

Greater Cambridge Local Plan Issues and Options 2020

Representations

Prepared by Fisher German LLP
on behalf of Deal Land LLP



Project Title:

Land east of Cambridge Road, Sawston and land east of Haverhill Road, Stapleford

Agent:

Hannah Price MRTPI

Contact Details:

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01 Introduction

These representations have been prepared by Fisher German on behalf of Deal Land LLP, landowner of two parcels of land known as land east of Cambridge Road, Sawston and land east of Haverhill Road, Stapleford.

The two sites were previously submitted to the Call for Sites in 2019 and the SHELAA response forms provided are appended to these representations for ease of reference. Figures 1 and 2 below show the location of the two sites.

Both sites will be impacted by the route of the Cambridge South East Transport - Better Public Transport Project. The transport route will run along the northern boundary of the land at Sawston. The land at Stapleford will contain a new stop to serve the transport route. For context, the approximate location of the proposed route (and stops) is shown on the figures below in yellow.



Figure 1: Land east of Cambridge Road, Sawston

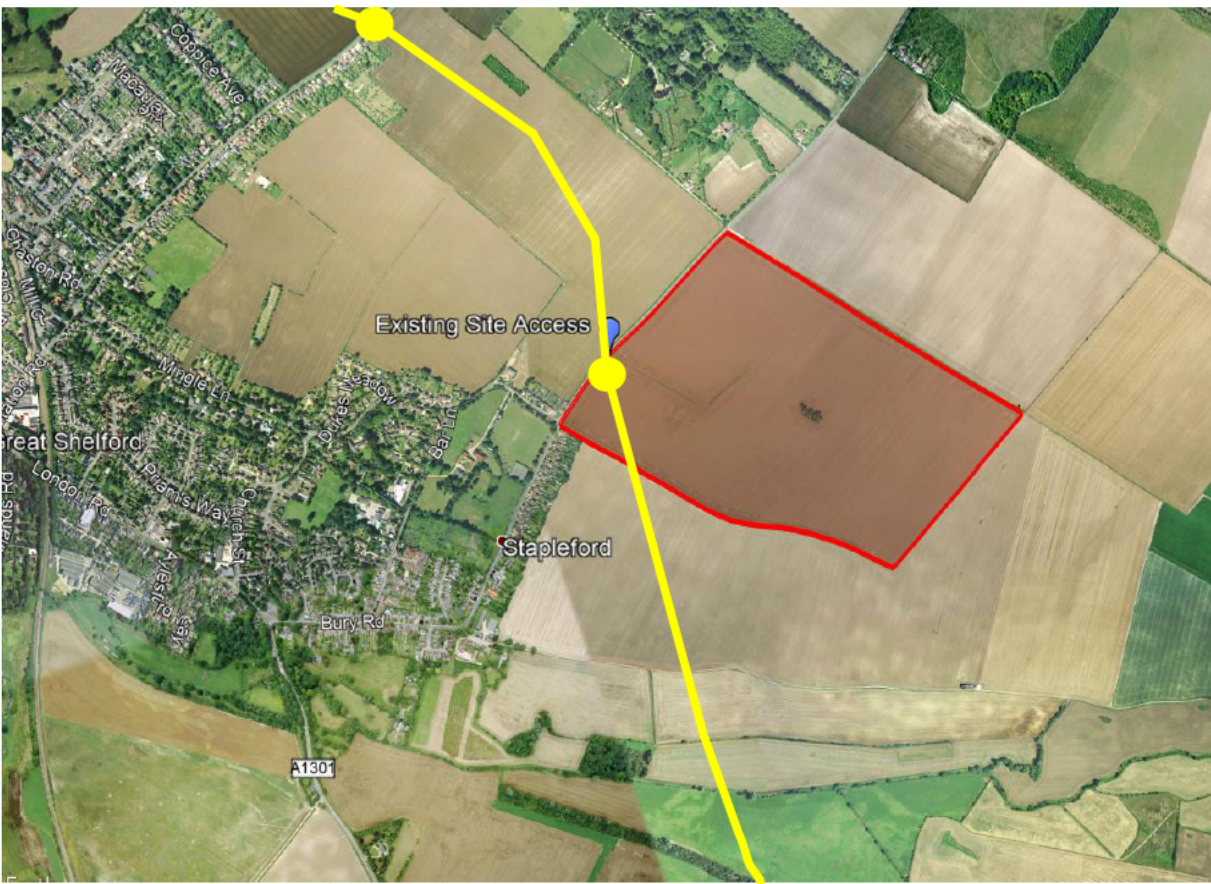


Figure 2: Land east of Haverhill Road, Stapleford

02 Question 31

How should the Local Plan help to meet our needs for the amount and types of new homes?

The new Local Plan should plan positively to allocate a sufficient amount of land to meet the needs of the communities and growing economy within Greater Cambridge. This means allocating enough land for both the projected housing needs of the area and additional land for housing to foster continued economic growth.

As detailed in our response to Question 32 below, the government's standard method for calculating housing need only identifies a minimum number of homes to be planned for. There is a need to plan for an increased level of housing in Greater Cambridgeshire to ensure that the Councils achieves their economic growth commitments and adopt a policy which aligns with the agreed positions within the Oxford-Cambridge Arc Joint Declaration of Ambition and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough devolution deal.

Furthermore, as set out in our response to Question 39, to ensure that the Local Plan provides for the quantum of development needed, it is highly unlikely that the emerging housing need can be entirely located on land either within existing settlements or on accessible land outside of the Green Belt. As such, the Greater Cambridge Local Plan should review the existing Green Belt boundaries.

03 Question 32

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?

Please choose from the following options:

