

GREATER CAMBRIDGE LOCAL PLAN: ISSUE & OPTIONS CONSULTATION (JANUARY 2020)

LAND AT LONG LANE, FOWLMERE, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

ON BEHALF OF CLARENDON LAND & DEVELOPMENT LTD

**TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)
PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004**



Pegasus Group

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 These representations are submitted by Pegasus Group on behalf of Clarendon Land and Development Ltd who has development interests in land west of Long Lane, Fowlmere.

1.2 We have reviewed the Greater Cambridge Local Plan (Regulation 18: Issues and Options 2020) The First Conversation and accordingly provide responses to relevant questions.

2.0 Question 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.

2.1 The site at Long Lane, Fowlmere has previously been submitted by Pegasus Group to South Cambridgeshire Council as part of the Call for Sites Exercise in March 2019 on behalf of Clarendon Land and Development Ltd. The information submitted included an indicative masterplan and supporting information which demonstrated the benefits of developing this site for residential development.

2.2 We have not resubmitted this information as part of this consultation process but can provide additional copies of the representations if required.

3.0 Question 4. Do you agree that planning to 2040 is an appropriate date in the future to plan for?

3.1 It is considered that 2040 is an appropriate date to plan for. Paragraph 22 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires Local Plans and strategic policies to plan for a minimum period of 15 years from the date of adoption of the Local Plan.

3.2 Figure 5 of the Issues and Options document outlines the Councils ambition to adopt the new Joint Local Plan (JLP) in Summer 2023. From this estimate the Plan would need to cover up to 2038 as a minimum. Given that the Plan is proposed to run to 2040 there is some flexibility to allow for any delays in the plan preparation process.

3.3 Notwithstanding the above, it is recommended that the Council retains a flexible stance on the potential Plan period until later stages of the plan preparation process sufficient to allow for any future delays. This recommendation is based on the previous experience of South Cambridgeshire District Council, whereby it took six years for the Local Plan to move through the process from the Issues and Options stage through to formal Adoption.

4.0 Question 6. Do you agree with the potential big themes for the Local Plan? Are there other themes or issues we should be considering that could inform our new vision for Greater Cambridge?

4.1 The themes and issues identified in the Plan are supported and are all equally important to achieve. It is important that policies in the Local Plan seek to achieve these themes and aspirations.

4.2 A further issue which the Local Plan should seek to address is affordability and ensuring that there is a wide range of homes available to all. In Greater Cambridge, housing is less affordable than the national average and is getting worse. As such, it is imperative that housing delivery is a priority for the Council in an attempt to ease the affordability pressures in the District.

4.3 Our responses to other questions in this consultation provide more detail and demonstrates the suitability of a residential site at Long Lane, Fowlmere to achieve the aims of the Local Plan.

5.0 Question 16. How should the Local Plan help us achieve 'good growth' that promotes wellbeing and social inclusion?

5.1 It is considered that the provision of a wide range of housing types and locations will assist the Council in achieving 'good growth' that promotes social well-being and social inclusion. The provision of suitable and affordable housing in existing villages such as Fowlmere will ensure that there is a choice of homes for either young people trying to move out of home yet stay within their community or elderly individuals wishing to downsize within the community. This will assist in providing a balanced community.

5.2 Developments in villages will give rise to economic and social benefits. New residents will use the existing local community services, facilities, clubs and societies within the village. This will support the ongoing provision, vitality and viability of these services. As part of any development proposals, financial contributions could be made, if required, towards these local facilities including education, health and public transport provision to enhance these facilities further; in line with paragraph 78 of the NPPF and the intention of supporting local services through development in rural areas.

5.3 This will positively influence individuals' health and lifestyle by having access to a good range of facilities, including public open space and an established community

6.0 Question 19. How do you think new developments should support healthy lifestyles?

6.1 New developments should be well planned to ensure close linkages with existing services and facilities as well as providing access to good quality open spaces to encourage healthy living. Developments should be designed to encourage walking, cycling and exercise as part of daily life.

