

Our ref: Q230805
Email: [REDACTED]
Date: 06 February 2024



Planning Policy Team
South Cambridgeshire Hall
Cambourne Business Park
Cambourne
Cambridge
CB23 6EA

FAO: Neighbourhood Planning Team

Dear Madam/Sir

Response on behalf of Lands Improvement Holdings Limited and Pigeon Land to Regulation 16 consultation on the draft Stapleford and Great Shelford Neighbourhood Plan

I write on behalf of Pigeon Land ('Pigeon') and Lands Improvement Holdings Ltd ('LIH') in response to the consultation on the Stapleford and Great Shelford Neighbourhood Plan ('the S&GS NP') Submission (Regulation 15 version), November 2024.

LIH and Pigeon are jointly promoting 190 hectares of land for development, known as Cambridge South, located between Cambridge Road and the M1 and south of Addenbrookes Road, immediately south of Trumpington ('the Site'). A Site Location Plan is enclosed. The vision for Cambridge South is to deliver an exemplary new residential community comprising circa 4,500 new homes – of which 50% would be affordable – plus ancillary commercial uses and amenities alongside supporting social, transport, green and blue infrastructure. Much of the housing would be dedicated to meeting the documented need for homes to support existing needs and planned growth at the Cambridge Biomedical Campus. The majority of that land falls within the S&GS NP area and LIH and Pigeon therefore have a keen and valid interest in the Neighbourhood Plan.

The opportunity that Cambridge South provides is being put to GCSP and the Cambridge Growth Group ('CGG') so that it may form part of their emerging plans.

We recognise that it is not for the Neighbourhood Plan to confirm such an allocation given that the land is currently designated as Green Belt. The purpose of this letter is to make sure that the authors of the NP are aware of the Cambridge South development and that any restrictive allocation of the land set out in this NP may need to be reviewed at a relatively early stage, given the national importance of meeting the identified need for supporting CBC's expansion and tackling Greater Cambridge's housing issues.



1 Background

LIH and Pigeon have promoted Cambridge South for a number of years and have engaged at each stage of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan ('GCLP') currently being prepared by the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service ('GCSP').

Most recently, LIH and Pigeon made a joint submission to the GCLP *First Proposals* consultation held in Spring 2021 alongside a consortium of landowners of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus ('CBC'). The submission set out the needs case for growing CBC and a holistic vision for achieving this alongside delivering much needed housing on Cambridge South to support the Campus' expansion and address the wider chronic issues facing the Cambridge housing market.

That submission comprised the following reports and studies (all of which are available to view via the [GCSP Local Plan consultation webpage](#)):

- CBC Vision 2050
- Planning Report, prepared by Quod
- Building a World Leading Innovation District for the Life Sciences, prepared by Creative Places
- Spatial Masterplan Report, prepared by Allies and Morrison
- Environmental Appraisal, prepared by Quod
- Transport Strategy, prepared by Vectos
- Utilities Appraisal, prepared by Buro Happold

The very serious issues facing the Cambridgeshire housing market are well known. The S&GS Housing Needs Assessment (2024 amendment) sets things out in stark terms:

“Local households on average incomes are unable to access even entry-level homes unless they have the advantage of a very large deposit. Market housing, even with the benefit of a higher than average income, is likely to remain out of reach to most. Private renting is generally only affordable to higher earners, with average earners able to afford entry-level market rents. Households made up of one or two lower quartile earners cannot afford the given rental thresholds.” (paragraph 10)

S&GS are by no means alone in recognising the severity of these issues. A Housing Study commissioned by CBC Ltd based on a broad survey of people who work on the Campus (i.e., doctors, nurses, lab technicians, researchers, estate management staff) sets out the housing challenges they face, with many struggling to meet their housing needs. 30% of CBC workers are currently unable to afford rents on the open market; healthcare workers – who account for 70% of the total workforce within CBC – face having to pay 13-15 times their earnings to afford a property, which is twice the



national average.¹ The effects of this are substantial and pervasive. High demand and low supply of affordable housing forces many to live in unsatisfactory conditions or to look for housing further field, leading to longer commute times which has effects on congestion, air pollution, climate change and quality of life. This imperils Cambridge's ability to attract workers, threatening its economy and long term prosperity.

