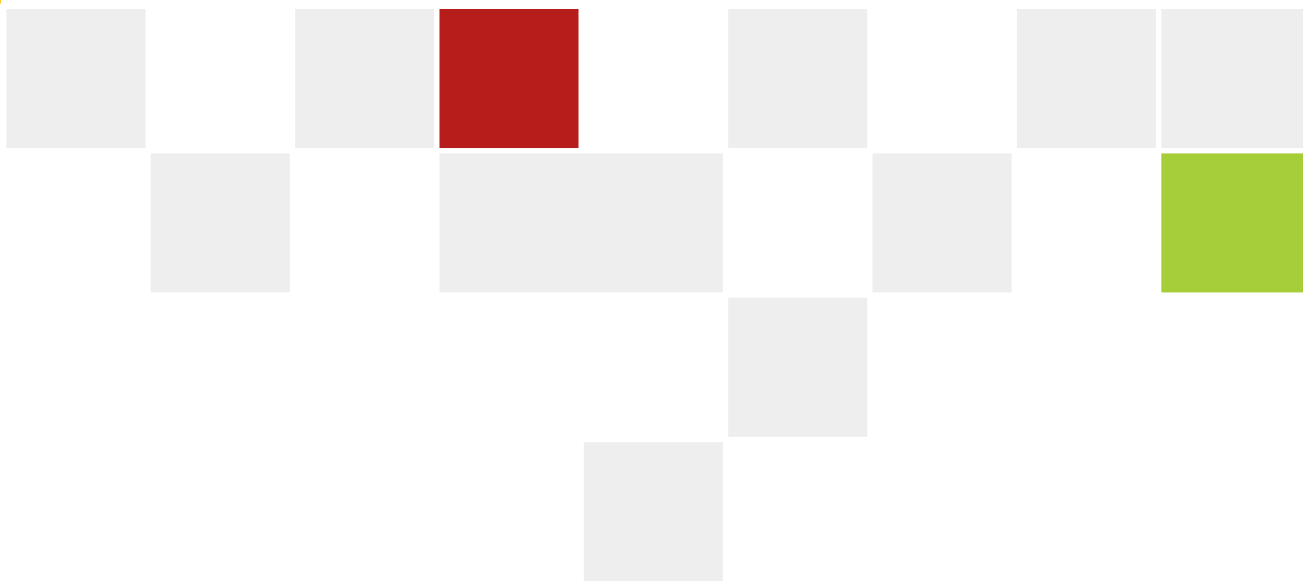


Land West of London Road, Fowlmere

Site Suitability Report



Boyer

Report Control

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APPENDIX

Appendix One - HELAA Site Assessment (Site Reference 40116)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Report has been prepared by Boyer on behalf of Wates Developments Limited in relation to the Greater Cambridge Local Plan First Proposals (Regulation 18) consultation document (hereafter referred to as the “First Proposals”).
- 1.2 In responding to the consultation, the Report makes specific reference to Land West of London Road, Fowlmere (“the Site”), which is being promoted for residential development.

Chapter 2 of this Report provides information on the suitability of Land West of London Road, Fowlmere for residential development and should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Vision Document and representations submitted in response to the First Proposals.

2. LAND WEST SIDE OF LONDON ROAD, FOWLMERE

Introduction

- 2.1 Wates Developments Ltd. are promoting Land West of London Road, Fowlmere. This Site was submitted to the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service (GCSP) as a component of their Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment in February 2020.
- 2.2 The GCSP assessed the Site against a range of criteria and allocated an overall amber rating in terms of suitability and a green rating in terms of availability and achievability.
- 2.3 We disagree with this amber rating and we have reassessed the Site on receipt of site specific technical evidence, which reassessed the Site as having an overall green rating.
- 2.4 Wates are promoting two parcels of land which combine to form the full site, with the Manor Farm access providing the division. The full site is being promoted for approximately 145 dwellings.
- 2.5 Further information regarding site description, planning considerations and evolving masterplan are detailed below, and illustrated in the accompanying Vision Document prepared by Mosaic.

