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Your ref:

04 February 2020

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Policy Team
c/o South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cambourne Business Park
Cambourne
Cambridge
CB23 6EA



St Neots Office

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Dear Sir/ Madam

GREATER CAMBRIDGE LOCAL PLAN ISSUES AND OPTIONS 2020 CONSULTATION – Land at Grays Road, Merton Farm and Land off Greenacres, Gamlingay

We act on behalf of Merton College Oxford in relation to the Land at Grays Road, Merton Farm and Land off Greenacres, Gamlingay which was put forward as part of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan Call for Sites undertaken in Spring 2019. The Greater Cambridge Local Plan will shape how Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire changes over the period to 2040, and possibly beyond. The Issues and Options 2020 Consultation enables the first conversation and explores big themes that will influence how homes, jobs and infrastructure are planned.

As set out in the Issues and Options 2020 consultation the cost of renting or buying a home in Greater Cambridge is much higher than the national average. If the Local Plan does not make provision for a larger quantity of housing this will be exacerbated. To achieve this, the Council must set itself an ambitious housing target for the plan period. Greater Cambridge is at the heart of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, the UK Innovation Corridor and the Cambridge-Norwich Tech Corridor, all of which will transform the regional economy, it is imperative the Councils plan for a higher number of homes than the minimum required by government.

The Local Plan should provide a range of housing sites, both small and large scale to enable flexibility and competition in the market. As set out in paragraph 68 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 small and medium sites make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of the area and can be built out quickly alongside larger scale developments such as significant extensions to existing villages and towns, provided they are well located and designed and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities as set out in paragraph 72 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019. There is significant demand for housing within Gamlingay given its level of services and facilities and it is accessible to surrounding towns and villages such as Pottton, Sandy, Biggleswade, St Neots, Huntingdon and Cambridge.

The land at Grays Road, Gamlingay is well related to the village edge on two sides and the development will provide a ‘rounding off’ of the village on the north side. The site has good access links to the village centre and facilities, and good connections to the wider village path network. The site can deliver a range of housing types and tenure to meet the housing need in Gamlingay. At present the housing to the north side of the village is exposed with minimal boundary hedgerows and landscaping. The site will enable a soft green edge to the village with further landscaping which could be extended along the northern boundary of the existing development off Murfitt Way to improve the view when entering the village from the north and this also provides the opportunity to enhance biodiversity. The development will provide the opportunity for footpath improvements linking the village to Gamlingay wood and through to Grays Road along with the provision of gateway parks forming public open space.

The Merton Farm site offers the opportunity to create residential and office development. The development would provide much needed housing and affordable housing through re-using existing

traditional buildings on the road frontage. In addition the proposal will replace existing substantial modern utilitarian farm buildings visible from the Conservation Area with more appropriate scale high quality buildings. The proposal enables a sensitively designed scheme with a landscaped private drive and footpath as well as the ability to accommodate offices for Hutchinson Builders, a local builders looking to relocate from Potton which will retain and enable local jobs. New hedgerow will be provided on the northern and eastern boundary which will also provide ecology benefits. The land off Greenacres, Gamlingay will also provide much needed housing and affordable housing with access achievable off Greenacres. Given the land is of low ecological value there is the opportunity to create biodiversity net gain, one of the big themes outlined in the Greater Cambridge Local Plan Issues and Options 2020.

The National Planning Policy Framework 2019 sets out in paragraph 78 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. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a nearby villages. Given the services and facilities in Gamlingay the village is ideally placed to accommodate further growth. The Greater Cambridge Local Plan should help to meet its housing need by having a combination of large and small sites. Therefore, dispersal through new settlements and villages would be appropriate locations to develop housing and the land at Grays Road, Merton Farm and Land off Greenacres are ideally place to assist with achieving this aim and enable sustainable development in accordance with paragraph 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.

Yours sincerely



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Associate - Planning

For and on behalf of Brown & Co - Property and Business Consultants LLP
t/a Brown & Co Barfords



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