The draft Neighbourhood Plan acknowledges and understands these issues and neatly summarises the problems they cause:

“It is very difficult for younger generations and even middle to high income earners to put down roots in Stapleford and Great Shelford. Property prices are high and trending upwards and there is a limited supply of suitable housing, affordable or otherwise, relative to demand. Without a better balance, Stapleford and Great Shelford could become ageing dormitory villages rather than the thriving multi-generational communities which they aspire to be.” (paragraph 4.13)

Cambridge South provides an opportunity to address the housing needs of Stapleford and Great Shelford, of CBC and of the wider City. It can accommodate circa 4,500 new homes, half of which would be affordable. There is a real prospect of making a meaningful difference and addressing the very serious challenges that people face in finding well connected, affordable, high quality housing in the local area. LIH and Pigeon are continuing to engage with GCSP and CGG to make them aware of this and to seek its incorporation into their plans for the area. LIH and Pigeon would welcome engagement with the Parish Councils on their plans for Cambridge South, should either Council wish to.

2 Government support for growth in Cambridge

Successive governments have been clear in their support for growth in Cambridge and specifically in southern Cambridge as expressed across budget announcements, Written Ministerial Statements ('WMS') and Government publications. The consistent message is that there is a strong backing for realising the true potential of Greater Cambridge, which the Government sees as a national priority. For instance:

- In September 2023, Michael Gove MP issued a WMS declaring the Government's support for “*transformational change*” to address barriers caused by “*lack of new space for laboratories and the new housing necessary to attract and retain talent.*”

¹ Cambridge Biomedical Campus Housing Study: Establishing the housing needs of the CBC workforce (April 2024). Available here: <https://cambridge-biomedical.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/CBC-Housing-Study-Report-Final-May24.pdf>



- In March 2024 Government published *The Case for Cambridge*, which recognises the city’s incredible history, built environment and institutions and seeks to “give new life to the spirit of innovation and endeavour which has been the cornerstone of Cambridge’s success.”
- Following that, a further WMS was published in May 2024, setting out unusually location-specific policy. It directly acknowledged the critical role that the Cambridge Biomedical Campus plays in the regional and national economy and invited proposals for its expansion. That WMS also set out the Government’s ambitions to:

“address any barriers to the early expansion and coherent enhancement of the campus, including through the accelerated delivery of any associated housing development and the provision of appropriate levels of affordable housing to meet the housing needs of those working at the campus.”²

- Matthew Pennycook MP wrote an open letter to leaders and executives within GCSP in August 2024 to make clear that the current Government thinks the “recent focus on Cambridge and its untapped economic potential are entirely warranted.”³

Ambitions for growth are being matched by investment in the infrastructure to support it. The Minister for Housing and Planning set out plans to invest £7.9 billion investment in the next 5 years for water companies across the Oxford-Cambridge corridor, including to delivering the new Fens Reservoir serving Cambridge.⁴ This follows Government funding for the Cambridge South Train station in 2019, due for completion in 2025.⁵

The above WMSs are not referenced in the as being relevant ministerial statements in paragraph 3.2 of the Basic Conditions Statement (2024) despite them clearly being so.