Site Description

- 2.6 The land that is being promoted, is approximately 10.33ha in size and is bound to the north by the Manor Farm Business Park, to the east and south by the B1368 and to the west by agricultural land. The Site is of a Greenfield nature.
- 2.7 As noted, the Site has been identified through the Greater Cambridge Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment as a potential site for development and allocated the reference 40116.
- 2.8 The Site's location within Fowlmere provides a location with access to key amenities such as a Primary School and Bus Services, whilst nearby towns and villages such as Shepreth, Melbourn and Royston provide a full range of required jobs, services, leisure and cultural facilities.
- 2.9 The Site is proposed to include considerable provision of public open space to enhance the quality of the Site for new and existing Fowlmere residents. This is considered to be a key benefit to the future scheme and also meets the Councils' aspirations to delivery high quality open space to new and existing residents of Greater Cambridge.

Landscape and Design

- 2.10 A Preliminary Landscape Review of the Site has been undertaken by SLR Consulting Ltd.

- 2.11 The Review confirms that the topography of the site is broadly flat, ranging in elevation between approximately 20m and 25m AOD. The Site is surrounded by areas of built development, including derelict land and disused buildings and Butts residential area and employment site to the south, residential development properties along London Road to the east and London Road to the south along with further residential properties and caravan park. The western boundary of the Site is defined by a tree belt which creates a defined physical barrier between the Site and the open agricultural land further to the west. The Site represents a logical location for accommodating development.
- 2.12 The adopted Local Plan identifies land at the eastern edge of the Site, along London Road, as “Important Countryside Frontage”. As demonstrated in the accompanying Vision Document, Land West of London Road and the proposed development responds positively to the Important Countryside Frontage designated along London Road. The development of the Site provides an opportunity to create a gateway into the settlement, providing a transition between the wider settlement and the village. The delivery of a village park will reinstate the countryside frontage, framing the edge of the settlement and aligns with the principle of the designation.
- 2.13 The mature tree boundary along the Site’s eastern edge also provides a clear segregation between the settlement and the wider countryside.
- 2.14 The preliminary landscape review concluded that the landscape of the Site is of low value to the north of the Manor Farm access. Furthermore, the visual appraisal concluded that the Site is visually enclosed but that there is the potential for sensitive views from residents and walkers to the east and south.
- 2.15 The concept masterplan as shown in the accompanying Vision Document has been landscape-led. As recommended by the Landscape Review, the masterplan proposes large swathes of the Site to provide accessible open space in the form of a village park and provide a gateway to Fowlmere.

Highways/Access

- 2.16 The Site and proposed development is also supported by an Initial Transport Appraisal, undertaken by i-Transport LLP.
- 2.17 The Site has a long frontage onto London Road (that becomes High Street at its northern end), which is subject to a 30mph speed limit.
- 2.18 The Appraisal demonstrates that access to both the northern and southern parcels is readily achievable in highway design terms from High Street and London Road respectively.
- 2.19 With regards to traffic impacts, a development of 145 dwellings is likely to generate approximately 70 two-way vehicle movements in the network peak hours. This will likely be split between travel southbound on London Road towards Royston and northbound via Cambridge Road to Cambridge. This level of traffic generation should not have a noticeable impact and should be well below a level that could reasonably be considered severe.

2.20 The proposed development is therefore considered to be acceptable in highways terms.

Flooding and Drainage

2.21 The Site sits entirely within Flood Zone 1, demonstrating that it has a less than 0.1% chance of flooding in any year. The flood risk from surface water on the site is predominantly very low.

2.22 The Concept Masterplan proposes areas of sustainable drainage systems, which will be multifunctional, providing both biodiversity and amenity benefits as supported by the Draft Local Plan and supporting evidence base.

