

20<sup>th</sup> February 2020

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

**Lambert Smith Hampton**  
United Kingdom House

**By email**

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Greater Cambridge Local Plan Issues and Options 2020 Consultation**

On behalf of our client, Colegrove Estates Ltd, please find enclosed a representation to the Greater Cambridge Local Plan Issues and Options consultation. We welcome the opportunity to engage with the Council for the duration of the Local Plan process.

This representation relates to the land to the south of Lanacre along Chrishall Road, Fowlmere, SG8 7RY. On 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019, the site was submitted as a part of the Greater Cambridge Call for Sites and Broad Locations 2019.

The submission to the Call for Sites was made by me on behalf of the client under the company name, Lanes Land & New Homes. Since this submission, I have been transferred to Lambert Smith Hampton (LSH), which is part of the same Group with Lanes. Please can you change my contact details on your Local Plan database to reflect this change.

**Land south of Fowlmere**

The site at land south of Fowlmere comprises vacant land with existing residential properties to the north. There is countryside around the rest of the site, adjacent to the existing settlement boundary. The overall site area is 3.76 hectares. The site is located in Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at low risk of flooding. The site is not located within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The site is also not located within a Conservation Area and is not located in close proximity to any statutory listed buildings.

The 2019 Call for Sites submission referred to local engagement that had been undertaken at the time and highlighted the sustainability credentials of the site and village. The submission also reviewed the village context and how the site south of Fowlmere reflected existing projections of built form as you move out of the village centre. Thus, the proposal reflected the natural growth of the village in a sympathetic and contextual way. A masterplan was produced for the 2019 submission indicating the potential for up to 50 dwellings and the potential for a farm shop at the site.

Since the 2019 Call for Sites submission, worked has continued on reviewing the site and considering the right nature and level of development that reflects the village context and promotes a sustainable form of development.

Attached is an updated master plan for the site, showing around 30 dwellings proposed on the site, with a mix of 12 No. affordable dwellings, 9 No. self-build dwellings and 9 No. market dwellings. The number of dwellings and mix proposed is for indicative purposes only at this stage, but the proposals demonstrate a scheme that could be delivered on site, meeting the demand for self-build properties

within the District; promoting policy compliant affordable housing and meeting the need within the village (40% of the total scheme); and, provision of an element of market dwellings. It was not considered a farm shop at the site would be appropriate in this location.

In addition to providing this mixed tenure of housing benefiting the community and village, the attached masterplan indicates the potential for allotments, community orchard and play area.

This form, density and mix of development, with community benefits, on the edge of the village would play a significant role in providing a sustainable form of village development, supporting the local community and village.

## **Response to Issues and Options 2020 Consultation**

We have reviewed the consultation document and outline a response to the relevant questions below. We have also submitted a consultation form for each question responded too. The forms should be read alongside this letter, which provides the full response to each question.

### Section 4: The Big Themes

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

It is recognised that the Greater Cambridge Local Plan will seek housing growth to be directed to urban areas, such as Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire's larger rural centres. The urban locations can, however, have their own constraints on land availability and limit the potential nature and type of housing. The opportunity exists within the villages, such as Fowlmere, to assist with providing a range of housing types, including starter homes, affordable housing and family housing. There is also the promotion and need for self-build developments, which development on the edge of villages could assist with providing. Through directing this form of development to the villages within the authority this would promoted inward investment into the villages, support the existing community through providing options for people to remain in the village.

The approach therefore needs to be balanced, so that villages are not forgotten about and where there is investment into villages, a mix of tenure of housing needs should be provided within the villages to support and enhance the sustainable credentials of the village.

The larger rural settlements are already subject to significant housing growth and therefore there is scope to consider allocating residential development across the smaller settlements, such as Fowlmere. Medium scale development in the villages will ensure that a range of housing types in a range of different settlement across the area are delivered, catering for various different demands in the area and maintaining communities in a sustainable way.

#### ***Q. 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?***

***Please choose from the following options: Yes, strongly agree / Yes, somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree / No, somewhat disagree***

We strongly agree that the Council should plan for a higher number of homes than the minimum required by government. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out that strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for the objectively assessed need (paragraph 11). Planning for only the government target meets the minimum requirements of the NPPF, but we consider that the shared planning authority should seek to exceed the minimum requirements of the NPPF in the formation of the Local Plan. Planning for a higher number of homes than identified by the government presents a robust approach that will ensure that if there are any problems with housing delivery (e.g.

infrastructure delays or viability issues) on allocated sites, there are a sufficient number of allocated sites that could meet the potential shortfall.

Additionally, planning for a higher number of homes than the minimum requirement serves to future proof the shared housing supply against economic and demographic changes across the area. This approach would ensure the robustness of the Local Plan reducing the opportunity for challenge to the overarching principle and vision at examination stage.

**Q.33. What kind of housing do you think we should provide?**

It is important to provide a range of housing types across the shared planning area. Greater Cambridge should seek to provide market housing, affordable housing (social rent and intermediate) and self-build housing, and direct the development towards sustainable locations which includes edge of village locations that can support a viable development opportunity.

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

**Please choose from the following options: *Highly flexible* / *Somewhat flexible* / *Keep the current approach* / *Restrict further* Is there are particular approach you would like the plan to take for your village?**

We consider that the Local Plan should take a highly flexible approach when considering development on the edge of villages.