7.0 Question 20. How do you think we should achieve improvements in air quality?

7.1 Developments should be designed to encourage walking, cycling and utilise public transport to reduce the reliance on the private car. Where feasible, developments should support infrastructure for electric car charging points.

8.0 Question 24. How important do you think continuing economic growth is for the next Local Plan?

8.1 Continuing economic growth is considered to be very important and should be a main focus for the Local Plan. However, this should be equally balanced with adequate housebuilding.

8.2 The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review (CPIER 2018) sets out the context of the Greater Cambridge area and states that it is a prosperous area and attracts many international businesses to come to the area and grow. These businesses have brought about revolutionary advances in a wide array of fields, transforming lives around the world. This prosperous economy should be encouraged and allowed to grow and flourish within Great Cambridge to ensure that the area can reap the many economic benefits of this investment. However, as the report sets out, it is imperative to ensure that this growth in employment is matched by housebuilding. The report states that if a correct balance between jobs and houses is not achieved, this runs the risk of further increasing house prices and increased congestion and commuter journey times leading to an irreparable damage to society and threatening the area's dynamism.

8.3 Therefore, it is imperative that the economy is supported through Local Plan policies as well as adequate housing growth.

9.0 Question 31. How should the Local Plan help to meet our needs for the amount and types of new homes?

9.1 See response to question 32.

10.0 Question 32. Do you think we should plan for a higher number of homes than the minimum required by government, to provide flexibility to support the growing economy?

10.1 It is considered important to ensure that additional provision over and above the local housing need derived from the standard method is included within the Greater Cambridge Local Plan. This will provide flexibility to support the significant economic growth in the area.

10.2 The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review (CPIER 2018) has shown that job growth has been faster than expected and that this growth is likely to continue. The report concludes that: *"it is indisputable that high rates of employment growth have put great strain on the housing market in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, particularly around Cambridge. The result is exceedingly high living costs, longer commutes, social stratification, and extra cost for business. Ambitions for house building should be increased to deal with a housing deficit that has grown up following under-projections of growth"*.

10.3 In view of these conclusions, it is obvious that housing growth needs to catch-up with job growth in the area in order to redress the balance between affordability and availability. It is considered that the housing provision in the forthcoming Local Plan period should be towards the top range of 2,900 homes per year as suggested by the CPIER report as opposed to the 1,675 current Local Plan target (2018) or the 1,800 per year standard method calculation.

11.0 Question 40. How flexible should the Local Plan be towards development of both jobs and homes on the edge of villages?

11.1 It is considered that housing and jobs on the edge of villages should be supported as this will provide a flexible strategy for the Local Plan and ensure a range of housing and jobs are provided in accordance with the themes of the Local Plan as set out in Section 4 of the consultation document. Our response to question 42 details this further.

12.0 Question 42. Where should we site new development?

12.1 The Local Plan should be flexible and allow developments in sustainable locations to ensure there is a balance of homes and jobs in the right place. It is important to ensure that a range of small sites are allocated in the Local Plan to ensure that these can be delivered in the short to medium term. The Local Plan should not overly-rely on large strategic allocations which are complex to deliver and rely on costly infrastructure to proceed. This is evident in the recent Inspector's findings to the Uttlesford Local Plan (10 January 2020) which set out that the Council needs to *"allocate more small and medium sized sites that could deliver homes in the short to medium term and help to bolster the 5 year HLS, until the Garden Communities begin to deliver housing. This would have the benefit of providing flexibility and choice in the market and the earlier provision of affordable housing."* Similar thinking is necessary in the Greater Cambridge Plan to ensure that there is not a sole provision of large strategic sites but a range of options and sizes to ensure that there is flexibility in the strategy and that housing (both market and affordable) can be delivered immediately. By allowing development to be dispersed across the District on the edge of urban areas and in villages, this would help to achieve this flexibility.

