

Supplementary Information
Greater Cambridge Local Plan - Call for Sites
LAND AT MILTON ROAD, IMPINGTON



Introduction

Sworders is pleased to submit the site 'Land at Milton Road, Impington' on behalf of our clients, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

'Land at Milton Road' lies to the north east of Impington village and is accessed from both Milton Road and Clay Close Lane. The site is currently in agricultural use and comprises farm buildings and agricultural land. There are small ditches running along the northern and eastern boundary of the site.

There is existing residential development to the east of the site, in the form of 1960s/1970s houses which back onto Milton Road. There is a single Victorian property, which sits in substantial gardens, and a number of properties along Clay Close Lane to the south of the site, and a row of terraced Victorian cottages to the north east.

Planning Practice Guidance sets out the factors which should be considered when assessing the suitability, availability and achievability of sites. This supplementary information demonstrates that the site is suitable, available and achievable, and suggests that, in light of the significant housing growth that the Greater Cambridge Plan will make provision for, the Green Belt boundary around Impington should be reviewed to release this site for development.

Suitability

Planning Policy

The Government's Planning Practice Guidance on Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment notes that the suitability of the sites should be guided by the development plan, emerging plan policy and national policy.

The Government's agenda to boost the supply of housing and to provide 300,000 homes per year by the mid 2020's has marked a step change in housing provision and means that Local Plans need to plan proactively for new homes, and to find solutions to deliver new homes.

In the Greater Cambridge City Deal (June 2014), Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council committed to a review of their Local Plans in 2019 to take account of the anticipated acceleration of housing delivery and to objectively assess housing and business needs at that point, and plan accordingly.



The adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 makes provision for 19,500 new homes, with the focus for development firstly being on the edge of Cambridge, then in new settlements, and then in the rural centres, which includes Histon and Impington.

Policy S/8 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan identifies Histon and Impington as a Rural Centre. Paragraph 2.55 of the Plan notes that rural centres are:

'...the largest, most sustainable villages of the District. They have good access to a secondary school (either within the village or accessible by good public transport), employment opportunities, a variety of services and facilities and have good public transport to Cambridge or a market town.'

Histon and Impington have shops, services, supermarkets, a doctors' surgery, schools. And public transport provision. The site lies within 1km of the village centre and of the guided busway stops, which provide fast and frequent bus services to Cambridge, St Ives, Peterborough and Huntingdon. Histon and Impington also provide cycle links into Cambridge City Centre.

The site therefore lies in a highly sustainable location, immediately adjacent to a large village which should be a focus for future growth in the Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

There is no relevant planning history on the site.

The development framework boundary of Impington lies immediately adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site; it extends around the north east of the development on Milton Lane on Woodcock Close and St George's Way.

The very southern part of the site, along Clay Close Lane, Impington, lies in the Histon and Impington Conservation Area. The boundary of the site passes to the back of 11, Clay Close Lane and 1, Clay Close Lane.

The site lies entirely within the Cambridge Green Belt. The preparation of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan will provide an opportunity for the boundaries of the Green Belt to be reviewed, if required, to accommodate the significant scale of new growth planned through the City Deal 2014.

There are five purposes of the Green Belt. We contend that the site does not contribute to three of those purposes; the site does not check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas; it does not prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another, and the Green Belt in this location does not assist in urban regeneration in this area. We would welcome the Council's assessment of how strong a contribution the site makes to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, and to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.

There are strong, defensible boundaries to the north of the site, in the form of mature and robust hedges and a ditch to the north, and a strong hedge line to the west. There is already relatively recent development to the east of the site, and development of this site could be considered to round off the village.



We note that the Histon and Impington Neighbourhood Plan Area was designated in 2016, and that the designated area covers our client's site. The draft Plan was consulted on in November 2018. The Plan does not seek to designate our clients' land for any specific purpose.

Site Suitability

The Planning Practice Guidance notes that, in addition to the above considerations, the following factors should be assessed; a site's suitability for development now or in the future – physical limitations or problems such as access, infrastructure, ground conditions, flood risk, hazardous risks, pollution or contamination; potential impacts including the effect upon landscapes including landscape features, nature and heritage conservation; and appropriateness and likely market attractiveness for the type of development proposed.

Vehicular access to the site is likely to be achieved from Milton Road; the road is subject to a 30mph zone and the site lies at grade with a straight stretch of road. In addition, a pedestrian and cycle access would be delivered from the southern part of the site onto Clay Close Lane, providing easy access to Impington. No detailed work has yet been completed on an access strategy, but the red line plan which supports this submission shows indicative locations for vehicular access to the site, and for pedestrian and cycle access.

There are no environmental or landscape designations on the site, and no heritage assets on or adjacent to the site. The site is level, and lies entirely within Flood Zone 1, the area at least of risk of flooding. No public rights of way cross the site. There are no Tree Preservation Orders on the site.

A small area in the southern part of the site lies within the Histon and Impington Conservation Area, along Clay Close Lane. There is no Conservation Area Appraisal available for this Conservation Area. Any development of the site will therefore need to consider the impact on the Conservation Area and its setting.

As set out above, the site lies within the Cambridge Green Belt, and would need to be released from the Green Belt before it could be allocated. Were it to be released from the Green Belt, there are strong defensible boundaries to the north and west which could preclude further development.

The guidance also notes that environmental/amenity impacts experienced by would-be occupiers and neighbouring areas should be assessed. The rear facade of existing dwellings on the east side of Milton Road currently look across into the site, over their rear hedge. Any plan for the site would take account of the existing occupiers' amenity and would ensure that planting along the Milton Road frontage would soften the impact of any new development.

Availability

We confirm that the site is in the sole ownership of our clients. We are not aware of any ransom strips or potential constraints to delivery. The landowners have expressed their intention to promote the land for development through this Local Plan process; please see attached a letter confirming this.

There are no unimplemented permissions on the site.



Achievability

The proposed policy compliant, residential development of this site is considered to be viable and is achievable in the short term (0-5 years).

Summary

In summary, Land at Milton Road is suitable, available and achievable. The site lies in a highly sustainable location, within walking and cycling distance of a wide range of shops, services and public transport provision in a Rural Centre. The site has no environmental constraints or landscape designations, and, if released from the Green Belt, is considered to be deliverable in the short term.

In the context of the significant increase in housing growth associated with the Government's growth agenda, the Greater Cambridgeshire City Deal, and the use of the standard methodology to identify objectively assessed housing need, we submit that Land at Milton Road, Impington should be considered for allocation in the Greater Cambridge Local Plan.