

Cambridge office

Strutt & Parker
66-68 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB2 1LA
Telephone 01223 459500

Cambridge@struttandparker.com
struttandparker.com



Planning Policy Team
South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cambourne Business Park
Cambourne
Cambridge
CB23 6EA

Direct Dial: [REDACTED]
E mail: [REDACTED]
Our ref: 208260

25th March 2019

Sent by email only to: planningpolicy@scambs.gov.uk

Dear Sir or Madam

Greater Cambridge Local Plan 'Call for Sites' Submission: Land to the west of Hardwick Road, Toft, Cambridgeshire

I write in relation to my client, [REDACTED] site at land to the west of Hardwick Lane, Toft, which is being submitted in order for it to be considered as part of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan 'Call for Sites and Broad Locations' exercise being undertaken by Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council. The site proposes the erection of up to 28 dwellings with associated new access, landscape and drainage. It is located immediately north of another site being put forward through this Call for Sites exercise, a 1.6-hectare site called South View Meadow. This submission comprises the following supporting documents:

- Completed 'Call for Sites and Broad Locations' response form;
- Site location plan showing the location and extent of the proposed site (together with other land owned by my clients); and
- Email providing evidence of land owner support for the submission of the site.

The site shown on the accompanying site location plan covers an area of approximately 2.23 hectares and is located to the north of the village of Toft, comprising agricultural land currently in a productive arable rotation. The site is bounded by agricultural land to the north and north west, residential development to the south west and paddock land to the south. Running along the east is Hardwick Road, which provides access from Hardwick to Toft. It is located approximately 8 kilometres west of Cambridge and is bounded in part by ditches, trees and hedgerows.

Toft is currently designated as an Infill Village under Policy S/11 of the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018, illustrating that the site would bring positive overall benefit to the village through a change from general agricultural use and given the services and facilities in Toft and nearby villages which the proposed development would support. The village of Toft offers services and facilities such as a church, village shop, golf club and village hall. Several businesses are also established in the village, including high tech enterprises such as Stratagem IPM, Excitech Ltd and Cambridge Design Partnership. There is also a good bus service that provides regular access to Cambridge, Cambourne and Longstowe. The proposed East West rail route is anticipated to run through either Bassingbourn or Cambourne, which will provide access to the rail network.

In recent years many local authorities have focused new development in larger villages or towns, or on the edge of cities. While this approach is supported up to a point, it is critical that medium-sized villages such as Toft take some development. In South Cambridgeshire, affordability remains a barrier to many individuals, couples, and families,





and many people are effectively priced-out of the area. The site at Toft benefits from its proximity to a range of shops, services, and facilities, and is within walking distance of primary and secondary schools in Comberton. However, unlike sites to the east of Toft and surrounding Comberton, this site is not located within the Cambridge Green Belt.

In recent years many villages across the Greater Cambridge area have lost vital services as shops have closed, public houses have been converted into residential properties, and bus services have been reduced. Toft has a reasonable range of services including a village hall, public house, and shop, and is also located within walking distance (approximately 1 kilometre) of the larger village of Comberton.

The village of Comberton is fortunate in this regard as it has maintained a post office/village store, public house/restaurant, village hall, church, primary school and large secondary school, as well as some key local employers providing rural jobs (primarily including Comberton Village College). Now with much improved broadband connectivity and a significant increase in home working and online shopping, many of the historic barriers to sustainability in rural areas are reduced. New residential development in Toft would support the rural economy and maintain the vitality and viability of this sustainable village for new and existing residents.

It is therefore important to enable modest, appropriately-sized extensions to villages so that the remaining services (including small businesses) can be supported and to enable much needed new market and affordable housing to be provided. It is considered that the proposed site is commensurate with the size and scale of the village and could provide a sustainable expansion to the settlement, providing homes for employees of the businesses located in both Toft and Comberton, whilst connecting parts of the village up.

Although a proposed development of this scale would not be supported by South Cambridgeshire District Council as stated within the Local Plan 2018, we consider the overall benefits of the proposed development to outweigh any negative impact on the local area, given the sites proximity to Comberton, its Village College and further small businesses located in both Toft and Comberton. The emerging Local Plan should introduce a less restrictive policy for rural villages in order to ensure that their services and facilities are supported, and that new families, couples, and individuals, have housing opportunities.

In terms of developing the site, a location plan has been included within this submission and an indicative site plan can be provided at planning permission stage to show how the site could be developed to accommodate up to 28 residential units with on-plot parking and sufficient garden space and landscaping. Open space and landscaping could also be provided throughout the site as well as a balancing pond that will provide new biodiversity opportunities and screening characteristics. New trees and hedge planting is also proposed as part of a landscaping scheme to ensure the site does not harm the views across the surrounding countryside.

It can be confirmed that this site is located within an area at very low risk of flooding as it is within Flood Zone 1. A preliminary ecological assessment alongside further surveys can be undertaken to identify whether the site is likely to support breeding species and provide advice on any suitable mitigation methods.

In terms of access, the site is currently accessed via Hardwick Road to the north end of the eastern boundary, however this is only a grass access over the existing ditch. It is proposed that as part of the development of the site improvements would be brought forward to ensure the site can be accessed safely and appropriately via a 'T junction' onto Hardwick Road with the appropriate visibility splays. The site is available immediately and could deliver new homes within the next 5-10 years.



I trust that the information submitted is sufficient for your purposes but should you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully



William Nichols
Senior Associate Director
Cambridge Planning

Enc: Completed 'Call for Sites and Broad Locations' response form;
Site location plan showing the location and extent of the proposed site (and other land owned by the landowner); and
Email providing evidence of land owner support for the submission of the site.

Cc:  and Anna Law (Strutt & Parker)