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South Cambridgeshire District Council  
Call for Sites Consultation,  
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Dear Sirs,

## **CALL FOR SITES SUBMISSION – LAND AT DODFORD LANE, 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.

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 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 at Dodford Lane, Girton**

The site lies to the south of Dodford Lane, Girton comprises 3.519 hectares of greenfield land. To the north of the site is Dodford Lane and a number of residential properties that front onto that road. To the south of the site is agricultural land and at the north eastern edge the land borders The Old Crown Public House. The site is bounded to the east by the open frontage onto High Street. To the west of the site lies the Girton Golf Club car park and Washpit Brook.

The site lies within the Green Belt and adjacent to the settlement framework. The eastern boundary of the site at the High Street is designated as 'Important Countryside Frontage'. A section of the western side of the site lies within Flood Zone 2 and 3 with the eastern section of the site lying within Flood Zone 1. There are no heritage assets within the site, however, there are two Grade II Listed Buildings within proximity of the site,

although there is existing residential development between the assets and the site. There are no ecological designations on or in proximity to the site. There is no known contamination at the site and whilst key utilities are not present at the site, these can be secured at a later stage.


Girton is identified in the adopted Cambridge Local Plan (2018) as a Minor Rural Centre where residential schemes of up to 30 dwellings will be permitted. Therefore, this site identifies itself as a sustainable location for residential development. The site is located in close proximity to a number of facilities and services including the village shop, primary school, employment opportunities and public house. There are a number of community and leisure facilities in Girton. Adjacent to the site's eastern boundary lies a bus stop which provides a regular bus service into Cambridge City Centre. There are also footpaths and cycleways which offer a sustainable method of transport into the City.

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 better served villages 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.

Any development proposals coming forward would look to alleviate any of the potential flooding issues at the site. The provision for public open space on the site would be located within the Flood Zone 3 section of the site to the west. Whilst the residential development proposals would be focussed within the section of the site which falls into Flood Zone 1; where residential development should be directed.

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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**Planner**