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Dear Sirs,

**CALL FOR SITES SUBMISSION – LAND AT WOLFSON COURT, CLARKSON ROAD, CAMBRIDGE**

**SUBMISSION TO GREATER CAMBRIDGE LOCAL PLAN ON BEHALF OF ST JOHNS COLLEGE**

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.

#### **Land at Wolfson Court, Clarkson Road, Cambridge**

Recently, St John's College have taken back ownership of Wolfson Court on the northern side of Clarkson Road on the west side of Cambridge. Previously, the site was used by Girton College for both undergraduate and postgraduate accommodation. Within the buildings there also exists a library (education), conferencing and catering facilities with a pre-school nursery set to the rear of the site.

The whole landholding extends to some 1.51 hectares and is a rectangular shaped site with the western boundary formed by the pedestrian/cycleway connecting Clarkson Road with Madingley Road. The northern boundary is formed by the rear gardens of large properties fronting Madingley Road, with the eastern boundary forming the edge of St Johns College School. The present site is formed by a number of student accommodation blocks with ancillary uses such as catering facilities set in buildings around a series of open courtyard areas. A more substantial grassed area is situated to the rear of the site. The front of the site at Clarkson Road accommodates a car parking area set behind a substantial wall and gable end of outbuildings.

St Johns College are looking at the potential development of the site in terms of the ability of accommodating further student accommodation and or educational uses on the site. In such a location, demand for student accommodation remains strong and with the building constructed back in 1972 the College is looking to create new accommodation fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Initial design work has looked at the provision of some 400 student rooms on the site but clearly further design work will be needed to assess the site's potential.

In the instance where the College is not seeking to change the use of the site, we acknowledge that this submission may not necessarily be appropriate in terms of the Call for Sites. However in the circumstances where a significant number of new rooms may come forward on the site then we consider it appropriate to inform the Councils of this approach.

We should forward to being kept informed of plan progress and should you have any queries please do not hesitate to give me a call.

Yours sincerely,

  
**Garth Hanlon**  
**Director**