

GREATER CAMBRIDGE LOCAL PLAN

Call for sites

Site submissions update 2025



Client: G W Balaam & Son
Project: Horseheath Road, Linton
HELAA ref: 40013
Date: 7 March 2025

1 Introduction

- 1.1 These representations have been prepared by CODE Development Planners (hereafter referred to as CODE) on behalf of G W Balaam & Son. G W Balaam & Son are the owners of land around Linton including the land south of Horseheath Road (HELAA reference 40013) and land north of Bartlow Road (HELAA reference 40044).
- 1.2 These representations have been prepared in response to the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (GCSP) Site Submissions Update 2025. This consultation provides an opportunity for landowners, developers and promoters to submit new sites for consideration or to provide information regarding material changes on an existing site submission.
- 1.3 This submission provides updated information in relation to site 40013 following material changes to the site and its surroundings relevant to the sites assessment and consideration for allocation in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan. The site was assessed in the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELLA) (September 2021) which concluded the site is available, achievable but not a suitable site for development. These representations argue the material changes effecting the site should be reflected in the site assessment and demonstrate the site should be considered a suitable site that remains available and achievable for development.

2 HELAA assessment (September 2021)

- 2.1 The HELAA is a technical assessment of sites and locations that may have potential for housing or economic development and provides an assessment of a site's suitability, availability and achievability. The outputs of the HELAA are intended to support GCSP in identifying the choices available for site allocations to meet development needs as the local plan progresses towards examination.
- 2.2 It is noted that the HELAA does not rule out sites because they are inconsistent with policies in the adopted local plans such as those relating to development frameworks (settlement boundaries). A key purpose of the HELAA is to consider future locations for development which depending on strategy choices made could include land currently considered contrary to policy in the adopted local plans. This approach is consistent with paragraph 010 Reference ID: 3-010-20190722 of the PPG which explains *'An important part of the desktop review, however, is to identify sites and their constraints, rather than simply to rule out sites outright which are known to have constraints.'*
- 2.3 The suitability of the sites was assessed using a 'Red, Amber, Green' (RAG) scoring system and considered a range of constraints and potential impacts which effect development sites. Sites were deemed unsuitable if they were assessed as 'Red' against any of the assessment criteria.
- 2.4 The HELAA assessment for 40013 concluded the site unsuitable for development. This is as a result of a 'Red' score when assessing the site against the criteria for impacts on landscape and townscape. The assessment criteria are set out in annex 2 of the HELAA and are shown below:



Score	Assessment criteria
Red	Development of the site would have a significant negative impact which cannot be mitigated.
Amber	Development of the site would have a detrimental impact which could be satisfactorily mitigated.
Green	Development of the site would have either a neutral or positive impact.

2.5 Further details of the assessment are provided in the site proforma (HELAA appendix 4) which explains *'the site forms most of a larger, open arable field south of Horseheath Road on the eastern edge of Linton. The land falls southwards from the road with views towards the River Granta and the rising ground above. **Development of this site in isolation would cause unacceptable landscape impacts as an isolated, unconnected pod of development separated from the village edge that would impact on the expansive views across the Granta valley (CODE emphasis).***

2.6 We accept that at the time of the assessment development of the site in isolation would have resulted in a pod of development disconnected from the edge of Linton. However, since the publication of the HELAA there have been material changes effecting the site which fundamentally impact the conclusions referred to and justify a re-assessment of the site's suitability for development.

3 Material changes effecting the site

3.1 Since the site was submitted to GCSP as part of the call for sites in 2019 and the publication of the HELAA assessment in September 2021 there have been material changes effecting the site. These changes are particularly relevant to the assessment and conclusions in relation to potential impacts of developing the site on the surrounding landscape and townscape.