Yes, strongly agree / Yes, somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree / No, somewhat disagree

Yes, strongly agree. As recognised within the consultation document, planning for a higher number of homes provides greater flexibility and ensures that the Councils are able to maintain a five-year housing land supply.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out at paragraph 35 is that in order to be found sound at Examination, plans must be positively prepared. To be positively prepared plans must provide a "strategy which, as a **minimum**, seeks to meet the areas objectively assessed needs" [our emphasis]. The Planning Practice Guidance expands on this, stating at Paragraph 002 (Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment section) that "the standard method uses a formula to identify the

minimum number of homes expected to be planned for, in a way which addresses projected household growth and historic under-supply. The standard method set out below identifies a **minimum annual housing need figure. It does not produce a housing requirement figure** [our emphasis]. Paragraph 010 explains that there are a number of scenarios where an increase from local housing need is likely to be appropriate, this includes "growth strategies for the area that are likely to be deliverable, for example where funding is in place to promote and facilitate additional growth" (e.g. Housing Deals).

Greater Cambridge is within the Oxford-Cambridge Arc. The Government describe the Arc as a "globally significant place", where there is an anticipation to deliver over "one million high-quality new homes by 2050". This is both to enable economic growth but also to assist in tackling severe housing affordability issues. All Councils within the Arc have agreed to the Joint Declaration of Ambition between Government and the Arc and as such should therefore act in a way which aligns with this declaration. This of course means seeking to increase the level of housing delivered in Greater Cambridgeshire.

Greater Cambridge is part of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough devolution deal, have committed to the vision of doubling the total economic output of the area over 25 years. As the document recognises, recent jobs growth has been shown to have been faster than expected, leading to the demand for new housing in the area exceeding supply. If not enough new homes are built, this could see employers struggle to recruit staff locally. This may force business to direct investment elsewhere, where there is a suitable and available working population, stunting local economic growth. Furthermore, in not providing suitable housing, the Council are likely to encourage unsustainable commuting patterns, as workers will need to travel longer distances from other locations to reach newly created jobs.