Ecology

2.23 There is a considerable buffer of over 1km between the Site and Fowlmere Watercress Beds SSSI, whilst the village of Fowlmere separates the Site and the Hummocky Fields SSSI to the west.

2.24 The presence of Priority Grassland, Wetland and Woodland Habitats are recorded in the wider area surrounding Fowlmere, however no Priority Habitats are located on or in close proximity to the Site.

2.25 It is not anticipated that residential development would have a detrimental impact on any designated site or those within regional or local protection.

Heritage

2.26 Whilst it is acknowledged that there are a number of heritage assets within Fowlmere, some of which are in proximity to the Site, being in proximity to the setting of a heritage asset does not necessarily cause harm to it.

2.27 The Site and proposed development is supported by a Heritage Briefing Note, prepared by Orion Heritage Ltd.

2.28 The Note acknowledges the proximity of the Site to the aforementioned Conservation Area, however states that, through the potential loss of the rural frontage to the London Road, is likely to be impacted.

2.29 The United Reformed Church, located opposite the Site, is also acknowledged, although as confirmed through the Heritage Briefing Note, its significance as a landmark building is reduced by the fabric concerned being a later addition, with significance from setting deriving principally from neighbouring buildings rather than its rural interface.

2.30 Orion Heritage conclude that in respect of all heritage assets, the development of the Site would result in a less than substantial range as a worst case scenario, which could be further mitigated through sensitive design and layout.

Arboriculture

- 2.31 The Site and proposed development is supported by an Arboricultural Technical Note, produced by SJA Trees.
- 2.32 The Technical Note acknowledges that there are some existing Tree Protection Orders (TPO) on the Site. These TPOs are shown to date back to 1975 and focus on Elm and Horse Chestnut trees. It should be noted that these orders were enacted prior to death of many Elm trees from Dutch Elm Disease, therefore no Elm trees remain on the Site. The remaining Horse Chestnut trees are suffering from lead miner infestations and are of reduced quality and value.
- 2.33 The non-protected mature trees on the site are Ash and Sycamores, although these trees are considered individually unremarkable and of moderate quality at best.
- 2.34 The Technical Note concludes that few protected trees remain and “*those that do are generally of limited value or quality*”. Development of this Site is considered acceptable in arboricultural terms.

Mitigating the effects of Climate Change

- 2.35 Land West of London Road, Fowlmere will positively contribute to carbon offsetting in a number of ways. As demonstrated through the accompanying Vision Document, the proposed development will deliver an attractive open space in the form of a village park, which will provide existing and future residents of Fowlmere with a destination for amenity and leisure. The residential elements of the scheme will deliver low carbon housing and benefit from electric charging points, promoting the use of electric vehicles. In accordance with the aspirations of the Greater Cambridge emerging Local Plan, low water consumption will also be promoted to reduce water usage and positively contribute to water recycling where possible.

Evolving Masterplan

- 2.36 Following the design suggestions offered through the technical assessments, a preliminary masterplan has been produced. This masterplan seeks to maintain and enhance the existing green frontage alongside the London Road and proposes generous swathes of the southern parcel as accessible public open space.
- 2.37 As the design criteria suggests, the majority of the northern parcel will see provisions for residential development, whilst felicitous residential development is proposed on the southern parcel. A range of popular community features are outlined such as allotments, orchard planting, a children’s play area and a village park. These features will complement the aforementioned generous allocation of public open space.
- 2.38 The masterplan proposes two options for development of the Site, both of which are underlined by the principles of a healthy and sustainable community and promote the concept of a 20-minute neighbourhood.

Summary

- 2.39 This Site is considered to be suitable, deliverable and achievable, and there are no known significant constraints that should prevent the development of the Site.
- 2.40 With appropriate master-planning and design, the Site is capable of delivering a sensitively designed but comprehensive and well-connected sustainable development that could contribute to the local development needs of the emerging Greater Cambridge Shared Planning area.

