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24th February 2020

Sent by email only to: [REDACTED]

Dear Sir or Madam

**Greater Cambridge Local Plan: The First Conversation
Regulation 18: Issues & Options Submission: Land north-east of Bourn, Cambridgeshire**

I write in relation to my client, P. X. Farms Ltd and in relation to land north-east of Bourn, Cambridgeshire. This site was not submitted at the 'Call for Sites' stage and is being put forward at this stage for consideration as a potential site for development. The site covers an area of 179.8 hectares comprising arable land to the north-east of Bourn and its gold course and club.

The submission of this site follows recent announcements relating to proposed new public transport infrastructure along the Cambridge to St Neots transport corridor including the confirmation of the preferred route for the proposed East West Rail project linking Cambridge and Bedford via a new railway station to the south of Cambourne (in the vicinity of my client's site), and the Cambridge Autonomous Metro (CAM), both of which significantly enhance the connectivity and sustainability credentials of my client's land, by linking it, via high quality public transport infrastructure to nearby employment locations in Cambridge, St Neots, and Bedford etc.

My client welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Greater Cambridge Local Plan: The First Conversation, which explores a series of big themes that will underpin the decisions about where homes, jobs, and infrastructure should be located, and consequently what spatial development strategy the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service should adopt.

Of particular significance is the level of housing required, which should be set at a level that seeks to meet the demand created by the concentration of jobs in the Greater Cambridge area, and the spatial strategy, which should be a blended strategy but one that focuses on sustainable locations that are well-connected or have the potential to be connected to high quality public transport, while recognizing that a range of sites is required to aid deliverability and to ensure that all villages can grow in a sustainable manner appropriate to their size and scale.

The site at land north-east of Bourn, is located in very close proximity to the proposed new Cambourne railway station, which will provide fast and direct services to nearby employment generators such as the Cambridge Biomedical Campus (adjacent to the proposed Cambridge South station), the established employment hub around Cambridge's central railway station, and the Cambridge Science Park. Given that climate change is one of the big themes set out in the Local Plan, delivering new homes and jobs on land in close proximity to the new Cambourne railway station would be an appropriate way in which to reduce the likelihood of car-dependency and increase the likelihood of achieving modal shift.

In addition to the proposed new railway line between Cambridge and Bedford, the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority recently commenced a consultation on a new underground section of metro in Cambridge. While this consultation exercise did not specifically relate to Cambourne, it clearly showed an indicative metro line to





St Neots, which would include a stop at Cambourne and therefore be in very close proximity with my client's site. It is clear therefore that this broad location will be very well connected to proposed new transport infrastructure and should therefore be a focus for new development.

This submission responds to the following questions set out in the Greater Cambridge Issues & Options document, which are considered of specific relevance to my client's site:

- Q2: Please submit any sites for employment and housing that you wish to suggest for housing in the Local Plan. Provide as much information and supporting information as possible.
- Q32: 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?
- Q37: How should we encourage a shift away from car use and towards more sustainable modes of transport such as public transport, cycling and walking?
- Q39: Should we look to remove land from the Green Belt if evidence shows it provides a more sustainable development option by reducing travel distances, helping us to reduce our climate impacts?
- Q40: how flexible should the Local Plan be towards development of both jobs and homes on the edge of villages?
- Q42: Where should we site new development?
- Q46: What do you think about creating planned new settlements?
- Q48: What do you think about siting development along transport corridors?

Q2: Please submit any sites for employment and housing that you wish to suggest for housing in the Local Plan. Provide as much information and supporting information as possible.

I am submitting approximately 179.8 hectares of land north-east of Bourn, Cambridgeshire on behalf of my client P. X. Farms Ltd, and have provided a site location plan accordingly. The land could provide a new southern extension to the growing Cambourne and Bourn Airfield developments or become a new settlement in its own right.

Q32: 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?