On the above basis, there is compelling justification to deliver housing at a level significantly above the base Local Housing Need. Such growth is required to ensure the Council's delivers housing at a rate commensurate with its commitments to the Cambridge and Peterborough Devolution Deal and Oxford Cambridge Arc. Increasing housing delivery above local housing need also contributes to the national objective of boosting significantly the supply of homes. Furthermore, whilst affordability is included within the standard methodology calculations, delivery at a rate above Local Housing Need is only going to benefit housing affordability in the locality. We consider the growth levels suggested within the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review document are likely to be needed to deliver the above aims.

04 Question 39

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 reduce our climate impacts? Yes / No

Yes. Land on the edge of existing settlements, including on the edge of the Rural Centres of Sawston and Great Shelford with Stapleford, provides an important opportunity for the Greater Cambridge Councils to plan for housing in a location which minimises travel distances and is supported by sustainable forms of transport.

As well as having good access to the existing train stations at Shelford and Whittlesford Parkway and being served by bus services to Cambridge, both villages are proposed to be connected by the route of the Cambridge South East Transport - Better Public Transport Project. As part of the proposals, two stops for the public transport route will be located at Sawston and Shelford, linking the villages with Cambridge Biomedical Campus and a new travel hub near the A11/A1307/A505 which will have connections to the employment areas at the Babraham Research Campus and Granta Park. Removing land from the Green Belt in these villages will also enable the Councils to maximise the opportunity to direct growth to sustainable locations connected by this proposed transport route.

The removal of land from the Green Belt will also serve to ensure the quantum of growth required is delivered across the authority. Previous Local Plans have removed land from the Green Belt and it is understood this land is either built out or committed and included in current supply. Having regard to the significant number of additional homes that are needed to support the growth of the local economy, it is highly unlikely that the emerging housing need can be entirely located on land either within existing settlements or on accessible land outside of the Green Belt.

In considering Green Belt land for release consideration should be given to land east of Cambridge Road, Sawston and land east of Haverhill Road, Stapleford; both sites are immediately adjacent to highly sustainable settlements which are currently constrained by the Green Belt.

The five defined purposes of the Green Belt are defined within paragraph 134 of the NPPF. As stated within the SHELAA submissions previously submitted for the sites, it is considered that these parcels do not serve the five purposes for the following reasons:

- a) Any development on the sites would not comprise sprawl from a large built-up area as it would be contained by clear defensible boundaries;
- b) Development would not result in neighbouring towns merging into one another as clear defensible boundaries will be present;
- c) Development on the site would only result in limited encroachment into the countryside and a carefully designed scheme would be able to ensure that any sense of encroachment is mitigated;
- d) The site does not help to preserve the setting and special character of a historic town;
- e) Analysis of the South Cambridgeshire Brownfield Land Register indicates that there is a limited amount of derelict and other urban land available for development. Therefore, greenfield land, such as the site subject to this submission, must come forward for development.

05 Question 40

How flexible should the Local Plan be towards development of both jobs and homes on the edge of villages?

Please choose from the following options: Highly flexible / Somewhat flexible / Keep the current approach / Restrict further

Is there are particular approach you would like the plan to take for your village?

The Plan should be **highly flexible** in its approach to allowing new housing development on the edge of villages. As previously stated, development on Green Belt edge of village sites can make an important contribution towards meeting the Greater Cambridge area's development needs over the plan period.

The villages of Sawston and Great Shelford with Stapleford are considered to be entirely logical and sustainable locations for development that can meet the day to day needs of their residents. Both villages contain a good range of existing services and benefit from very good existing and proposed public transport connections to Cambridge.

The release of land from the Green Belt and allocation of new homes at these villages will ensure that existing services are able to continue to thrive. Moreover, without land being released from the Green Belt, the restrictive nature of current national policy for Green Belt means that there can be no flexibility for growth until a future Local Plan review. As such the land should be allocated now, wherein a positive planned approach to delivery can occur, including where appropriate the provision of new community facilities and services. The delivery of such sites will support the Council in ensuring its housing need is met on sustainable sites, with good access to sustainable modes of travel.

