

Dear Steering Group

## HARSTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN, REGULATION 15 CONSULTATION 2025

### SITE H10-LAND SOUTH OF RECTORY FARM, HARSTON

This representation has been prepared by Bidwells on behalf of Jesus College in response to the Harston Neighbourhood Plan ("HNP") Regulation 15 public consultation. These representations relate to Land South of Rectory Farm, Harston ("the Site"), which is within the ownership of Jesus College.

Representations were made at Reg 14 stage in June 2024 which is appended to this representation for reference (**Appendix A**). Subsequently, a site visit was held with Bidwells, the landowner (Jesus College) and Parish Council Members and South Cambridgeshire District Council ("SCDC") Housing Officers to discuss the availability and suitability of part of the site H10 (Neighbourhood Plan Reference) to assist in meeting the Affordable Housing Needs of Harston Parish Council ("PC") via the HNP as a potential 'Exceptions Site'. A site meeting note from this visit is also appended (**Appendix B**).

#### Current Status of the Site

The purpose of this representation is to reaffirm the site is both available and deliverable for the provision of affordable housing through a rural exception site proposal. As discussed in the previous representation and as part of the site visit, Jesus College would like to consider and determine with the PC the number of affordable dwellings which might be needed to serve the plan period. This will help to understand the amount of land within the site which would be required with associated infrastructure, access points, open space and landscaping etc.

#### Concluding Comments

A shared vision for the Site is potentially achievable by means of a collaborative approach between the key stakeholders. The college would be open to ongoing discussions with the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group with respect to this site proposal to assist in meeting the affordable housing needs of the Parish. We acknowledge that the PC is liaising with the district council in terms of the relationship and individual responsibilities between the HNP and the forthcoming consultation on the Greater Cambridge Local Plan. If the PC requires any further information from Bidwells and/or Jesus College we would be happy to provide it. Furthermore, we would be happy to meet with you again to discuss any questions the PC may have in this matter.



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Kind regards



**Rob Hopwood**  
Partner, Planning

**Enclosures**

Appendix A – Reg 14 Representation for Land at Rectory Farm submitted 10<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Appendix B – Note from site visit on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024

Appendix C – Site Location Plan

## **Appendix A - Reg 14 Representation for Land at Rectory Farm submitted 10<sup>th</sup> June 2024**



**BIDWELLS**

Your ref: Reg 14 Consultation of Harston's Draft  
Neighbourhood Plan  
Our ref: JB86971  
DD: [REDACTED]  
Date: 10/06/2024

Harston Neighbourhood Plan Working Group  
By email: [clerk@harstonparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@harstonparishcouncil.gov.uk)

Dear Steering Group

## **HARSTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN, REGULATION 14 CONSULTATION 2024**

### **SITE H10-LAND SOUTH OF RECTORY FARM, HARSTON – REPRESENTATIONS ON BEHALF OF JESUS COLLEGE**

These representations have been prepared by Bidwells on behalf of Jesus College in response to the Harston Neighbourhood Plan (“HNP”) Regulation 14 public consultation. These representations relate to Land South of Rectory Farm, Harston (“the Site”), which is within the ownership of Jesus College.

We have been in recent email correspondence with the Parish Council (“PC”) to arrange to meet on site with members of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group and local councillors to discuss how the site can positively contribute to the delivery of the HNP. However, as it has not been possible to arrange the site meeting in advance of the public consultation period closing date on 11 June, we are making representations to the Regulation 14 consultation.

Our representation is set out as follows:

- Background to the Site
- Planning for new homes in Harston
- Site assessment of Site H10
- Other Sites in the Site Options and Assessment report
- Concluding comments

### **Background to Land South of Rectory Farm**

As shown by the attached Location Plan (**Appendix A**), the Site known as ‘Land south of Rectory Farm, Harston’ extends to circa 5.5 hectares and is located to the north-east of Harston village. The site is identified as Site H10 in the Site Options and Assessment technical report carried out by AECOM in February 2024.