The standard methodology indicates a need for 1,800 homes per year, or 40,900 homes for the suggested plan period of 2017-2040. However, as the draft Local Plan acknowledges, the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Independent Economic Review (CPIER) '*showed that our recent growth has been faster than expected, and that growth is likely to continue. As a result, demand for new housing in this area has been exceptionally high and housebuilding has not kept up.*'

The draft Local Plan indicates that a rough indicative calculation based on CPIER suggests that if the jobs growth is achieved, around 2,900 homes a year would need to be built in Greater Cambridge, which equates to an indicative total of 66,700 homes over the period 2017-2040.

CPIER recommends that '*There should be a review of housing requirements based on the potential for higher growth in employment than currently forecast in the EEFM.*' It states that '*No economy can achieve its potential without an adequate supply of housing, which must offer a range of types and price points for all society*' and add that it '*is concerned that Cambridgeshire & Peterborough is already running a very significant risk in this regard and that risk is most acute in the Greater Cambridge area.*'

CPIER continues, stating that '*There has been insufficient housing development to meet demand. Average house prices and commuting have risen, choking labour supply while reducing the well-being of those forced to commute*'



longer and longer distances [from more affordable areas]. CPIER concludes that *'we believe the accumulated deficit in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough is so acute that the local authorities should re-examine their assessments of housing need, setting higher numbers, which at least reflect previous under-delivery'*. It should also be noted that the CPIER indicates that job growth in recent years in Greater Cambridge has been under-estimated with a knock-on impact for the level of housing required, which is likely to be far higher than the numbers set out using the standard methodology method.

For these reasons, my client strongly agrees that the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service *'should plan for a higher number of homes than the minimum required by government, to provide flexibility to support the growing economy'*. While there is clearly more empirical evidence to be undertaken, the indicative CPIER calculation of 2,900 homes a year (or 66,700 homes over the plan period) should be seen as an appropriate starting point. My client therefore supports the option of delivering at least 2,900 homes per year, as only by building at a higher level than has previously occurred will start to mitigate the significant negative effects on both the local and national economy should housing in Greater Cambridge continue to be constrained.

Q37: How should we encourage a shift away from car use and towards more sustainable modes of transport such as public transport, cycling and walking?

The spatial strategy approach is a key way of encouraging shifts away from car use towards more sustainable modes of transport by focusing development in locations with good existing public transport or with potential for improved public transport - the spatial approach that is ultimately chosen will have implications for the area's ability to deliver modal shift from the private car to alternative transport modes, and consequently assisting in reducing climate emission, and create more efficient patterns of commuting.

My client's site at land north-east of Bourn is particularly well-placed to encourage a shift away from car use and towards more sustainable modes of transport such as public transport, cycling and walking.

It already benefits from its proximity to Cambourne, the largest settlement in Greater Cambridge outside the city of Cambridge itself, which has an excellent range of shops, services, facilities, and employment opportunities, as well as primary and secondary schools.

However, of particular significance is the East West Rail Company's decision to support Route Option E, which would link existing stations at Bedford (Midland) and Cambridge with communities in Cambourne and the area north of Sandy and south of St Neots (Tempsford). This route was the favourite among respondents to that consultation and also provides the most significant benefits from every £ of taxpayers' money spent. One of the principal objectives of the new railway is to support new housing and jobs growth and the Connecting Communities: The Preferred Route Options between Bedford and Cambridge Executive Summary specifically states that one of the reasons for choosing this route as the preferred option is that it *'could support much needed development of more affordable housing in areas including Bedford, between Sandy and St Neots and at Cambourne'*. It *'also connects the growing population of Cambourne with environmentally sustainable transport and could integrate with proposed improvements to the local transport network in south Cambridgeshire such as the busway extension and Cambridgeshire Autonomous Metro'*.

The construction of this route means that locations in close proximity to the proposed new Cambourne railway station such as my client's site at land north-east of Bourn will be particularly well-connected to key employment locations across the region and beyond.



