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

CALL FOR SITES SUBMISSION – LAND NORTH OF HUNTINGDON ROAD, GIRTON

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.

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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 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.

With regards to the villages within South Cambridgeshire, it is the case that those larger villages with services and facilities, or indeed those with potential for increased services and facilities should be the focus for growth. In our view, villages that possess no primary school nor with good access to a primary school, should not be the focus for further allocations. Whilst this would not necessarily preclude new growth through infill nor indeed new affordable housing, it is accepted that it would be generally unsustainable to make housing allocations in such settlements unless there are other planning considerations that would indicate otherwise. As part of a strategy to accommodate new development, the Councils should also explore locations on the edge of the built up area where there are good accessibility connections to and from the City and which remains the focus for the highest order of services and 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 surrounding 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 North of Huntingdon Road, Girton

This site on the northern side of Huntingdon Road, Girton comprises 1.95 hectares of greenfield, undeveloped land. The site is triangular in shape with the A14 forming the northern boundary. The southern boundary of the site is formed by Huntingdon Road, where vehicular access to the site would be taken from. To the east of the site is the student accommodation for Girton College known as The Grange with the grounds and facilities associated with Girton College beyond.

The site lies entirely within the Green Belt and outside the Girton Development Framework. The site is not subject to any other policy, ecological or landscape designations. The site lies entirely within Flood Zone 1; the least risk of flooding and where development should be directed. There are no heritage assets on the site, however, Girton College contains both Grade I and II Listed Buildings.

Girton is identified in the adopted Cambridge Local Plan (2018) as a Minor Rural Centre where residential schemes of up to 20 dwellings will be permitted. Whilst distinct from the main village of Girton and nearby

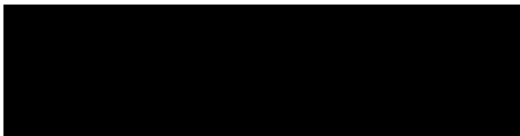


villages, the site is on the main approach into Cambridge. There are footpaths and cycleways along Huntingdon Road which offer a sustainable method of transport into the City. This site represents a potential location for residential development.

It is considered that the Councils should look at this opportunity to secure much need new market housing (including affordable housing) in this location which has good public transport and cycling links into Cambridge. 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.

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,



Rachael Morey MRTPI
Planner