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For and on behalf of
Daniels Bros (Shefford) Ltd, Mrs L Allaway & Mrs Cherry

Greater Cambridge Local Plan Issue and Options 2020 Consultation Report

Land north of Craft Way, Steeple Morden

**Prepared by
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by DLP Planning Ltd on behalf of our clients, Daniel Bros (Shefford) Ltd, Mrs L Allaway & Mrs Cherry, to respond to the Great Cambridgeshire Local Plan Issues and Options 2020 consultation and further highlight our site at land north of Craft Way Steeple Morden that has been previously submitted as part of the Calls for Sites process.

2.0 RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION EVENT

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 This representation refers to two adjoining sites. The smaller site comprises about 0.4ha to the north of Craft Way suitable for up to 4No. dwellings. It is bounded by a public right of way to the west beyond which is the curtilage of a listed residential dwelling known as No. 40 Hay Lane – sometimes referred to as ‘Two Trees’. It’s boundaries to the north and east are to the curtilage of No. 60 Hay Lane which comprises the second site subject to this representation.

The site is presently unused and overgrown, characterised by a dense scrub of mainly self-sewn woodland.

- 2.2 The second site has an illustrated capacity of 21 dwellings in addition to the retention of the existing residential property. It is also accessed in full from Craft Way and would enable the present driveway from Hay Lane serving the existing dwelling to be used solely as a pedestrian connection. The land comprises mainly residential garden although the parcel to the south of the house and adjoining Craft Way comprises a grassed paddock.
- 2.3 As illustrated, the scheme could provide a mixture of house types including detached and semi-detached dwellings and would provide the airport's mix of tenures. If allocated in conjunction with the smaller site, the proportion of affordable dwellings would be calculated on the basis of a total of 25 dwelling units.
- 2.4 The boundaries of the larger site are to Craft Way to the south, existing residential curtilage to the west and to the curtilage of a large gated development of flats known as Woodland Grange to the north. The eastern boundary is to the grounds of a large but unlisted house at Brook End. As a result, the two parcels do not have a common boundary with open countryside.
- 2.5 The larger parcel is wholly excluded from the conservation area save for the present entrance drive. Both can be developed independently, or together retaining their existing boundaries supplemented by new landscape planting. As such development could reflect a sympathetic design in relation to the surrounding context in regard to structure, form and character in the settlement, enabling the development to seamlessly integrate into the existing development. Specifically, any development would not affect the setting of the listed building which is to the west of the public right of way and would not give rise to overlooking of the grounds of that dwelling or of No 60 Hay Lane to the north east.
- 2.6 A new access can be achieved from the site onto Craft Way, with suitable visibility splays achievable in both directions.
- 2.7 Particular attention can be paid to matters of access, to the relationship with the site boundaries and public rights of way which follow the western and northern boundaries, but which are outside the site limits. In addition, the wildlife and woodland designations and the proximity of the listed buildings can be taken into account to ensure that any impacts are

mitigated against through means of design.

- 2.8 The site is free from constraint, available and deliverable and would not adversely impact on either the existing neighbouring dwellings or the character and appearance of the adjoining Conservation Area.

Question 4 - Do you agree that planning to 2040 is an appropriate date in the future to plan for? If not, what would be a more appropriate date and why?

- 2.9 As long as the plan provides a consistent amount of housing provision throughout the course of the plan and the plan is adaptable to change, then planning to 2040 can be considered an appropriate date to be planning towards.
- 2.10 Moreover, it assures that the Plan when adopted will have at least a 15 year horizon of need at the point of adoption and will avoid the need, experienced by some Authorities, to extend the original period due to delays in preparation or the adoption process.
- 2.11 Therefore, whilst in terms of setting strategic patterns of growth, we would advocate as long a horizon as possible, in this instance we consider that 2040 reflects an appropriate balance of future planning and certainty of delivery.

Question 6 - Do you agree with the potential big themes for the Local Plan?

- 2.12 The proposed 'big themes' are of significance, but the essential priority should be the delivery of sufficient development across the District.

Question 7 - How do you think we should prioritise these big themes?

- 2.13 The priority should be to ensure that the required level of housing is brought through the Local Plan whilst also seeking to ensure that the role of Greater Cambridge in the national economy is recognised and nurtured – see also our comments on 32.

Question 10 - Do you think we should require extra climate adaptation and resilience features to new developments?