3 Relationship between the Neighbourhood Plan, the emerging GCLP and national policy

Cambridge South is the only site of scale within active travel distance of CBC that could sustainably meet the need identified in the WMS. It is apparent, therefore, that these national priorities could have

² Available online here: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2024-05-08/debates/2405085800017/CambridgeDeliveryGroupUpdate>

³ Letter from Matthew Pennycook MP, 23rd August 2024. Available here: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66cdf3f68e33f28aae7e1f67/housing-minister-letter-to-greater-cambridge-leaders.pdf>

⁴ MHCLG Growth Corridor Strategy Statement made, 29 January 2025

⁵ Cambridge South infrastructure enhancement: Transport and Works Order, 18 June 2021



implications for the local area and the Neighbourhood Plan needs to be careful not to set itself in conflict with national policies.

The most effective way of doing this may be to recognise in the Plan itself that it would need to be reviewed in the event that the Greater Cambridge Local Plan or the Spatial Plan proposed to be produced by the Cambridge Growth company confirms plans for strategic scale growth within the Neighbourhood Plan Area. Without this, several policies will likely become out of date and carry limited weight.⁶

It is also important in any event to be sure that the Neighbourhood Plan policies are consistent with other current national planning policies.

LIH and Pigeon would welcome the opportunity to engage with the Parish Councils if and when a review of the Neighbourhood Plan is carried out.

Summary

Pigeon and LIH are seeking to have Cambridge South allocated in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan to deliver approximately 4,500 new homes to help meet Greater Cambridge's acute need for housing. LIH and Pigeon recognise that it is not for this version of the Neighbourhood Plan to allocate Cambridge South for this purpose. Should GSCP remove Cambridge South from the Green Belt and allocate it for development, however, the Neighbourhood Plan would require an early review to ensure that it does not undermine or constrain strategic policies in the newly adopted GCLP or conflict with national policy. LIH and Pigeon would be pleased to engage with the Parish Councils on any such review of the Neighbourhood Plan that may happen in the future.

We request pursuant to Regulation 19(b)(ii) to be notified of any decision made by the local planning authority under section 38(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).

