

As the Development Strategy Topic Paper acknowledges, the rural southern cluster area provides the opportunity to provide new homes that are close to the research parks and potentially in locations with sustainable transport opportunities. The approach to identifying new rural allocations (Key criteria and Relative factors) is supported. This does make it critical that the ratings in the Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) are robust. The recognition that some villages in the Green Belt have the best access, which may constitute exceptional circumstances to release sites from the Green Belt reflects the policy in the NPPF (paragraph 142) that when “..reviewing Green Belt boundaries, the need to promote sustainable patterns of development should be taken into account”, and is welcomed. We would also concur with the Reasons for the proposed policy direction’ in the Local Plan – “The Councils consider that the carbon benefits of locating homes close to jobs in the research parks, where there are existing opportunities for very high quality sustainable travel, could provide the exceptional circumstances required to justify removing land from the Green Belt in this location but only if considered alongside the environmental impacts.” That recognition is not however then reflected in the identification of sites (with the exception of one green belt site in the Southern Cluster – S/RSC/HW).

As stated in representations on the Vision and development, additional sites in sustainable village locations also need to be included as part of a rounded strategy to provide opportunities for villages to grow and thrive as required by the NPPF (Paragraph 79).

St John’s College has put forward a number of sites which we continue to contend would deliver on these opportunities, but one site in particular sits squarely within the stated policy direction. Land west of Hinton Way, Great Shelford (40485) is uniquely placed with proposed plans showing the route of the new public transport route between the A11/Granta Park and the Cambridge Biomedical Campus via Sawston, Stapleford and Great Shelford (Cambridge South East Transport Phase 2) following the northeastern edge of the site with a stop adjacent to the site. An application for a Transport and Works Act Order for the scheme is due to be submitted in early 2022. The site also affords ready access to the Rail Station and services in Great Shelford and cycle links via National Cycle Network Route 11 to Addenbrookes/the Biomedical Campus and the City Centre. Whilst the whole site has been given a red assessment for Landscape and Townscape in the SHLAA, the SHLAA concludes that “A significantly reduced scheme may be possible with mitigation”. The assessments for proposed allocation S/RSC/HW in the HELAA are similarly red for Landscape and Townscape for the proposed wider sites. Moreover, the SHLAA conclusions do not take account of the alignment of the new public transport route. Taking account of that route, development on the southwestern/village side of the new route would not have a significant adverse impact upon the existing landscape character nor would it be an encroachment into the rural

countryside. Allocation of the site sits squarely with the statement that “The Councils consider that the carbon benefits of locating homes close to jobs in the research parks, where there are existing opportunities for very high quality sustainable travel, could provide the exceptional circumstances required to justify removing land from the Green Belt in this location but only if considered alongside the environmental impacts.” The limited landscape impacts and exceptional accessibility credentials of the site constitute the exceptional circumstances required to release the site from the Green Belt and allocate it for residential development.