- 2.14 Climate adaption should be seen as a universal and not as an exceptional requirement or characteristic in Grater Cambridge

- 2.15 A balance will be needed between delivering the development needed and the national objective of moving towards properly sustainable communities: this is unlikely to be fully delivered in the period to 2040 which must be considered to be a transitional period and planned for accordingly.
- 2.16 Climate adaptivity – and the general approach to development form and distribution – should be considered on a site by site basis tailored to each individual site, as the viability differs between each site and what can be realistically provided by each development in terms of climate adaptation, that will inherently increase the costs of development. In short, accelerated costs that diminish the viability of development or so work against needing economic and social needs must be avoided as this will be damaging to key matters such as social inclusion as well as to the delivery of a sustainable future.
- 2.17 In particular therefore, we do not consider that climate adaptation should dictate, for example, that all new development should be focused on a small number of central urban locations or new planned sustainable settlements. Rural communities which are a fundamental characteristic of the Greater Cambridge area, will continue to need support and levels of growth that will sustain them as communities. The way in which we build, the energy we use in our homes and the way we travel may change but delivering climate resilience should not mean either a substantial shift of existing populations out of rural communities nor the curtailment of future growth (of an appropriate scale) within them.
- 2.18 Climate resilience measures must however be realistic and deliverable within the economic, social and fiscal requirements to meet the housing needs of the population; they must also be capable of being delivered within whatever legislative framework driving sustainability and carbon neutrality shall prevail during the plan period.

Question 13 - How do you think we should improve the green space network?

- 2.19 Connectivity is a key consideration allowing greater movement within communities and enhancing the scope to support and create wildlife corridors.
- 2.20 As part of the development for proposals for the land off Craft Way, Steeple Morden there is the scope to provide additional public open space, and improve the connectivity of the existing footpath/biodiversity corridors within the village. Furthermore, the provision on site would enable scope for greater integration of community groups.

- 2.21 Currently the site is in private ownership and is not accessible to the wider public, under the development proposals greater public access would be permitted to natural habitats such as the woodland areas.
- 2.22 The provision of enhance open space, properly designed and managed would permit a greater level of biodiversity than the current dominating feature of vacant greenfield. Therefore, as a direct result of permitting this development in Steeple Morden there would be an inherent enhancement in the provision of publicly accessible green spaces.

Question 14 - How do we achieve biodiversity net gain through new developments?

- 2.23 As a matter of general principle, we support a greater integration of development into the natural environment. Biodiversity net gain can be achieved in a number of ways but in relation to meeting the housing needs of the Greater Cambridge area the focus should be on site selection which minimises impacts on established biodiversity resources but equally, using development to secure regeneration and enhancement. So, for example, the enhanced value of habitat can often better be secured by positive management – such as new tree planting of appropriate species - rather than simply seeking to preserve existing poor-quality vegetation.
- 2.24 We would also support the principle of off-site biodiversity projects where focused habitat creation can be delivered that helps support and encourage notified species and which can be more effective, in our view, than attempting to encourage the on-site coexistence of habitat and human occupation. That does not of course preclude taking action through design to allow for the encouragement of flora and fauna within our built-up areas.
- 2.25 As noted, the majority of the overall site area is residential curtilage and there is significant scope to regenerate unmanaged scrub and trees. Development would not however affect previously undisturbed open countryside.
- 2.26 As is demonstrated in the attached plans, the proposed development could be landscaped in a means that will encourage biodiversity and fulfil other functional requirements.

Question 15 - Do you agree that we should aim to increase tree cover across the area?

- 2.27 Enhancing the tree cover across Cambridgeshire is an important consideration, especially given the comparable lack of coverage in the region compared to other areas. It reflects on our comments regarding Q14 insofar as ecological and biodiversity enhancement should not be seen as confined to the individual does allocated for development.
- 2.28 In relation to the proposed sites at Steeple Morden the sites offer significant scope to incorporate new tree planting, both supplementary and in replacement, but in our view this opportunity alone, whilst supporting the implementation of the Cambridge Tree Strategy, is not suffice to meet the acknowledged need to increase tree cover in the Greater Cambridge area as a whole.

Question 16 - How should the Local Plan help us achieve ‘good growth’ that promotes wellbeing and social inclusion?

- 2.29 The larger site is capable of providing a policy compliant proportion of affordable housing provision to aid in improving social wellbeing and social inclusion.
- 2.30 Connectivity and integration are also important, especially in rural communities. The central rather than peripheral location of the sites and access from an established residential area is important as is the relationship to, and scope for enhancement of, the local footpath network.
- 2.31 By enhancing local greenspaces through the creation of on-site provision which should also be accessible to the existing community there is scope to promote better wellbeing through positive inclusion of the site into the wider community.

