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South Cambridgeshire District Council  
Call for Sites Consultation,  
Planning Policy Team,  
South Cambridgeshire District Council,  
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Dear Sirs,

## **CALL FOR SITES SUBMISSION – LAND AT PARSONAGE FARM, HORNINGSEA**

### **SUBMISSION TO GREATER CAMBRIDGE LOCAL PLAN ON BEHALF OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE**

Savills (UK) Ltd Planning Team are instructed by St John's College, Cambridge to provide planning consultancy advice in respect of their landholdings across the country including those landholdings in the city of Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire.

#### **Context**

In such a context, we are instructed to make the necessary representations to the various stages of consultation as it relates to a review of the currently adopted Local Plans. To this end we welcome the Council's embarking on a review of those Plans to create a new Greater Cambridge Local Plan for the next plan period. We certainly consider that there is great merit in a single plan covering the Cambridge area because there is a very clear relationship between the City and the area surrounding it.

The application of previous planning policies has been part of a planning strategy which has sought to control growth on the edge of the City which in turn has led to a more dispersed pattern of development requiring settlements within South Cambridgeshire District Council's administrative area needing to accommodate new development whilst looking at Cambridge to mainly provide for the main focus for employment, retail, leisure and cultural needs.

Consequently, a significant amount of commuting takes place within and across South Cambridgeshire's administrative area in to and out of Cambridge. A series of initiatives remain in the pipeline to address the issue of influencing patterns of travel to encourage alternative modes of transport other than the private motor car. Whilst such programmes are welcome, it remains the case that a development strategy that analyses all possible options should be taken forward within the next plan period.

The development strategy within the recently adopted Local Plans for the City and South Cambridgeshire acknowledges that Cambridge remains the most sustainable location for new development – that strategy identified the urban area as the starting point for new development. The next most sustainable location for new development was the edge of Cambridge in terms of a development sequence and this part of the strategy has seen significant new developments at Trumpington Meadows, North West Cambridge, land between Huntingdon Road and Histon Road, north of Newmarket Road and land north of Cherry Hinton. Whilst significant in terms of numbers, such development in our view, has not had a significant adverse impact on the qualities that the City seeks to protect and accordingly we consider that there is certainly potential for further growth on the City's edge within the next plan period.

After the City edge, the Council's took the view that new settlements were the next most sustainable options for growth – Waterbeach, Cambourne West and new development at Bourn Airfield form part of the current

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planned growth and indeed further growth at such locations may form part of any new strategy in the next plan period.

In the case of the other settlements within South Cambridgeshire there was a general view taken within the strategy as it relates to the current adopted plan that development should be generally limited. This was on the basis of sustainability reasons.

Thus the development strategy within the current adopted plans was part of a mixed approach having regard to the development sequence although such a strategy was heavily skewed in number terms towards new settlements and expansion of Cambourne. A number of representations were made to the Inspectors on this point and the Council's responded on these specific issues during the course of the Examination.

It is our view that it remains the case that the development strategy to be adopted in any single plan review across both local planning authority's areas should consider a range of development options and allocations within the urban area, on its urban edge, at new settlements and within the villages. There is no single location for growth in such a context.

A planning approach within the rural area of South Cambridgeshire which assesses the level of services and facilities within a village and its accessibility to them is a strategy that has been applied in the past and we consider is applicable to the next round of plan formulation. Such an approach recognises the need for villages to accommodate growth where environmental considerations allow both in terms of providing new housing for new residents as well as introducing new spending power and investment to sustain and grow local facilities.

It is clear in such a context, both in terms of development in villages as well as the application of a development strategy which looks at development on the edge of Cambridge, that a review of Green Belt boundaries is required. To retain Green Belt boundaries as currently defined in the adopted plans is to maintain a pattern of development which generates significant problem of commuting and the cost therein by forcing new housing and businesses in to more remote locations beyond the main focus of demand which remains the City of Cambridge. In addition the tightly drawn Green Belt Boundaries around a number of the larger necklace villages as well as some of the smaller villages around Cambridge have prevented their own growth and in a climate associated with the next plan review where we consider development pressures will remain intense, the focus on accommodating new growth in and on the edge of villages will continue to be a major issue and the planning authorities need to adopt a strategy which acknowledges this issue.

### **Land at Parsonage Farm, Horningsea**

The site known as 'Parsonage Farm, Horningsea comprises 4.0 hectares of ploughed agricultural, undeveloped land. To the north of the site are residential dwellings and their gardens, To the east and south of the site lies existing agricultural land. The site is bound to the west by Horningsea Road, which provides links to Waterbeach to the north and Cambridge City to the south.

The site lies south of the existing settlement boundary of Horningsea within the Green Belt. The site is not subject to any other policy, landscape or ecological designations. There are no heritage assets on the site, although there are a number of Grade II Listed Buildings located along the High Street to the north of the site. The site lies entirely within Flood Zone 1; the least risk of flooding and where development should be directed.


Horningsea is identified in the recently adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2018) as an 'Infill Village' within the settlement hierarchy. However, the village contains a number of services and facilities including public house, place of worship, employment facilities and public open space. Although there is no primary school within the village, Fen Ditton Community Primary School is located 1.57km from the southern boundary of the site and is easily accessed. There is a footpath and cycleway linking the village to the Primary School so this can be accessed using sustainable methods of transport. There is also a regular bus service from the High Street, approximately 300m from the north west of the site.

The site is a logical extension to the village, where there has been little growth over the past plan period. In order for a settlement to not stagnate and to remain sustainable there should be growth in these locations across plan periods. Whilst the site extends to some 4 hectares, it is the case that the size of the existing village and the scale of new development has to recognise the need for new development to assimilate into the village and thus the amount of new housing could be in the order of around 20 houses to ensure a sensible element of logical scale of growth. Extending the village to the south is logical as it is in closer proximity and accessibility to the services and facilities located within City. The site therefore a sustainable location where policy compliant affordable housing can be met alongside new market housing

It is considered that the Councils should look at this opportunity to secure much need new market housing (including affordable housing) in this sustainable location in one of the villages close to Cambridge and which has good public transport and cycling links to the City. A review of Green Belt boundaries is consequently required a part of the plan review and in such a context the site is considered appropriate for new residential development to ensure that the village grows in a controlled manner

We look forward to being kept informed of plan progress and should you have any queries concerning the contents of submission please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

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**Director**