

The emerging Plan currently only identifies one proposed housing allocation at Sawston. The site, known as S/RSC/H/1 (c): land south of Babraham Road, Sawston, is an existing development allocation and is proposed to remain within the Plan. It is noted that the other former housing allocations within the village have gained planning permission and therefore the existing policies would no longer be required. In terms of site south of Babraham Road, this is described as being “at the start of the planning application process, and therefore a policy framework needs to be retained for this site. However, this will be kept under review as the plan progresses”.

In this regard, it is noted that a full planning application for 280 dwellings on the site south of Babraham Road is pending consideration (see App Ref: 21/03955/FUL). The determination deadline is 30th November 2021.

Consequently, it is reasonable to assume that the Babraham Road allocation will gain planning permission very soon and therefore it will no longer be appropriate to allocate it within the Plan.

As is evidenced by the status of the existing allocations in Sawston, it is clear that there is strong local demand for housing in the locality and therefore these allocations have come forward for development in a relatively short period of time.

As such, we believe the Council must consider allocating further sites within Sawston, to ensure that there is a supply of sites to help meet housing needs arising at the start of the emerging Greater Cambridge plan period.

Land east of Cambridge Road, Sawston SHLAA Ref: 531

We previously promoted a site known as land east of Cambridge Road, Sawston, SHLAA reference 531.

As part of the current representations, we wish to amend the site boundary, to reflect a parcel that is closer to the settlement (please see attached Site Location Plan).

It is considered that the site comprises a logical location for the future expansion of the village, and as evidenced by the existing commercial unit on the site, there is potential for it to deliver a mix of uses, if this was deemed acceptable by the Council. Alternatively, the site could come forward for residential development, with an appropriate buffer between the existing commercial unit and the new dwellings provided.

Green Belt Assessment

At present, the land east of Cambridge Road is designated as Green Belt land.

The Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment (2021) assessed the site as part of a larger parcel known as SA22.

The Green Belt Assessment has assessed the parcel against three 'Cambridge Green Belt' purposes. Which are:

- 1 - to preserve the unique character of Cambridge as a compact, dynamic city with a thriving historic centre
- 2 - to maintain and enhance the quality of Cambridge's setting
- 3 - to prevent communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with the city

Whilst the Assessment attempts to explain how these are linked to the five purposes of Green Belt as defined within the NPPF, we do not believe the assessment is robust as it does not clearly assess the sites against the five purposes.

As detailed by paragraph 138, the five purposes of the Green Belt are:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

We therefore request that the Authority update their Assessment to also assess the parcels against the NPPF Green Belt purposes.

Overall, Green Belt Parcel SA22 was assessed as having a 'high' harm rating by the Green Belt Assessment.

As we explained above, we do not believe the assessment is robust as it does not clearly assess the sites against the five purposes of the Green Belt as defined by paragraph 138 the NPPF.

In addition to this, we also believe the Assessment should be updated to assess the smaller parcels of land that have been proposed for housing.

In terms of the land east of Cambridge Road, we request that the Council assess the smaller parcel, put forward by these representations on its own, independent from the other land within parcel SA22.

To assist the Council with their assessment of this smaller parcel, we have completed our own assessment of the site against the NPPF's five Green Belt purposes:

a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;

A residential development on the land east of Cambridge Road will be contained by existing defensible boundaries, including woodland and trees to the north and east of the site and Cambridge Road to the south. It is proposed that a new green buffer comprising open space and landscape planting would contain the site to the west. Due to the defensible boundaries to the site, any development will not result in an area of 'unrestricted' sprawl to Sawston.

b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;

The proposed development parcel will result in a reduction in the gap between Sawston and Stapleford. However, the gap between the settlements would still extend to approx. 1.1km and therefore, with the establishment of a new green buffer on the western boundary of the site, the development will ensure that the two villages remain separate.

c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;

As noted above, the proposed development will be contained by existing and proposed defensible boundaries. As a result, it will not result in a significant encroachment into the countryside.

d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and

The site performs no function in preserving the setting and character of a historic town and or designated heritage asset.

e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

As is evidenced by the need to allocate land for housing on the edge of the settlement, there is no suitable derelict of urban land within the settlement which could be developed in preference to this site.