As outlined in the response to Q 31, it is recognised that the Greater Cambridge Local Plan will seek a greater proportion of housing growth to be directed towards urban areas such as Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire's main rural centres. However, given the recognised constraints of developing with the existing urban areas and the demand for different housing types, it is important for the authorities to ensure that a wide range of housing is available across the shared planning area rather than solely within the larger urban areas.

The larger rural settlements are already subject to housing growth and therefore a flexible approach should be taken towards development on the edge of villages, encouraging development in the right location to supporting existing local communities.

Development on edge of village sites can present an opportunity for the logical extension of settlement boundaries that provide housing, and where appropriate, employment and community opportunities. The scale and density of proposals should be assessed on a site by site basis rather than policies applying rigid unit targets for sites. This aligns with the NPPF's guidance that development should seek to optimise the use of sites (paragraph 127).

Development on the edge of villages can play an important role in supporting the vitality and viability of the local economy, because development will bring new residents into villages, who can utilise and support local businesses. A flexible approach to edge of village development will therefore ensure that proposals, which will boost the vitality of villages, can be permitted under the local plan's policies.

Taking a flexible approach to plan making and planning policies is encouraged within the NPPF.

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out that Local Plans should be:

*"sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change"*, and,

Paragraph 81 of the NPPF outlines that policies should be:

*“flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, allow for new and flexible working practices (such as live-work accommodation), and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances”.*

Taking a flexible approach to development on the edge of villages will allow for the new Local Plan to adapt and respond to the economic and demographic changes within the shared planning area across the plan period, in line with the overarching guidance of the NPPF.

**Q 42. Where should we site new development? Rank the options below 1 6 (1 – Most Preferred 6 – Least Preferred)**

**Densification of existing urban areas / Edge of Cambridge: Outside Green Belt / Edge of Cambridge: Green Belt / Dispersal: New Settlements / Dispersal: Villages / Public Transport Corridors**

Our ranking of the options is based on the assessment of each development option within the Sustainability Appraisal of Issues and Options December 2019.

- 1 Densification of existing urban areas
- 2 Edge of Cambridge: Outside Green Belt
- 3 Dispersal: Villages
- 4 Public Transport Corridors
- 5 Edge of Cambridge: Green Belt
- 6 Dispersal: New Settlements

The above ranking considers that the densification of existing urban areas and edge of Cambridge: Outside Green Belt present opportunities for sustainable development, with a potential lesser impact as located outside of the Green Belt. It should however be questioned that solely focusing development to these locations as a strategy, will raise questions over the realistic delivery of the housing numbers required within the Greater Cambridge Area.

We have ranked Dispersal: Villages as third on the list, as this option provides a credible and sustainable option that will assist with delivering housing across the area and through the new Local Plan period. There are many opportunities that exist with edge of village sites located outside of the Green Belt, such as the site south of Fowlmere, which will have lesser impact on the openness than sites located in the Green Belt and deliver much needed housing.

Public transport corridors are ranked just below Dispersal: Villages. This form of development acknowledges the focus of development through the Oxford and Cambridge Arc, which the new Local Plan will assist with delivering and supporting over the Plan period.

Edge of Cambridge: Green Belt and New Settlements are ranked lowest as this form of development will have most impact on openness within the protected areas of Green Belt around Cambridge and New Settlements will require the provision of a significant level of new infrastructure to support the development. The delivery of infrastructure projects is often subject to delays that can prevent development coming forward within a timely manner, impacting on delivering the Greater Cambridge housing targets.

**Q. 47. What do you think about growing our villages?**

We consider that growing the existing villages in Greater Cambridge should form an important part of the Local Plan strategy, and promotes an overarching mix of sustainable development that will maximise the potential to deliver the Local Plans vision and objectives.

Encouraging growth in the villages can contribute to sustaining the vitality and viability of existing facilities and infrastructure in the villages. Encouraging the growth of villages will ensure that a range of housing is available across Greater Cambridge to meet the varying housing demand.

The growth of the villages could allow for increased investment infrastructure generated from the CIL and S106 income from approved development schemes. The impact that development proposals can have on a village's character are recognised as a challenge, but it is considered that through good design, any potential impact on the character of villages can be mitigated.

Finally, it is noted that there are a number of the larger villages are located in the Green Belt; whereas the land we are promoting to the south of Fowlmere is located outside of the Green Belt, with a lesser impact on openness if developed than sites and land located within the Green Belt. We therefore consider that directing village growth to those villages, such as Fowlmere, with land outside of the Green Belt, should be considered for development prior to sites within the Green Belt.

### **Summary**

This representation sets out the response on behalf of Colegrove Estates Ltd, to the relevant questions set out in the Issues and Options Consultation. This representation encourages the Local Plan to plan for a housing target above the minimum government requirement and to consider the growth of villages to form an important part of the wider housing delivery strategy.

This representation also seeks to promote the land to the south of Lanacre along Chrishall Road, Fowlmere, for residential development (self-build, affordable and market units), allotments, community orchard and play area. The site south of Fowlmere would contribute to the provision of housing within Greater Cambridge, whilst also providing community facilities. We request that the site is allocated accordingly within the latter stages of the Local Plan.

We hope that these representations are of assistance in taking the plan forward to the next stage of preparation.

Should you require any further clarification in relation to this representation, please do not hesitate to contact me or my colleague Fiona Harte on the details provided below.

Yours sincerely,

**Peter Biggs BSc (Hons) DIP TP MRTPI**  
**Director – Planning, Development and Regeneration**  
**LAMBERT SMITH HAMPTON**

**DDI**  
**Mobile**  
**Email**

**Enc.**

**Site Location Plan**

**Concept Site Plan**