

Planning Policy
South Cambridgeshire District Council
South Cambridgeshire Hall
Cambourne Business Park
Cambridge

26 September 2019

Dear Sir / Madam,

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE CALL FOR SITES SUBMISSION: LAND AT PITT DENE FARM, BETWEEN HILTON AND ELSWORTH

We act for Farmland Reserves UK. In March this year we wrote to you in connection with the Call for Sites. In an email to CBRE dated 12th September you stated: Some items missing from the HELAA response form sent to us in relation to your submission for **land at Pitt Dene Farm, Elsworth**. You then asked for our view of the market attractiveness of the sites. We respond why in our view the sites will be attractive to housebuilders:

The larger site of 338 Hectares

1. The focus of Allocation in the Combined Authority region is understandably now concerned with allocating sites around Cambridge and building on activity in and around Huntingdon and at St Ives, where land is proposed for Allocation within the northern arc of the ring road. This concentration of sites will take advantages of existing areas of growth, but this emphasis also lacks diversity and suggests an agglomeration in specific areas. As an alternative, we believe that housebuilders will welcome sites not coalesced together and this site will offer an opportunity to build a varied housing stock in a sub-regional setting. The site has the potential to deliver a New Garden Town, being in one ownership and thus there is a fair prospect of A New Garden Town being deliverable if Allocated.

The intention should be, if Allocated, that the site will provide enough land to meet housing needs across an extended timescale of approx. 20 years. The extent of the holding is of a size where placemaking will be a key component. Housebuilders actively seek sites of this size where the scale permits the development of a community over time and where a new settlement starts to be built that can develop into a new town. As happened with Milton Keynes, the existing villages will require sensitive incorporation into the New Garden Town and major PLC housebuilders have the resources and experience to do this.

2. It is recognised that a development of this scale would need to make significant contributions towards infrastructure delivery to enhance off site infrastructure, primarily highways, but not limited exclusively to this. A residential development of some size will be

required to ensure both deliverability and viability and there will be a need for support facilities, such as Policy compliant levels of Affordable dwellings and dwellings to house rural workers and a site of this size will be more than capable of delivering these facilities.

3. There are no specific planning designations in relation to the Site within the adopted SCDC Local Plan (2018). The site falls outside of any defined settlement, known as the 'Development Framework' under Policy S/7 of the adopted Local Plan. This policy resists development outside of the Development Framework area, save for allocations within Neighbourhood Plans and other uses suitable for countryside locations. Notwithstanding this, the preparation of a new Local Plan will require the consideration of future development needs for the District and the Greater Cambridge area, and the allocation of available land to meet this need, which may include land outside of defined settlement boundaries. Hence, we contend that the priority for growth in jobs and housing in the region suggests to us that a spread of sites should be considered for Allocation and that there is in the hierarchy of housing development and clear desire to see sites in regional centres, but also that there is a place for more rural settlements to provide for much needed housing, too.

The smaller parcel of approx. 30 Hectares comprising two agricultural fields abutting the northern edge of the settlement of Elsworth

1. This parcel, If Allocated, will allow for a modest extension over time to the village of Elsworth. We suggest that initially, the first phase be modest and the Local Authority working with the community decide when it is appropriate to provide any further extension, most like in the latter stages of the Plan period. Thereby, not introducing too much additional housing stock into an existing village setting all at one time.
2. An extension limited in size and in timing to a village should satisfy interest from local house builders, who struggle to find sites and often suffer at the hands of more competitive PLC housebuilders. Not only could there be a policy to favour a local builder, but it might be welcomed by the community if there is a brief to encourage self-build at site. Typically, the injection of a limited number of new build dwellings offers an opportunity for localised community benefits and we should expect this to be one of the planning considerations
3. Given the aging population across the UK, we recommend that the site also be explored for assisted or Senior Living. Not only will this fill a housing need but will also provide local employment of full or part time basis which could be met in whole or part by local residents and thereby reduce commuting to work traffic.

Yours sincerely,



Contractor