Question 17 - How do you think our plan could help enable communities to shape new development proposals?

- 2.32 It is crucial that new development embodies the existing high-quality character features of the surrounding context which are highlighted by the local community. As part of the development proposals at Steeple Morden the high-quality design cues can be incorporated to the design reflecting local design considerations. In short, the scheme a scheme is capable of being designed which is appropriate to its location, but which also creates its own sense

of place. This is supported by, and achieved through, the provision of public open space on site of a type that is appropriate to the needs of the community.

Question 18 - How do you think we can make sure that we achieve safe and inclusive communities when planning new development?

- 2.33 At Steeple Morden, the sites at Craft Way could contribute toward providing a varied suite of homes for the community, including an affordable portion of development. Moreover, as illustrated, the sites taken as a whole can provide for a mix of house types and sizes that would help further the creation of an inclusive community.
- 2.34 Notwithstanding the provision of affordable homes, all of the dwellings should be capable of being provided with energy efficiency measures: specifically, there would be scope given the form and density of the envisaged development as shown to make provision for energy saving technology such as heat pumps or integrated solar generation.

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

- 2.35 The creation of even modest areas of communal space creates an area for social interaction.
- 2.36 However, the relationship of space to built form is essential if it is to be seen as safe and full use is to be made by the community. The integration of landscaping and utilising the existing vegetation is also key to prevent the creation of overly urbanised developments, hence the provision of multiple landscaping elements in the development proposals.

Question 21 - How should the Local Plan protect our heritage and ensure new development is well-designed?

- 2.37 Development in Great Cambridge should seek to protect heritage assets through well-designed new developments.
- 2.38 At Steeple Morden the developments as proposed would have regard to the form and density of surrounding parts of the village and thereby seek to maintain the setting of the adjacent listed building. They are also demonstrably capable of maintaining the current landscape buffers and the new development could take design cues from the listed building to further the influence of the listed building.

Question 23 - How do you think we could ensure that new development is as well-designed as possible?

- 2.39 A careful balance is needed between the characteristics that make up local distinctiveness, and the use of modern innovative technologies that will yield more sustainable buildings.
- 2.40 Guidance is needed based on emerging governments aims to secure better building design however this should not stifle truly innovative design even where it presents as a significant contrast to existing local built form
- 2.41 Overall, new development should take the high-quality characteristics of the surrounding built form to influence the design implemented as part of the development proposal. Further the design should also include complete compliance with the design principles as set out, which should create a distinctive and characterful development that includes for the provision of climate change mitigation/adaptation.
- 2.42 In the case of the sites as Steeple Morden, there would be scope to create a truly innovative form of development. This however is not illustrated in the attached plans which reflect the conventional expectation for layout and house types. The Local Plan needs to set out what flexibility the Council will permit in the approach to residential design not just in major growth areas but across the whole Greater Cambridgeshire area.

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

- 2.43 The sites proposed at Steeple Morden are demonstrably available and deliverable without being constrained and could provide a suitable mix of market, affordable and entry-level housing, that will comply to national space standards and can be defined as accessible homes.

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?

- 2.44 If you only provide for the minimum then there is no room for error if sites do not come forward within the plan period. As such by planning for a higher number of houses you build in an

element of flexibility which allows for unpredictability. It makes the plan more robust and given that further housing will be needed beyond the plan period, provision over the minimum does not imply the development of unneeded dwellings.

- 2.45 Moreover, Greater Cambridge is by definition an area of economic growth and is attractive to inward migration driven in particular by the technology industries. It follows that many such inward migrants have a financial ability to outcompete local communities for the available housing. Failure to provide a budget above the government's minimum requirement is therefore either likely to do the short of the economy to support continued growth or, more likely, to increase housing stress in existing communities.

Question 33 - What kind of housing do you think we should provide?

- 2.46 Housing needs to provide a suitable mix of all types of provision to ensure that the needs from all aspects are met. The housing provided needs to be adaptable and allow people to remain in housing for perpetuity if desired.

Question 35 - How should we ensure a high standard of housing is built in our area?

- 2.47 Ensuring that a high standard of housing is achieved is crucial as part of the housing delivery. This relates to the consideration of design and the guidance that is appropriate to how innovative design can be treated in areas where the natural inclination is to build in 'conventional' patterns and forms perpetuating establish (and not necessarily optimum or desirable) forms of development.
- 2.48 As part of this high-quality provision ensuring that the space standards are established and adhered to on all developments, in addition to standards being set for energy efficiency, accessibility and adaptability. Furthermore, designing to reflect health and wellbeing is a key consideration and should be considered as part of the layout and amount of social interaction that is proposed on the site. It would also include the provision of green space or landscaping. New homes should also energy efficient features that provide adaptability in relation to climate change.