The Site is situated on the edge of Harston village, outside the settlement boundary and within the Green Belt. The site comprises arable farmland and borders the A10 to the east, a small farm track and fields to the north, fields to the east and existing residential properties to the south. The south-eastern corner



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adjoins existing residential development along the A10. The site offers good access to community facilities and services in Harston including a village shop, open space and schools.

Jesus College would like to consider and determine with the PC the number of affordable dwellings which might be needed to serve the plan period which will help to understand the amount of land within the site which would be required with associated infrastructure, access points, open space and landscaping etc.

### **The Need for Affordable Homes in Harston**

We are conscious that there is now a delay in the preparation of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan, and that the next consultation is scheduled to take place in the Autumn of 2025. However, we note updated jobs and housing evidence papers prepared on behalf of the Councils in late 2022 indicated higher growth figures for Greater Cambridge than was originally envisaged. In addition, central government has identified Cambridge and its hinterland as a key location for economic growth of national significance. How this will work its way into policy and planning practice remains to be seen, but there is a strong policy imperative for additional development to support the planned economic growth at the Cambridge Biomedical Campus as well as supporting other office and labs proposals which have been given permission locally. It is acknowledged there is an acute need for affordable housing locally and it is prudent that the PC is planning for this need as one of its priorities within the emerging HNP.

As you will be aware, planning permission has been granted for the proposed R&D facility Cambridge Discovery Campus at the former Hauxton Wastewater Treatment Plant to support the nearby Cambridge Biomedical Campus and add to the life science ‘southern cluster’ of Cambridge. This will comprise a 250,000 sq. ft. campus development along with a new Country Park and amenity building to potentially generate 1190 jobs locally. As shown in the attached Public Rights of Way Plan (**Appendix B**) there is good connectivity between site H10 and the Cambridge Discovery Campus, which could provide affordable housing for workers within active travel commuting distance.

The Housing Needs Assessment which forms part of the evidence base for the Neighbourhood Plan finds that ***‘there is a high level of affordable housing need in the parish. Specifically, it finds that if the South Cambridgeshire’s need for affordable housing were prorated to Harston, based on its current share of population, there would be a need for 86 affordable homes to rent over the period up to 2041 and a need for 21 affordable homes to buy’*** (HNP, Paragraph 10.4). ***Furthermore, ‘There are currently (March 2023) 42 households in need of affordable or social rented housing with a connection to the Harston village, according to South Cambridgeshire District Council’s waiting list data’*** (HNP, Paragraph 10.5).

The Housing Needs Survey also demonstrates a significant level of support for affordable housing in principle, with some reservations regarding the use of greenfield sites and the increased traffic brought about by increased numbers of dwellings. The need is identified as 32 households, which is derived from the combination of the existing evidence from the housing register and the additional findings from the housing needs survey.

Chapter 10 of the Regulation 14 HNP deals with matters relating to housing and the built environment. Policy HAR 13 is targeted at addressing ***‘Objective 10: Existing affordable housing needs will be addressed through the provision of affordable housing schemes targeted at meeting parish needs’***. Paragraph 10.7 states that the neighbourhood plan is very supportive of bringing affordable housing forward by means other than inclusion on large development sites, namely through rural exceptions housing schemes.

Jesus College supports Policy HAR 13 and is keen to help address the objective of allocating affordable housing needs and discussing how much of the Land South of Rectory Farm would be needed to deliver the number of homes required. Site H10 comprises 5.54 Hectares, which, at a density of 30 dwellings per hectare as stipulated by the Local Plan (Policy H/8), could deliver 166 dwellings over the plan period if the whole site was utilised. However, it is unlikely that there is such a need to serve the plan period and therefore it would be appropriate to understand the need and agree on how many dwellings the neighbourhood plan might require over this plan period.

Policy HAR 14 addresses the size, mix and tenure of new residential development with the aim of attracting young families to the parish and allow older residents to downsize, in terms of meeting Objective 11.

