

Greater Cambridge Local Plan – Issues and Options Consultation 2020  
Greenhedge Farm, Stapleford

February 2020



**GREENHEDGE FARM,  
STAPLEFORD  
GREATER CAMBRIDGE  
LOCAL PLAN – ISSUES  
AND OPTIONS  
CONSULTATION 2020**

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# Quality Assurance

<b>Site name:</b>	Greenhedge Farm, Stapleford
<b>Client name:</b>	██████████
<b>Type of report:</b>	Greater Cambridge Local Plan – Issues and Options Consultation 2020
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<b>Date</b>	February 2020
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<b>Date</b>	February 2020



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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 These representations have been prepared by Bidwells on behalf of [REDACTED] in response to the Greater Cambridge Local Plan Issues and Options 2020 consultation. These representations relate to land within [REDACTED] ownership at Stapleford, known as Greenhedge Farm (hereafter “the site”). A Site Location Plan is included at **Appendix 1**.
- 1.2 The site is located within the Cambridge Green Belt and these representations present the initial case for the site’s removal from the Green Belt. An initial commentary note, prepared by Bidwells, which provides an initial consideration of the site’s contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt, accompanies these representations.
- 1.3 These representations relate only to the site’s Green Belt designation and respond to question 39 of the Issues and Options consultation document:

## 2.0 Site Context

### Site Description

- 2.1 The site lies within the administrative boundary of South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) and is located to the north east of Stapleford. The site measures approximately 4.2 hectares and is split into two distinct parcels (Area 1 and Area 2 as shown on the Site Location Plan at Appendix 1). These parcels currently comprise fields and are separated by a dwelling and agricultural buildings.
- 2.2 The site is bound to the east by Haverhill Road, to the south by allotments, to the west by Bar Lane and to the north by Gog Magog Way. The site is effectively surrounded by existing built development in the form of residential dwellings along these road frontages and beyond the allotments. The Stapleford recreation ground is located immediately to the north east.
- 2.3 The Stapleford “high street” and village centre of Great Shelford are located approximately 500m and 1.2km respectively to the south west of the site. Shelford rail station is approximately 1km to the west of the site. Cambridge is located approximately 4km to the north.
- 2.4 There are mature trees along Gog Magog Way, Bury Road and around the recreational ground; a denser tree belt defines the boundary of the allotment to the south. A small cluster of trees also encloses Greenhedge Farm from south east to south west.
- 2.5 As per the adopted Proposals Map (2018), the site is located in the Countryside and within the Cambridge Green Belt. The Development Framework of Stapleford abuts the site’s eastern and western boundaries and is adjacent to the southern boundary of the allotments located to the south of the site. The northern parcel (Area 1) is also subject to an allocation of open space under Policy SC/1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2018). The existing open space allocation seeks to meet local need for open space, as an extension to the existing recreation ground to the east.
- 2.6 The site is not located in a Conservation Area and is within Flood Zone 1.

### Stapleford

- 2.7 Stapleford, along with Great Shelford, is classified as a Rural Centre in the settlement hierarchy within the adopted Local Plan. Rural Centres are the most sustainable settlement type within the hierarchy and are recognised as the “largest, most sustainable villages of the district”, having good access to education, employment, services and facilities and public transport services.
- 2.8 The Village Classification Report (2012) prepared by SCDC reaffirms Great Shelford and Stapleford’s position in the settlement hierarchy and ranks Great Shelford and Stapleford as the fourth most sustainable villages in South Cambridgeshire, a district which comprises over 100 villages. This is by reference to an assessment of the extent of services, facilities and shops. Great Shelford and Stapleford is therefore one of the largest and better served villages in the District.

## 3.0 Where to Build?

**Question 39. Should we look to remove land from the Green Belt if evidence shows it provides a more sustainable development option by reducing travel distances, helping us reduce our climate impacts?**

- 3.1 As part of the preparation of the Local Plan, a review of the Green Belt should be undertaken to assess whether land currently within the Cambridge Green Belt still serves the five purposes of the Green Belt as set out in paragraph 134 of the NPPF. Where land does not serve these five purposes or the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy, which is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open (NPPF paragraph 133), the Green Belt boundaries should be altered in the next Local Plan accordingly.
- 3.2 Furthermore, Green Belt land that no longer serves the five purposes and is in locations which facilitate more sustainable patterns of development, for example, land within close proximity to public transport corridors or adjacent to some of the larger villages in the District, should be released to contribute to reducing climate impacts.
- 3.3 Greenhedge Farm, Stapleford is located within the Green Belt and a note providing a high-level overview of Green Belt policy and how it is relevant to the site accompanies these representations. The note concludes that the site shows some discrepancies with Green Belt policy and its essential quality of openness. The note identifies the following preliminary considerations:
- The existing built form and surrounding mature planting provides an opportunity to reconsider the Green Belt boundary in this location;
  - The site should not be assessed in isolation, the Green Belt review should also consider the adjoining land. However, it is considered that the southern parcels have a stronger connection to the surrounding built form which lessens their contribution to the Green Belt;
  - Discrete areas within the site, particularly the southern parcels, have different degrees of enclosure due to built form and tree cover. As such, they have less ‘visual openness’;
  - The site is not located between villages nor does it contribute to the separation of settlements;
  - The site, due to its location and scale, is not considered to relate to the contribution of the Green Belt to the setting and character of Cambridge.
- 3.4 This initial analysis begins to demonstrate that the site may no longer contribute to the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy nor the five purposes of the Green Belt. As such, it is strongly recommended that a full Green Belt review is undertaken and that the site’s contribution to each purpose of the Green Belt is assessed.
- 3.5 Notwithstanding the need for a Green Belt review, given the initial findings above, the site’s location and the existing surrounding built form, it is considered that the site:
- Does not check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas – it is surrounded on all four boundaries by built development, with three of those boundaries comprising the development framework of Stapleford. The removal of the site from the Green Belt would therefore not lead to unrestricted sprawl;
  - Does not prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another – the site is not located between towns or villages and is enclosed by the existing built development of Stapleford.