Q42: Where should we site new development?

Within this question the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service invites consultees to rank a series of options about where new development should be located within the spatial planning area of Greater Cambridge. It explores six choices:

- densification of existing urban areas
- edge of Cambridge: outside Green Belt
- edge of Cambridge: Green Belt
- dispersal - new settlements
- dispersal: villages
- public transport corridors

This is a rather blunt tool in which to assess the spatial approach and a flexible approach is likely to be more appropriate. The Cambridge & Peterborough Independent Economic Review (CPIER), which was published in September 2018. Within the document, it concludes that 'Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is an area which already makes a huge contribution to the UK, and which holds great promise for the future. It also faces risks, which could bring the success to an end, and challenges relating to creating an inclusive society where economic growth works for everyone'.

The CPIER, which admittedly covers a wider geography than Greater Cambridge, advocated a 'blended spatial strategy' of four possible scenarios. The scenarios considered included:

- densification
- dispersal
- fringe growth
- transport corridors

It concluded that 'some densification, particularly in Cambridge, is needed, though this should happen away from the historic centre, and more on the edges, as and where new development sites come forward. There should be some scope for expanding development around the city boundary, but intelligently planned transport links will be needed to avoid worsening of congestion. In Cambridge itself there are limits to development, and it is inevitable that much of the additional new growth will need to take place in new or expanded settlements that are well connected to Cambridge via high-quality public transport. Such development would have the advantage of being close to the principal centres of employment and the existing rail infrastructure whilst also opening up opportunities for new transport links to connect the main centres of employment more effectively'.

My client's site at land north-east of Bourn is a very sustainable location, which is consistent with the conclusion of the CPIER. The site is well-related to the centre of Cambourne, which benefits from a high quality bus service and the site is also adjacent to the Cambridge to Newmarket railway line, where land has been safeguarded to provide for a new railway station should it be required in the future.

Q48: What do you think about siting development along transport corridors?

Focusing development along transport corridors is an appropriate and essential part of any blended spatial strategy. My client acknowledges and supports the new Local Plan's emphasis on climate change, which is of critical



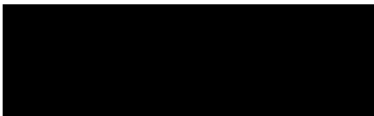
importance, and clearly focusing development in locations that are well-related to proposed new transport infrastructure. My client's site at land north-east of Bourn is very well-placed to help towards achieving this aim.

However, of particular significance is the East West Rail Company's decision to support Route Option E, which would link existing stations at Bedford (Midland) and Cambridge with communities in Cambourne and the area north of Sandy and south of St Neots (Tempsford). This route was the favourite among respondents to that consultation and also provides the most significant benefits from every £ of taxpayers' money spent. One of the principal objectives of the new railway is to support new housing and jobs growth and the Connecting Communities: The Preferred Route Options between Bedford and Cambridge Executive Summary specifically states that one of the reason for choosing this route as the preferred option is that it *'could support much needed development of more affordable housing in areas including Bedford, between Sandy and St Neots and at Cambourne'*. It *'also connects the growing population of Cambourne with environmentally sustainable transport and could integrate with proposed improvements to the local transport network in South Cambridgeshire such as the busway extension and Cambridgeshire Autonomous Metro'*.

The CPIER acknowledges the role of Transport Corridors in delivering the spatial strategy. It states that 'By ensuring good quality public transport development is in place before development, the number of those new residents who will use the transport is maximised. This is likely to be the best way to stretch some of the high-value businesses based within and around Cambridge out into the wider Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. These companies will not want to be distant from the city, but these clusters could 'grow' out along transportation links [such as the new Cambridge to Bedford section of East West Rail], providing connection to other market towns'.

This letter should be read in conjunction with the completed forms, and site location plan, and vision document that accompany this submission. 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: Site location plan

Cc: 