

Greater Cambridge Local Plan – Issues & Options Consultation (January 2020)
Draft Representations
Dencora Trinity LLP

Introduction

This note sets out the draft representations to the Issues & Options consultation to the Greater Cambridge Local Plan. The final version of the representations will be uploaded to the Councils online consultation system.

Questions

2. Please submit any sites for employment and housing you wish to suggest for allocation in the Local Plan. Provide as much information and supporting evidence as possible.

Trinity Hall Industrial Estate was promoted through call for sites process in March 2019 on behalf of Dencora. This is an established employment site. The applicant wishes to redevelop the site for employment purposes. However, as part of the Local Plan review, the applicant questions whether the site really has an important contribution to the AAP as it is divorced from the wider AAP site by the Guided busway. It is suggested that as part of the emerging Local Plan the boundaries of the AAP should be reviewed. Nevertheless the site can make an important contribution to employment, delivering an employment led redevelopment scheme.

28. In providing for a range of employment space, are there particular locations we should be focusing on? Are there specific locations important for different types of business or industry?

It is essential that the Local Plan caters for a range of employment uses many of which support knowledge-intensive sectors, but are not straight R&D uses.

The key emergence over the past few years has been the expansion in the number of ‘hybrid’ research and development buildings that are required to cater for this mix of high-quality businesses. Examples of these can be found in the science parks around Cambridge and typically they comprise modern warehouse-type construction with high quality office fit-out typically occupying 20–50 per cent of the built space. Externally, the buildings will have the appearance of office buildings with high quality landscaping, street furniture and external finishes. They will combine office functions, but also research and development and production facilities, all under one roof.

There is now an established demand from across the ‘mid-tech’, ‘high technology’ and ‘bio tech’ industries (amongst others) for hybrid business units that cater for a mix of business needs, and such uses are considered to be ideally located within the promoted Site (Trinity Hall Industrial Estate).

However, it is also important that the policy context that employment sites are not unduly restrictive or onerous, to the extent that it represents a barrier to delivery of alternative uses, which may be of equal merit or need, which could otherwise be accommodated within the development site.

Policies should not seek to prioritise existing or specific proposed uses at all costs, but allow for alternative uses should there be an identified need or demand. The market is evolving and over the lifespan of the Local Plan there needs to be flexibility.

The policies in the existing Local Plan are too inflexible and seek to protect employment uses for their own sake irrespective of the location, the suitability of the use in a particular location, the condition of the existing buildings or unforeseen opportunities for alternative uses (where there is a clearly identified need). An example of which could be a D1 education related use. There should be a broader definition of employment development, and where development is employment led, a range of alternative uses should be permitted provided these complement and not unreasonably dilute the core function of the employment site, rather than having a restrictive approach the references B1, B2 and B8 uses only.

Carter Jonas – 21st February 2020