### Site Assessment of Site H10

The site was initially put forward as part of the ‘call for sites’ evidence gathering in 2023, and then was considered as part of a Site Options and Assessment technical report carried out by AECOM in February 2024. The Site Options and Assessment report refers to the site as ‘H10’ and assesses the Site as **having low sensitivity to visual amenity and limited or no impact on heritage constraints. Due to the proximity of the site to the existing settlement boundary, the assessment states that:**

***‘The site could be a suitable location for rural exception housing if agreed with the landowner’.***  
(Harston Neighbourhood Plan Site Options and Assessment, AECOM : 64)

It goes on to state that:

***‘It must be noted that development of the full extent of the site may also result in a lack of separation with the nearby area of Hauxton and have an adverse impact on the rural character of the edge of Harston, therefore the southern portion would be better suited for rural exception housing.’*** (Harston Neighbourhood Plan Site Options and Assessment, AECOM : 64)

### Methodology of the Site Options and Assessment report

Sites were identified from the ‘call for sites’ exercise and the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning HELAA which was published in 2021. Sites were then evaluated using a range of qualitative and quantitative information collected in a desktop study. A site visit was subsequently carried out on 13 October 2023 to assess physical factors such as access and current use alongside qualitative characteristics such as views and character. A red/amber/green rating was then given to each site based on the assessment and the relevant Planning Practice Guidance which tests whether a site is suitable, available and achievable. An indicative housing requirement for each site was calculated based on local plan policies, density of the surrounding area (30 dph) and any site specific factors.

### Other Sites in the Site Options and Assessment report

In total, 16 sites were identified during the call for sites process and four were excluded due to their location in the greenbelt. Therefore, 11 sites were progressed for assessment.

Only one site is rated as ‘suitable for development’ - site H8 which is identified as suitable for infill housing in the Green Belt for 1 dwelling. A further four sites are rated amber, meaning that they ‘may be appropriate for development if the identified issues can be resolved or constraints mitigated, or that a site is only suitable for partial allocation’. Sites H12, H14 and H15 can be developed under paragraph 154 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as they are previously developed land which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt. These sites would contribute an estimated 10,

6 and 2 dwellings respectively. Site H13 is not in the green belt and is estimated to have a capacity of 8 dwellings if the Settlement Boundary was adjusted to include the site.

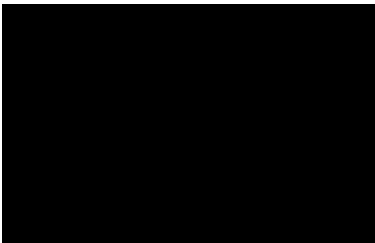
H12 is allocated in the draft HNP under Policy HAR27, which is aimed at addressing Objective 10 in relation to affordable housing need. H14 is allocated in the draft HNP under Policy HAR28, however there is no requirement for these dwellings to be affordable. Therefore HNP is only proposing to allocate 16 dwellings, not all of which are definitely affordable, compared to the identified need of 42 households in the Housing Needs Assessment and 32 households in the Housing Needs Survey as discussed above. As part of the conversations between Jesus College and Harston Parish Council, the actual need should be identified.

If the other sites labelled amber were also built out, this would take the total number of dwellings up to 26 dwellings which still falls short. Therefore the need for affordable housing is not due to be met over the plan period and Site H10 should be considered as a rural exception site to meet the need.

### Concluding Comments

Jesus College supports Policy HAR 13 of the emerging Harston Neighbourhood Plan which aims to meet the affordable housing need via rural exception sites policy. In addition, Jesus College is keen to meet the PC on site to discuss the scale and appropriate quantum of housing and associated community infrastructure needed to deliver a successful development. A shared vision for the Site is potentially achievable by means of a collaborative approach between the key stakeholders. The College would also like to take this opportunity to wish the Parish Council well in its endeavour to adopt a workable and effective Neighbourhood Plan.