APPENDIX ONE - HELAA SITE ASSESSMENT (SITE REFERENCE 40116)

Site 40116 (Land West of London Road, Fowlmere)

Criteria	GCSP Assessment	GCSP Traffic Light	Amended Traffic Light	Amended Assessment
Adopted Development Plan Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primarily outside Development Framework Within 200m of the Cambridge Greenbelt 	Amber	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is acknowledged that the Site lies predominantly outside the current adopted development boundary/framework.
Flood Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wholly in Flood Zone 1 Minimal surface water flooding risk. 	Amber	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Site lies within Flood Zone 1. Flood risk on the Site is very low, there is flood risk on a very limited portion of the Site from surface water, which can be appropriately mitigated. In accordance with the HELAA assessment criteria for a Green rating, the Site is at low risk of flooding (within flood zone 1) and limited areas identified as at risk surface water flooding.
Landscape and Townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TPO on site Site 1 (North of Manor Farm access): The existing boundary wall and vegetation limits local and visual amenity views into the site. With careful landscape 	Amber	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very few protected trees remain on the Site and those that do are generally of limited value or quality. The landscape of the Site is of low value to the north of the Manor Farm access. The Site is visually enclosed.

	<p>mitigation works the site is capable of accommodating a development subject being of an appropriate scale and landscape mitigation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site 2 (South of Manor Farm access): Development upon this site would have a significant adverse effect upon the Important Countryside Frontage and local landscape character. Development would be an encroachment into the countryside. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Site presents an opportunity to provide high quality public space that will be accessible to new and existing Fowlmere residents, which will result in a positive lasting impact on the Site's landscape. Development of the Site would have a positive impact by introducing additional landscape features, through tree planting, creating a high quality landscaped area that would be publically accessible, thereby rendering an overall Green rating.
<p>Biodiversity and Geodiversity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within 200m of a Wildlife Site. All new housing developments will require assessment of increased visitor pressure on nearby SSSI. Any residential development above 50 outside of current urban area will require consultation with Natural England. The southern boundary of the site lies adjacent to London Road RSV CWS, cited for its frequent numbers of calcareous grassland indicator 	<p>Amber</p>	<p>Green</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A buffer of over 1km exists to the east between the Site and the Fowlmere Watercress Beds SSSI. Portions of the Site lie within the SSSI Impact Risk Zone for both the Fowlmere Watercress Beds and Hummocky Fields SSSIs, however this does not render an amber rating. The Site does not contain any Priority Grassland, Wetland or Woodland Habitats. The existence of a local County Wildlife Site is acknowledged outside of but in close/medium proximity to the Site.