The removal of the site from the Green Belt would not result in the coalescence of adjoining settlements;

- Does not contribute to safeguarding the countryside from encroachment – as set out above, the site is surrounded on all four boundaries by built development and whilst located outside of the development framework, is not considered to encroach on the countryside that is beyond the settlement pattern; and
- Does not preserve the setting and special character of a historic town – it is considered that the removal of the site from the Green Belt would not impact on the setting and character of the Stapleford Conservation Area given the distance and intervening built form between the site and the Conservation Area. Furthermore, due to its location and scale, the site is not considered to relate to the contribution of the Green Belt to the setting and character of Cambridge.

3.6 In relation to assisting urban regeneration, the removal of the site would not discourage the re-development of derelict or other urban land. The site would remain outside of the development framework of Stapleford and in the Countryside. As such, its protection from development in planning policy would remain in place. Furthermore, the current Local Plan encourages development of brownfield sites within development frameworks and it is considered that this policy position should remain in the next Local Plan.

3.7 It is important that any retained Green Belt serves a Green Belt purpose in order to have a robust Green Belt. A Green Belt review should be undertaken, to assess whether the current Green Belt boundary is enduring and includes defensible boundaries; where it does not, then the Local Plan process must take the opportunity to review and amend, such as with Greenhedge Farm, Stapleford.

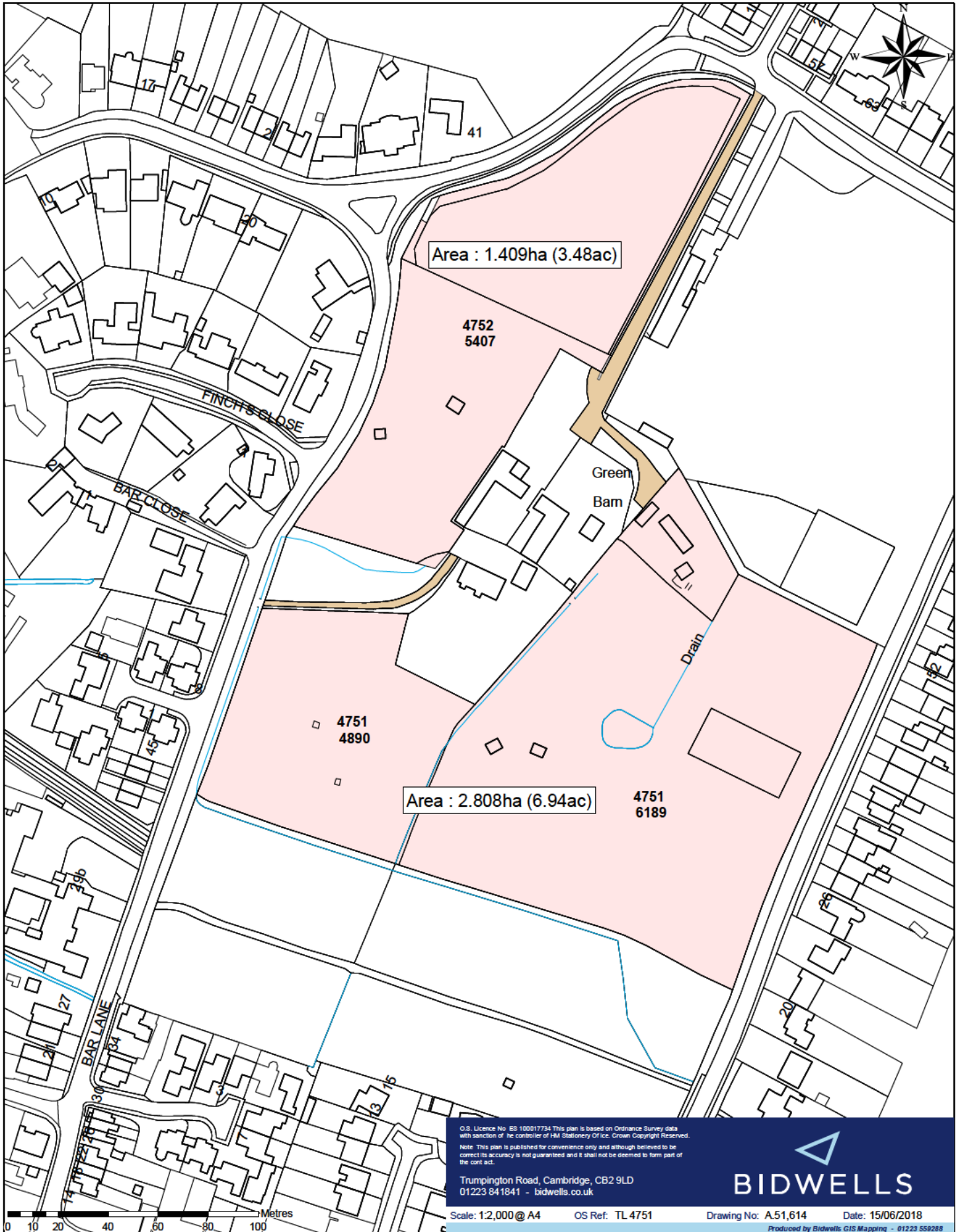
# APPENDIX 1

## SITE LOCATION PLAN

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# Land at Greenhedge Farm, Bar Lane, Stapleford



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