Kind regards



**Rob Hopwood**  
Partner, Planning

### Enclosures

Appendix A – Site Location Plan

# Appendix B - Note from site visit on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024



Subject: Minutes of meeting at Rectory Farm, Harston  
Date: 01/07/2024  
Present: **Cambridgeshire Acre:** Jenna Brame, Senior Rural Housing Enabler (JB); Hayley Neal, Chief Executive (HN);  
**Harston Neighbourhood Plan/Parish Council:** Hilary Roadly, Head of HNP Group (HR); Dom Bellamy, Chair of Harston Parish Council (DB); Rupert Pearce Gould, Harston Parish Councillor (RPG);  
**SCDC:** Kirstin Donaldson, Housing Acquisitions (KD); Claire Guyton, Housing Development Project Officer (CG); Madeline McGarvie, Housing Development and Policy Research Officer (MM);  
**Development Consultant for SCDC:** Rob Dean (RD);  
**Jesus College:** Richard Anthony (RA); Isabel Harison (IH);  
**Bidwells:** Rob Hopwood (RH); Claire Galilee (CG).

## NOTE OF SITE VISIT

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### Purpose of Meeting

**To meet PC Members and SCDC Housing Officers to discuss availability and suitability of part of the site H10 (Neighbourhood Plan Reference) to assist in meeting the Affordable Housing Needs of Harston PC as a potential 'Exceptions Site'**

RH began the meeting by thanking attendees for making the time for the site meeting. RH then led the group to the point which could provide a proposed vehicular access to optimise the visibility splays at the northern most part of the site(which could accommodate 32 dwellings) off the A10, away from the Traffic Lights. A pedestrian and cycle access could be provided in the south-east corner of the site to enable residents ease of access into the village. KD Raised that the access would cross the Melbourn Greenway and therefore early engagement with the Greater Cambridge Partnership would be required. DB highlighted the access to the Hauxton Discovery Campus will also interrupt the Melbourn greenway.

RPG pointed out that there should be no coalescence of the development with Hauxton to the north-east. RH explained that there would still be a substantial gap between the northern extent of the development proposal and the start of Hauxton development north of Church Road.

The site visit then moved to the bridleway(which runs east-west) further northwards along the A10 to Haslingfield where a southwards view across the field to the site was possible.

DB explained that new development in Harston should be aimed at using the facilities within Harston, rather than travelling to Hauxton/Cambridge. In particular, HR raised the primary school capacity issue. The school has a capacity of 160-170 pupils and currently there are only 110 enrolled. This fact suggested there would be a need to build new family housing to support the school roll numbers. DB and RPG suggested that a good pedestrian link from the southern edge of the site into the village would promote the use of the Harston school and facilities.

HR mentioned that the village experiences drainage and flood risk issues and there would be a need to seek to ensure mitigation measures are discussed with Anglian Water to improve the situation.

KD raised that if the Neighbourhood Plan Group were keen for bungalows, then a large site would be beneficial as bungalows are very space inefficient and take up more space.

RH explained that the benefits of the large site is the potential to achieve substantial Biodiversity Net Gain and the opportunity for green space. KD said that if built by SCDC the site would come with no additional benefits in order to maintain viability for affordable housing. If off site highway works are needed this would be additional cost which may mean an element of market housing may be needed to help viability. RA explained that at their site at Beech Farm, Jesus College funded additional tree planting around the perimeter which was beyond the scope of the developers.

KD established that should South Cambs purchase the land to build it out, the parish need to approach them and present their desire for the site to be delivered. JB said she is happy to help the HNP group to assess the different rural exception sites as the Aecom report is not very detailed in this respect.

Towards the end of the meeting both RH and RA, confirmed the college would be open to ongoing discussions with the Neighbourhood Plan Group with respect to this site to assist in meeting the affordable housing needs of the village. If the PC wanted any further information both Bidwells and Jesus College would be happy to provide it.

The meeting concluded at approximately 11:45am.

# Appendix C: Site Location Plan

# H10

1. Site Details	
<b>Site Reference / Name</b>	H10
<b>Site Address / Location</b>	Land south of Rectory Farm
<b>Gross Site Area</b> (Hectares)	5.54
<b>SHLAA/SHELAA Reference</b> (if applicable)	N/A
<b>Existing land use</b>	Agriculture
<b>Land use being considered</b>	Housing
<b>Development Capacity</b> (Proposed by Landowner or SHLAA/HELAA)	Unknown
<b>Site identification method / source</b>	Call for Sites
<b>Planning history</b>	N/A
<b>Neighbouring uses</b>	Agriculture, Housing