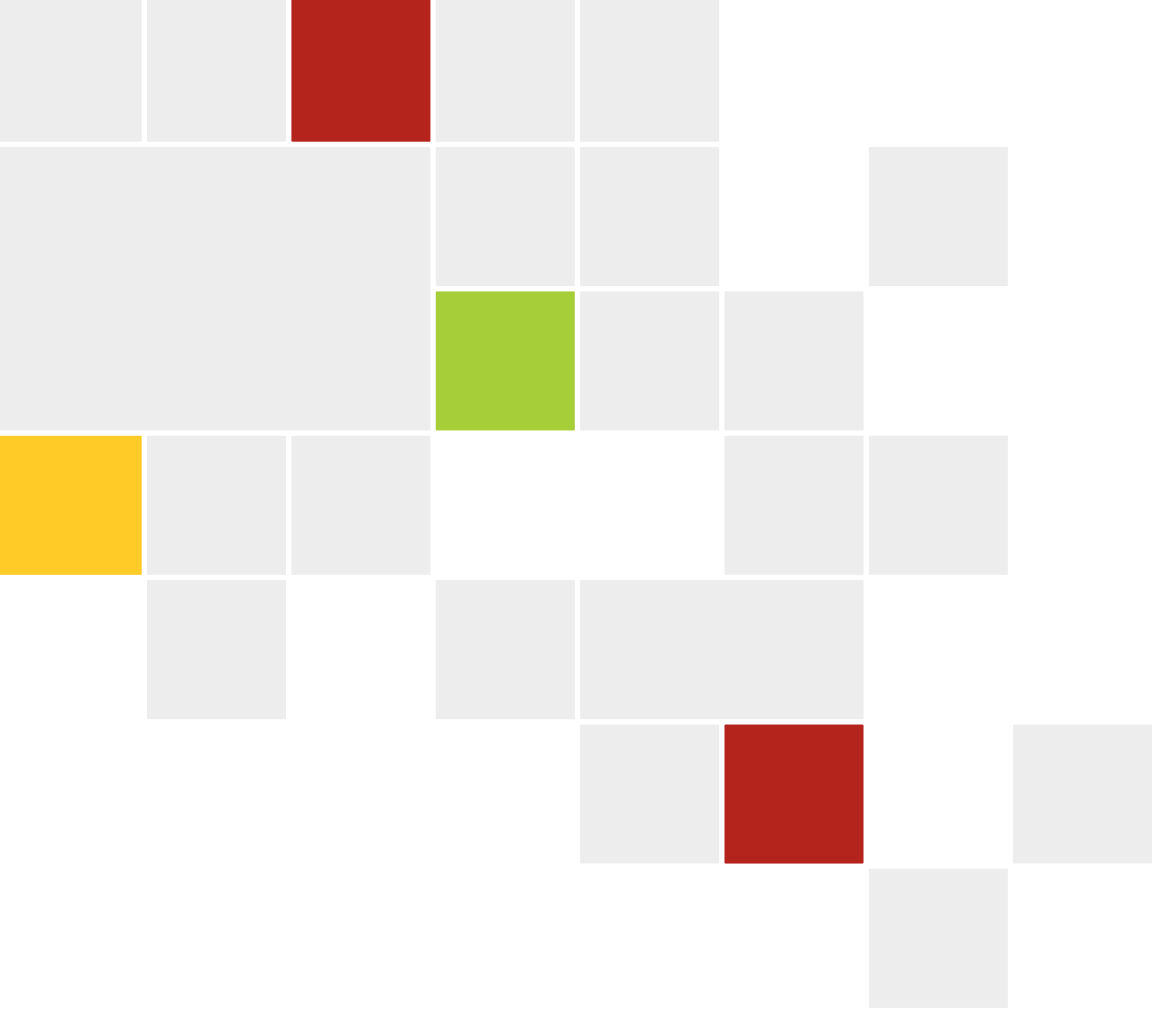
	<p>species. There are no apparent priority habitats within the site; however, there are grasslands which may be calcareous in nature due to underlying geology, hedges and wooded boundaries on site that are likely to have ecological value.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of the site may have a detrimental impact on a designated site, or those with a regional or local protection but the impact could be reasonably mitigated or compensated. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As demonstrated through the accompanying Site masterplan, the proposed development will provide an overall net gain in terms of biodiversity, therefore positively contributing to the biodiversity and geodiversity of the local area. • As per the HELAA assessment: Green criteria, development of the Site would not have a detrimental impact on any designated site or those with a regional or local protection.
Open Space / Green Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within or Partially within an Important Countryside Frontage. • Site is not on protected open space designation. 	Green	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existence of an Important Countryside Frontage is recognised, however, future development would incorporate high quality public open space to mitigate the impact of this lost frontage. • Development of the Site would not result in the loss of any public open space or green infrastructure, and in-return would provide a significant provision of such an amenity.
Historic Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within 100m of a Listed Asset. • Within 100m of a Conservation Area. 	Amber	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no listed buildings on the Site and the Site does not lie within a designated Conservation Area. • A limited proportion of the Site lies adjacent to the designated Conservation Area.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development needs to respond to the historic setting and context of the Conservation Area and the sensitive village approach. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed development, as shown on the supporting Masterplan, demonstrates how development can be delivered on the Site in a manner that is sensitive and complementary to the aforementioned Conservation Area and associated listed buildings. It should be noted that some of the nearby listed buildings have been subject to architectural changes, namely the United Reformed Church, which has been subject to fabric changes to the elevation closest to the Site.
Archaeology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located on south side of historic village. Ring ditch remains of Bronze Age date recorded to the east. 	Amber	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is acknowledged that the Site has no particular archaeological significance. There is a considerable buffer between the Site and any significant archaeological features to the East. As per the HELAA assessment: Green criteria, development of the Site would have either a neutral or positive impact to Archaeology, thereby rendering a Green overall rating.
Accessibility to Services and Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distance to Primary School: Less than or Equal to 450m Distance to Secondary School: Greater than 2,000m Distance to Healthcare Service: Greater than 2,000m Distance to City, District or Rural Centre: Greater than 2,000m 	Amber	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, we do not dispute the amber rating assessed by Greater Cambridge. It should be noted, however, that the Site lies within 322m from a Primary School; adjacent to a Local, Neighbourhood or Minor Rural Centre and adjacent to Public Transport, all of which offer a green rating.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distance to Local, Neighbourhood or Minor Rural Centre: Greater than 2,000m Distance to Employment Opportunities: Greater than 1,800m Distance to Public Transport: Less than or Equal to 450m Distance to Rapid Public Transport: Greater than 1,800m Distance to proposed Rapid Public Transport: Greater than 1,800m Distance to Cycle Network: Greater than 1,600m Adequate accessibility to key local services, transport, and employment opportunities. Proposed development would not require delivery of accompanying key services. 			
