

21st February 2020

BY EMAIL ONLY.

Dear Sir/Madam

Greater Cambridge Local Plan – The First Conversation: Issues and Options 2020
Land east of Long Road, Comberton

Thakeham Homes Ltd (Thakeham) is writing in respect of Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council's ("*the Councils*") Greater Cambridge Local Plan – The First Conversation: Issues and Options 2020 specifically in relation to the Land east of Long Road, Comberton ("*the Site*"). A Site location plan is enclosed as Appendix 1, a Vision Document for the Site is included as Appendix 2, and the Councils' completed questionnaire template for each of the relevant questions are also enclosed.

The comments made in these representations do not prejudice any other representations that are submitted by Thakeham Homes.

Introduction

Thakeham is pleased to be participating in the current consultation and have outlined our position below in response to the specific questions raised in the Councils' Issues and Options 2020 paper, particularly on the Councils' approach to locating new development, in order to deliver a Local Plan that supports sustainable development across the district. Thakeham has completed the Council's questionnaire template for each of the relevant questions. These forms are enclosed with this letter under Appendix 3.

Due to the requirement for the Councils' to significantly increase housing supply to aid economic growth and improve affordability across the district, Thakeham wish to support the progression of the Local Plan and make comments within our representations that the strategy for allocating new development should include planning for larger scale development through extensions to existing villages, which the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states is the best way to achieve supply of large numbers of new homes (Paragraph 74).

Thakeham also confirm within these representations that the Site is available and deliverable within the first 5 years following adoption of the new Local Plan. The Site will help the Councils' deliver sustainable development in a strategic location, allowing the village of Comberton to grow and thrive in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF (Paragraph 78).

About Thakeham

Thakeham do not just build houses; Thakeham are infrastructure-led placemakers and are committed to creating new, extraordinary places, where the highest attention to detail makes a positive difference.

Thakeham build for the future, for communities and for individuals. Our approach sets us apart from our competitors. We deliver our schemes with a focus on sustainable development,

looking ahead of current housing standards. From 2025, all Thakeham Homes will be net-zero carbon in lifetime use.

Each development is different and tailored to its locality, with careful consideration of the area's character, as well as the environment. As a sustainable placemaker first and foremost, Thakeham's commitment to improving existing communities means its schemes are design and infrastructure led; engaging with highways, healthcare, utilities and other stakeholders from the start of a project. The delivery of a large volume of homes facilitates the delivery of physical, social and green infrastructure which benefits the wider surrounding area, as well as the new residents, and ensures that Thakeham create sustainable places to live and work. At every stage, our approach is one that ensures we leave a legacy behind that everyone can be proud of.

Land east of Long Road, Comberton

The Site consists of a 21-hectare (52 acre) parcel of land located to the east of Long Road, and north of B1046 road, 0.5 miles to the east of the village centre of Comberton. The Site comprises a green field and is located within the Green Belt but within close proximity to existing residential development to the east and west. The Site has been assessed below using the PPG note titled 'Housing and economic land availability assessment' updated in July 2019.

Availability

PPG provides the following guidance when considering whether a site is available for development:

"A site can be considered available for development, when, on the best information available (confirmed by the call for sites and information from landowners and legal searches where appropriate), there is confidence that there are no legal or ownership impediments to development. For example, land controlled by a developer or landowner who has expressed an intention to develop may be considered available."

PPG Paragraph 019 Ref. 3-019-20190722 (July 2019)

We confirm that the Site is within Thakeham's control and that it is available for residential development.

Suitability

PPG provides the following guidance when considering whether a site is suitable for development:

"Sites in existing development plans or with planning permission can generally be considered suitable for development although it may be necessary to assess whether circumstances have changed which would alter their suitability"

PPG Paragraph 018 Ref. 3-018-20190722 (July 2019)

We consider the Site to be a sustainable, logical and viable choice for the siting of development and therefore appropriate for allocation. As such, we consider that the Site is suitable for the delivery of residential development and the settlement boundary should be extended to include this site to positively bring forward sustainable development.

Achievability

In determining whether a site is achievable for development, PPG provides the following guidance:

“A site is considered achievable for development where there is a reasonable prospect that the particular type of development will be developed on the site at a particular point in time. This is essentially a judgement about the economic viability of a site, and the capacity of the developer to complete and let or sell the development over a certain period.”

PPG, Paragraph 020 Ref. 3-020-20190722 (July 2019)

For a scheme of this size the intention would be to make a full planning application meaning it will therefore be possible to implement the scheme immediately following the discharge of any relevant pre-commencement conditions. The Site would therefore deliver houses within the first five years of the plan period and should be considered achievable for development in accordance with the NPPF.

Conclusion

As demonstrated within our responses and appended Vision Document, Thakeham support the progression of the Local Plan and has made comments within these representations that due to the requirement for the Councils' to significantly increase housing supply to aid economic growth and improve affordability across the district, the strategy for allocating new development should include planning for larger scale development through extensions to existing villages, which the NPPF states is the best way to achieve supply of large numbers of new homes (Paragraph 74).

Given the existing scale of the shortage of housing and the need to increase the objectively assessed housing need, Thakeham consider the necessary exceptional circumstances exist to release sustainably located sites from the Green Belt, which includes sites like the Land east of Long Road, Comberton.

The site is available, suitable and achievable and able to deliver housing within the first five years of the plan period. The site is set within a sustainable location, and therefore represents a logical and viable choice for the siting of development. Allocating the Site represents an opportunity for the Councils' to plan positively and help meet the housing needs of Greater Cambridgeshire by delivering sustainable development in a strategic location, allowing the village of Comberton to grow and thrive in accordance with the NPPF (Paragraph 78).

We trust that these representations will be useful and clear, and we would be grateful for confirmation of receipt. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries or require any further information.

Your faithfully,



Megan Hodges
Planner

Appendix 1 – Site Location Plan
Appendix 2 – Vision Document

Enc.
Completed Questionnaire Forms