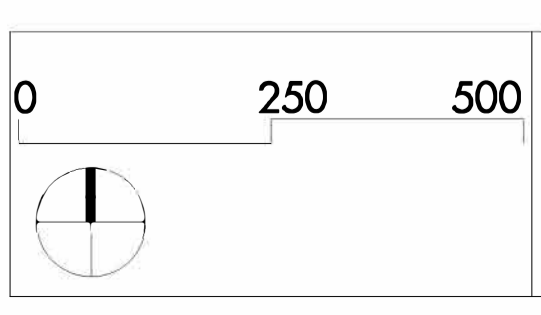
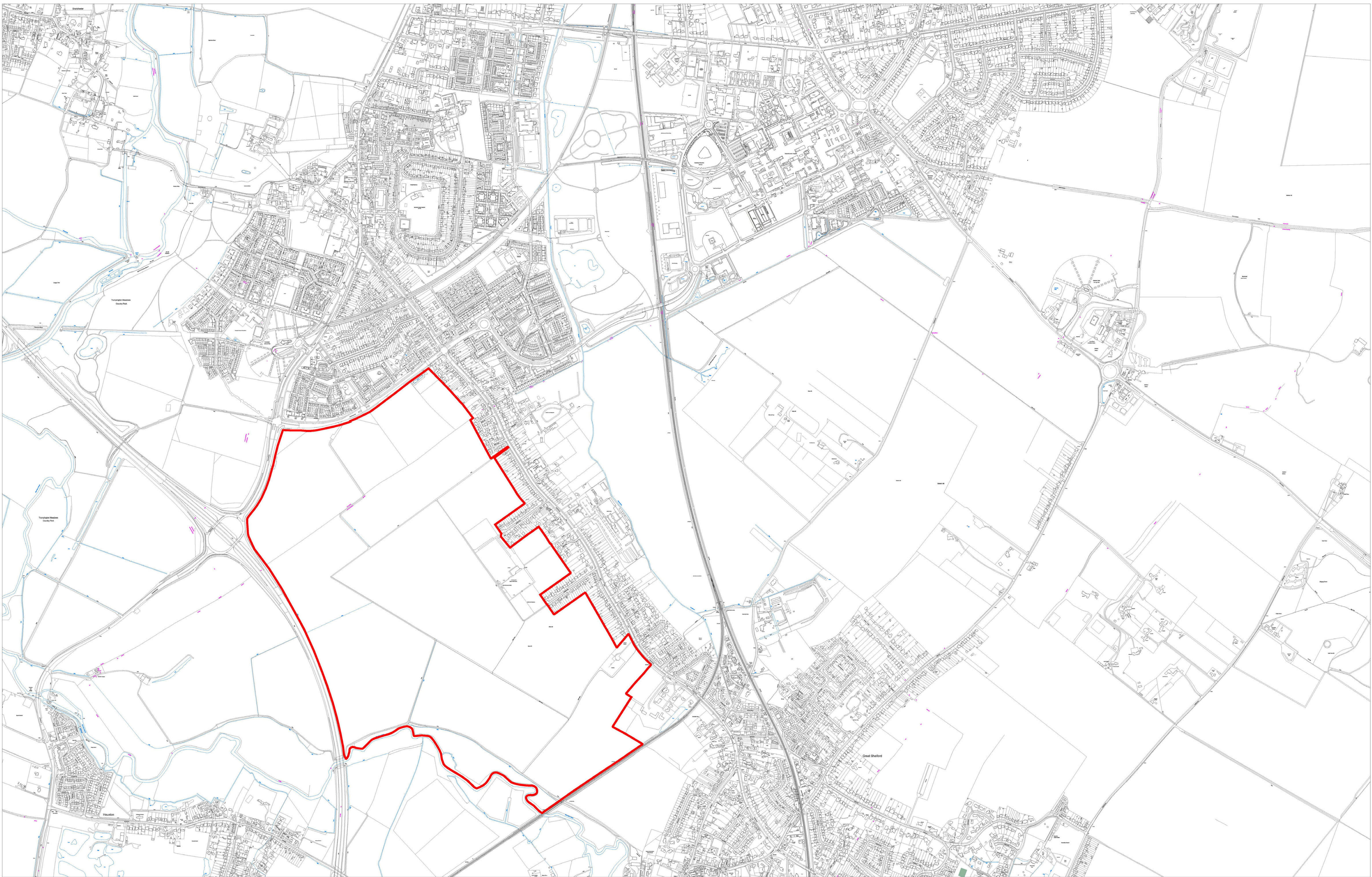
Yours sincerely



Gregory Blaxland
Associate Director

enc. Site Location Plan
cc. James Buxton (Pigeon)
Kathryn Turner (LIH)

⁶ As per section 38(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.



Do not scale from this drawing. Use figured dimensions only. Figured dimensions are in millimetres. All levels are in metres. All dimensions and levels shall be verified on site before proceeding with works. Detailed site survey to be carried out to verify positions and level relationships with the features and ordnance shown. The Architect must be notified of any discrepancy. Boundaries are indicative only and are to be verified by others. Where building components are described in the specification as Descriptive Specification (Contractor Design) elements shown on this drawing pertaining to those components are to be noted as "Issued for Design Intent only".

Allies & Morrison LLP is not responsible for any errors caused by the transmission, translation, software or computer systems. Allies & Morrison LLP is not responsible for nor shall be liable for the consequences of any use made of the drawings or models other than that for which they were produced by Allies & Morrison LLP for the Client.

REV	DATE	DESCRIPTION	CRD	REV	DATE	DESCRIPTION	CRD
-	03.11.23	FOR INFORMATION	AS				

Allies and Morrison LLP
 85 Southwark Street
 London SE1 0HX
 telephone 020 7921 0100
 facsimile 020 7921 0101
 email studio@alliesandmorrison.com

CAMBRIDGE SOUTH
LOCATION PLAN
 20189_06_01_001

A&M JOB NO: 20189 SCALE 1:7500 @ A1 / 1:15000 @ A3

Revision
-