3.2 In the time that has passed since the publication of the HELAA the neighbouring site (HELAA reference 40364) has been built out to provide 42 residential dwellings and allotments. This follows the receipt of planning approval at appeal (reference S/2553/16/OL) and subsequent reserved matters application (reference S/4418/19/RM). The approved scheme is an L-shaped site located in the same field parcel as 40013 and wraps around two sides of the site's western and southern boundaries. The development of the site has the effect of extending the physical edge of Linton eastwards so that it is now adjacent to the western and southern boundaries of site 40013 as shown in figure 1.



Figure 1: Site 40013 and approved scheme 2553/16/OL (Google Earth, 2023)



3.3 This is particularly relevant in light of the HELAA assessment conclusions regarding the site's impact on the landscape in which specific concerns were expressed regarding the development of site 40013 in isolation from other development. With the development of 40364 the development of the site would no longer be 'in isolation' and the conclusions that development of the site would result in an '*isolated, unconnected pod of development*' are out of date and no longer accurate. Photographs appended to these representations further demonstrate the connection between the site and the edge of Linton.

3.4 Instead, development of the site would 'round off' the neighbouring development by filling in the remaining parcel of the field which sites 40364 and 40013 are located in. The developments potential impact on landscape and character was one of the main issues considered by the Inspector during the appeal. who ultimately concluded, '*the development of 42 dwellings could sufficiently mitigate the landscape impacts of the proposal*'. (paragraph 37, Appeal Decision PP/W0530/W/17/3174153, 14 March 2018). Similarly, we believe that any impact from the proposed development of the site could be sufficiently mitigated through appropriate densities and landscaping. The principal impacts identified in the HELAA assessment are no longer relevant as the proposed development site is now connected to the village of Linton.

4 Conclusions

4.1 The development of the land adjacent to the site has a fundamental impact on the site and the potential impacts of development. It is no longer the case the development of the site would lead to an isolated pod of development that is disconnected from the edge of Linton. Instead, the development would be connected with the new edge of Linton which has been extended eastwards through the development of site 40364 and would fill in the remaining parcel of land in the wider field which accommodates both sites 40364 and 40013.

4.2 In our view this alleviates the concerns identified in the HELAA about the potential impacts of the site coming forward in isolation where the conclusions reached do not accurately reflect the up-to-date circumstances and require updating. The RAG assessment for landscape and townscape should be updated to reflect this and we believe the conclusion changed to show the site is suitable for future development as any harm to the landscape and townscape can be successfully mitigated as demonstrated by the neighbouring site.

4.3 Accounting for the changes outlined above we believe the site should be considered suitable, available and achievable for the provision of residential development. Further work is required to establish the final dwelling numbers, but we suggest the site could accommodate circa 20 dwellings. The allocation of the site would facilitate the development of a sustainable residential development on the edge of a minor rural centre. Any future development of the site would have access to a range of services and facilities in Linton, with pedestrian access achieved via connection to the existing footpath network. For journeys further afield a bus service operates from Linton High Street and is within walking distance of the site. Additionally, vehicles and cyclists alike will be able to access services within the village via Horseheath Road which links to Linton High Street.

4.4 Whilst the site has an area of 1.18ha and is therefore above the 1ha threshold for smaller sites set out in paragraph 73 (a) of the NPPF to contribute towards the 10% target for allocations on smaller sites the allocation of the site would nonetheless make an important contribution towards meeting the housing requirement for Greater Cambridge. As a smaller site it is likely the site would be built out quickly to support housing delivery in the early part of the plan as well as supporting small and medium enterprise housebuilders.



- 4.5 The HELAA assessment against the other assessment criteria has shown any other impacts identified from the development of the site could be sufficiently mitigated for and that the site has good access to a range of services and facilities in Linton by a means of transport other than private motor vehicle. Development of the site in this location is in line with the kind of development encouraged by paragraph 83 of the NPPF which seeks to promote sustainable rural development through the provision of housing in locations to maintain and enhance the vitality of rural communities.
- 4.6 In light of the above we consider the land south of Horseheath Road, Linton (40013) provides a sustainable location for small scale residential development suitable for allocation as part of the emerging local plan.