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- 12.2 Fowlmere is categorised as a Group Village in the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (Policy S/10) reflecting the settlement's access to facilities, which allows residents to carry out most daily activities. It is considered that further limited development will help to maintain these remaining services and amenities as well as providing affordable housing to meet local needs.
- 12.3 South Cambridgeshire has previously relied on strategic sites for housing delivery; challenges and subsequent delays that have arisen with such schemes have resulted in the shortfall observed. It is evident therefore that the allocation of smaller sites within the Local Plan, such as those within Group Villages will ensure a more robust delivery strategy for the district.
- 12.4 There is therefore an opportunity as part of the new joint Local Plan to allocate modest residential development at Long Lane, Fowlmere which will provide much needed market and affordable homes in this location; in accordance with paragraph 59 of the NPPF and the objective of significantly boosting housing supply.
- 12.5 In Greater Cambridge, housing is less affordable than the national average and is getting worse. As such, it is imperative that housing delivery is a priority for the Council in an attempt to ease the affordability pressures in the District. Development of this site will also widen the choice of different housing types in Fowlmere itself.
- 12.6 The development of the site will give rise to economic and social benefits. New residents will use the existing local community services, facilities, clubs and societies within the village. This will support the ongoing provision, vitality and viability of these services. As part of the development proposals, financial contributions could be made, if required, towards these local facilities including education, health and public transport provision to enhance these facilities further; in line with paragraph 78 of the NPPF and the intention of supporting local services through development in rural areas.

12.7 It is clear that the allocation of the site at Long Lane Fowlmere for residential development would positively contribute to the District’s housing supply and provide an array of potential economic and social benefits for the village community.

13.0 Question 47. What do you think about growing our villages?

13.1 Residential growth in villages is supported. The National Planning Policy Framework (2019) recognises that to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities (paragraph 78). Additional development in villages will help to sustain the available services by maintaining population numbers. These residential schemes will propose additional households, all of which can use the local services, facilities, clubs and societies within the village resulting in greater levels of patronage and custom. This will support the ongoing provision, vitality and viability of these services.

13.2 The provision of new housing also has the ability to provide opportunities to create a more balanced local population by providing opportunities for young people to stay in the community they grew up in or for older people seeking to move within the community.

13.3 The site at Long Lane, Fowlmere has the ability to provide sustainable development in an existing rural village which has a range of facilities and services. The provision of additional development will help to support these services in future years.

13.4 Fowlmere is a settlement with a population of approximately 1,200 located approximately 14.5 km southwest of the city of Cambridge. The village is considered linear, stretching for approximately 1.5 km along the Long Lane and London Road. The oldest part of the village is situated within the

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Conservation Area in the centre of Fowlmere from which subsequent development has been built out from.

13.5 The village possesses a range of services capable of supporting the everyday life of residents and also benefits from its proximity to nearby shops and amenities within other towns and villages, in particular Melbourn and Royston. Those local services within Fowlmere include a primary school, public house, restaurant, a village hall and recreation ground. All these facilities are within a 900m radius of the site and can be accessed via well maintained public footpaths. The site is well related to the settlement and is considered to be a logical extension to the built-up development.

13.6 Other services such as GP surgeries, post offices, train stations, secondary schools, retail, entertainment and cultural facilities are available in the neighbouring villages of Melbourn, Meldreth and the town of Royston. Even greater service provision can also be found in the city of Cambridge.

13.7 Public transport services include regular buses on A2B route 31 between Barley and Cambridge. There are 5 inbound and 6 outbound services operating each day including at peak commuting times. Owing to Fowlmere's location near to the Great Northern Mainline, connections are available at Royston, Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton for Thameslink and Great Northern services between Kings Lynn and London Kings Cross. The aforementioned bus route also stops in Great Shelford another train station on the mainline. These represent realistic travel options in the rural area and will allow residents to access many day-to-day services and employment in line with Paragraph 103 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which acknowledges that transport solutions vary between urban and rural areas.

13.8 The growth of villages in the Greater Cambridge Plan is supported and it is considered that the site at Long Lane, Fowlmere should be allocated for residential development to assist the Council in their housing delivery and in achieving the objectives of the Local Plan.

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