in density, the masterplan includes for a reduced development footprint and further landscape areas along the western and southern boundaries. The proposal responds appropriately to its edge of village context and would represent a logical extension of the village alongside the proposed allocation to the north.

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- 3.10 **HELAA Comment:** Discharge to ground or surface water of more than 20m³/day would require consultation with Natural England. Boundary habitats including hedgerows, watercourses and mature trees may qualify as Habitats of Principal Importance/be of high ecological value. Retention of wooded areas outside of the site would be supported. Water vole have been recorded within Longstanton Brook and at least a 5-10m buffer would be required. Otherwise, arable habitats are likely to be of low ecological value, although may support farmland bird populations.
- 3.11 Development of the site may have a detrimental impact on a designated site, or those with a regional or local protection but the impact could be reasonably mitigated or compensated.
- 3.12 **Peterhouse Response:** A walkover survey of the Site was completed by an experienced ecologist and botanical surveyor in January 2020. The site carries no formal wildlife site designations and there are no non-statutory wildlife sites or ancient woodlands within 2km of the site.
- 3.13 The site comprises almost entirely of a single arable field and is of low ecological value overall. There are no ponds or standing waterbodies on Site or within 250 m, so the presence of great crested newts is unlikely. The Site was not considered to be of value to reptiles given the lack of significant areas of rank grassland or other suitable habitats.
- 3.14 As shown on the concept masterplan, a significant buffer can be delivered along Longstanton Brook as the eastern half of the site is proposed as open space.
- 3.15 In overall terms, the Site is likely to have modest protected faunal interest that would need detailed assessment to support a future planning application. However, the presence of protected species should be straightforward to mitigate by adopting standard ecological mitigation approaches as part of development planning.

- 3.16 As demonstrated by the concept masterplan, the site can accommodate a substantial amount of green infrastructure which provide a range of opportunities for habitat creation and enhancement. As such, it is likely that a 10% biodiversity net gain could be achieved as a minimum.

Historic Environment

- 3.17 **HELAA Comment:** The site is within 100m of a Conservation Area. The North East corner of site is opposite the boundary of the conservation area, which is also the entrance point to the village. Acceptability of the development is dependent on design and layout.
- 3.18 **Peterhouse Response:** Whilst the site boundary is within 100m of a Conservation Area, the concept masterplan demonstrates that the eastern part of the site would comprise open space and landscaping with residential development focussed in the west. The distance between the residential development and the Conservation Area is substantial and therefore unlikely to generate harm to the setting of the Conservation Area.

Site Access

- 3.19 **HELAA Comment:** The proposed site is acceptable in principle subject to detailed design.
- 3.20 There are potential access constraints, but these could be overcome through development.
- 3.21 **Peterhouse Response:** A suitable access is proposed onto Hattons Road towards the northern extremity of the site demonstrating that an adequate visibility splay can be achieved (2.4m x 70m) which is suitable for a 30mph limit in a rural area. Along this section of Hattons Road the national speed limit (60mph) currently applies, although this changes to a 30mph speed limit at approximately the north eastern boundary of the site and again at the north western boundary. It is anticipated the 30mph speed limit would be extended along Hattons Road to deliver development on the site. The access has been shown with a 6.5m carriageway and 2m footways which would be suitable for a development of over 150 dwellings.

Transport and Roads

- 3.22 **HELAA Comment:** Cumulative impact assessment will be required. The existing access to the site will need to be upgraded to facilitate a development of this size. The traffic is likely to distribute to junction 25 of the A14 where there is an existing accident cluster and existing capacity issues. In order to develop the site, the applicant must promote sustainable travel to local services and the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway by providing high quality infrastructure.
- 3.23 Any potential impact on the functioning of trunk roads and/or local roads could be reasonably mitigated.
- 3.24 **Peterhouse Response:** A suitable access to accommodate the proposed level of development can be delivered onto Hattons Road. Due to the site's location it is well placed for future residents to be able to walk and cycle, rather than travel by private car, to meet their daily needs. Longstanton Park and Ride is located approximately 1.5km to the north of the site and provides residents with access to a high frequency service between Cambridge and St. Ives. The Park and Ride is within easy cycling distance of the site and would provide residents with access to

sustainable modes of transport. As part of development proposals, various initiatives and/or works could be delivered to further encourage use of the Park and Ride.

- 3.25 There is a footpath public right of way running along the eastern boundary of the site, which connects Hattons Road with School Lane and a footpath on the opposite side of Hattons Road. A tactile paving crossing point and footway could be created along the northern boundary of the site on the south side of Hattons Road to improve connectivity. A footpath link can also be created to the south to the existing footway on School Lane and the Citi5/5A/5C bus stop around 100m from the south eastern boundary of the site. This would provide the potential new residents with safe pedestrian access from within the site and encourage the uptake of active travel and public transport. The indicative footway improvements and informal crossing points are indicated on drawing SK01 in Appendix B of the Transport Appraisal.