Questions 36 - How should the Local Plan ensure the right infrastructure is provided in line with development?

- 2.49 Development that uses existing available infrastructure capacity should be a priority as it reflects the most efficient use of resources. Clearly there will be need for significant new infrastructure investment to deliver the wider objectives of the plan but this should not detract from the opportunities to provide development in locations that have, and do not need further investment in, schools, roads, drainage, utilities etc.
- 2.50 There is capacity in Steeple Morden to accommodate development of the scale promoted.

Question 37 - How should we encourage a shift away from car use and towards more sustainable modes of transport such as public transport, cycling and walking?

- 2.51 Realistically public transport networks are only likely to be viable in our main urban areas and between principal centres. Even within the period to 2040, there is unlikely to be a radical shift away from private transport especially in wealthier areas – unless government takes significant national action in this regard.
- 2.52 Government policy is focused on reducing the pollutant impacts of private transport and not on eliminating or indeed significantly altering access to or use of private vehicles.
- 2.53 Planning policy should therefore address the shift in form rather than a shift in mode – which has not been achieved over the past 20 years. It should focus on making EVs a practical means of travel for all of the motoring population and ensuring that new homes have access to charging facilities on or off curtilage, and that destination chargers are widespread. The Council needs to focus on ensuring that such provisions are made and to working with the utility providers to make sure that there is electrical capacity to meet these objectives.

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

- 2.54 In relation to our comment on Q10, it is essential that provision for the continued growth of rural communities is made as the alternative is that they will stagnate and decline – it is not appropriate to excessively focus on driving urban based populations and any attempts to do so will simply cause rural areas to become inaccessible to those who need a rural location –

which is unsustainable.

- 2.55 New sites need to be allocated in rural communities where they can be properly integrated into the physical and community structure and where they will be complementary to the function and sustainability of that settlement – where sustainability is more than simply the availability of a post office a pub and (an infrequent) bus.

Question 41 - Do you think the Local Plan should be more flexible about the size of developments allowed within village boundaries (frameworks), allowing more homes on sites that become available?

- 2.56 As long as there is suitable provision of infrastructure in the settlement a site's location in relation to present village settlement boundaries should not restrict the amount of housing that is brought forward. Each site should be treated on an individual basis.
- 2.57 Equally it is our view that it is not necessary to maximise the number of dwellings achieved on any given land allocation in the rural area – other considerations around good design, sustainable building form and social integration should also be prevailing factors.

Question 42 - Where should we site new development?

- 2.58 New development should be allocated throughout the villages, to mitigate the overall impact of housing throughout the area rather than overly impacting a single area. As we have noted in response to other questions, consideration of available infrastructure capacity, physical and social integration and the opportunities for individual or cumulative biodiversity enhancements are also relevant considerations as well as availability and the likelihood that the site will be delivered.

Question 44 - What do you think about developing around the edge of Cambridge on land outside the Green Belt?

- 2.59 Referring to Q42, the development should be dispersed throughout the villages to not over burden a single area with additional demands.

Question 45 - What do you think about developing around the edge of Cambridge in the Green Belt?

- 2.60 As stated in relation to Q42, development should be dispersed throughout the villages to not over burden a single area with additional demands. Where it is not required the development of Green Belt should be avoided and given the suitable sites that can be brought forward in village locations, development in the Green Belt is not necessary.

Question 46 - What do you think about creating planned new settlements?

- 2.61 Whilst we consider that new settlement have a very important role in delivering substantial quantities of the social and economic growth that must be delivered, they are not the sole panacea to meeting the economic or housing objectives of the area. The issues of delivery are well known and their contribution, together with that from major urban extensions, needs to be complemented by a range of other elements and opportunities.

Question 47 - What do you think about growing our villages?

- 2.62 With regard to Q42-46, the most suitable solution is to disperse a proportion of development throughout the villages for their own sake and so as not over burden a single area with additional demands or over rely on a strategy that is of uncertain deliverability. This approach can help to sustain existing facilities in the village and create a more diverse population. And development should be allowed where there is sufficient infrastructure to support additional development or is located in close proximity to the main transport corridors.
- 2.63 Given Steeple Morden's location near to the main transport corridors and infrastructure available within the settlement it would be well positioned to cater for a portion of the demand. In addition, due to the scale of the proposals the development could provide around 25 net additional dwellings as detailed in the accompanying plans.