06 Question 42

Where should we site new development?

Rank the options below 1 6 (1 – Most Preferred 6 – Least Preferred)

Densification of existing urban areas / Edge of Cambridge: Outside Green Belt / Edge of Cambridge: Green Belt / Dispersal: New Settlements / Dispersal: Villages / Public Transport Corridors

It is considered that the siting of new development should follow the Dispersal: Villages / Public Transport Corridors.

Both Sawston and Great Shelford with Stapleford have historically been unable to grow due to their location within the Green Belt. To ensure that the settlements continue to thrive and the services and facilities within them remain viable, it is important that new development is directed towards them. The CLA's paper Strong Foundations: Sustainable Villages – Making Communities Fit for the Future (2018)

outlines the negative impacts faced where tight planning rules preclude the growth of villages. It states that where villages are unable to grow and have development restricted, they end up in a “cycle of decline”. This is likely to be the case in areas of high house prices, as younger people are forced to move away to secure affordable housing. Without suitable growth communities are likely to age, with associated social economic issues. To ensure balanced, healthy and vibrant communities, growth must be allowed. This however will require a review of the Green Belt as part of the preparation of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan

The Cambridge South East Transport - Better Public Transport Project creates an entirely new opportunity to direct growth to already sustainable, but what will be even more sustainable locations as a result of the new public transport route. The sites east of Cambridge Road, Sawston and east of Haverhill Road, Stapleford are both located in close proximity to the proposed stops for the transport route (including a stop proposed within the Stapleford site itself).

07 Question 47

What do you think about growing our villages?

As set out above, it is considered that the villages play an important role in ensuring that the existing services and facilities within the village can continue to be sustained.

As referenced at Question 42 above, we fully support the delivery of new development in villages. Such development has the benefit of increasing and sustaining the population of the villages. One important factor to consider is that without development, the population can fall and average age increase as younger residents who may wish to move outside the family home, are forced to move elsewhere due to a lack of available housing stock or being priced out of the village housing market. Meanwhile older people tend to stay in larger family homes due to a lack of options to downsize.

New development can deliver a range of housing types, including housing for the elderly, which can mean that older residents can move to more suitable accommodation, freeing up existing family housing. New affordable housing can also be provided by developments, further improving the range of housing tenures that local people can access. Specialist housing such as care homes or the increasingly popular retirement villages can also be delivered where required.

With regards to delivery, the NPPF is unequivocal that the supply of large numbers of new homes can often be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns. We consider that large extensions to villages, where well integrated to public transport, is a viable option to assist in meeting increased housing needs. Such proposals can deliver high quality schemes as envisaged within the Oxford Cambridge Arc. We consider the two proposals included in these representations are optimally positioned to deliver in this regard.

08 Question 48

What do you think about siting development along public transport corridors?

The provision of development along public transport corridors is a logical way to deliver development that will encourage the use of sustainable transport methods to access both employment and day to day services. Development in these locations is therefore supported.

The proposed Cambridge South East Transport - Better Public Transport Project will enable the already sustainable settlements of Sawston and Stapleford to become even more sustainable due to the increased linkages between settlements and employment locations created as a result of the new public transport route. Locating development within public transport corridors would enable this opportunity to be maximised.

Moreover, this approach is also considered to be in conformity with the NPPF which is clear that significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This is recognised as being able to help reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health.

Paragraph 72 of the framework sets out that “The supply of large numbers of new homes can often be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns”. It continues that in establishing such locations, strategic policy-making authorities should “consider the opportunities presented by existing or planned investment in infrastructure” and that there should be sufficient access to services and employment opportunities, either as an integral part of the development of via good access to larger towns. The delivery of the Better Public Transport Project is a planned piece of infrastructure which can support significant new strategic growth and as such development proposals such as those outlined in these representations are optimally located to take advantage of newly created accessibility.