Site Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed site is acceptable in principle subject to detailed design. 	Amber	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The potential access to the Site has been assessed with low or negligible arboricultural impacts.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are potential access constraints, but these could be overcome through development. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to both the northern and southern parcels is readily achievable in highway design terms from High Street and London Road respectively. In accordance with the HELAA assessment: Green criteria, access by all means is possible, therefore rendering a Green scoring.
Transport and Roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This site is located in a rural location and must ensure there are high quality walking and cycling links to local services and to the rail station. The site is located close to the A505 and should consider the outputs of the A505 Study. Also, the B1368/A505/Barley Road junction has been identified to be improved with signals installed. 	Amber	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Site is accessible in transport terms - there are opportunities for non-car travel including bus services to Cambridge, Barley and Royston. The increased vehicular movements from development of this Site would not have a noticeable impact on the functioning of trunk roads and/or local roads, and therefore should be assigned a Green rating regarding transport and roads.
Noise, Vibration, Odour and Light Pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site is capable of being developed to provide healthy internal and external environments in regard to noise/ vibration/odour/Light Pollution after careful site layout, design and mitigation. 	Amber	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Site is capable of being developed to provide healthy internal and external environments in regard to noise / vibration/ odour/ Light Pollution after careful site layout, design and mitigation and warrants a HELAA assessment Green rating.
Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site does not lie within an AQMA. 	Green	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Site does not lie within an AQMA and any future traffic impacts shall be minimal.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal traffic impact on AQMA. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Greater Cambridge Green rating is agreed.
Contamination and Ground Stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential for historic contamination, conditions required. 	Amber	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any potential issues regarding contamination and ground stability will be appropriately assessed and addressed as part of a future planning application.
Strategic Highways Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within Highways England Zone 10 - South West. <2,000 dwellings / 5,000m2 employment - Capacity for growth. 	Green	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Site lies within Highways England East Region and is not in close proximity to Strategic Road Network Development on the site will have a neutral impact on the Strategic Road Network, the Greater Cambridge Green rating is agreed.
Green Belt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Comment. 		Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Site does not form part of or lie in proximity to the Cambridge Green Belt, therefore rendering a Green rating.



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