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RE: Greater Cambridge Call for Sites – March 2025
Land South of Horseheath Road, Linton – HELAA Reference 40554

1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Strutt & Parker are instructed by Endurance Estates to submit representations to the Greater Cambridgeshire Call for Sites update process to promote the inclusion of Land South of Horseheath Road, Linton (hereinafter referred to as “the site”) as a residential site in the emerging Local Plan.
- 1.2 In line with the guidance published by Greater Cambridge Planning, this note, and the accompanying materials are submitted in order to provide updated information on the opportunities and constraints of the site and to reaffirm the suitability, availability and achievability of the development.
- 1.3 The site, which comprises approximately 6.56 hectares, is currently in agricultural use and is under the control of Endurance Estates by way of a promotion agreement. The site is promoted for up to 120 dwellings at 30dph.
- 1.4 Endurance Estates are site promoters with extensive experience across the Greater Cambridge area in promoting sites through the Local Plan process and have established relationships with housebuilders who ultimately deliver the sites.

Greater Cambridge Housing Need

- 1.5 As a result of the changes to the NPPF in December 2024 and associated updates to the Standard Method for calculating Local Housing Need (LHN), it is common ground that Greater Cambridge cannot, as of February 2025, demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply. Whilst it is accepted that the Call for Sites submission does not directly relate to the 5-year housing land supply issues, it should nevertheless feed into the emerging Local Plan in terms of strategy and represents a material change in the circumstances for housing development in Greater Cambridge.
- 1.6 The new Local Housing Need (LHN) calculated in accordance with the updated Standard Method represents a combined increase of 634 dwellings per annum for Greater Cambridge when compared to the housing requirements as outlined in the Adopted 2018 Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire Plans. Details are set out in the table below.

	Adopted Local Plan Housing Requirements (and difference versus 2024 Standard Method)	Previous Standard Method LHN (and difference versus 2024 Standard Method)	December 2024 Standard Method LHN	Proposed Housing Requirement in Emerging Plan (and difference versus 2024 Standard Method)
Combined Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire	1,675 dpa (-634)	1,726 dpa (-583)	2,309 dpa	2,111 dpa (-198)

- 1.7 Whilst it is true the majority of the 5-year housing land supply shortfall is as a result of the increased Standard Method Housing Need figure, the shortfall has undoubtedly been exacerbated by difficulties in delivering the large-scale strategic sites which Greater Cambridge are reliant upon to deliver the majority of the housing need across both districts. Since the adoption of the 2018 Plans, both Councils are increasingly reliant upon significant housing delivery at Northstowe, Bourn Airfield and Waterbeach, alongside strategic sites on the Cambridge Fringe. Many of these sites have regrettably suffered from widely publicised difficulties in the delivery of the supporting infrastructure necessary to mitigate their impacts. As a result, many large sites now running significantly behind their expected delivery rates as outlined in the Housing Trajectory.
- 1.8 Accordingly, it is necessary for Greater Cambridge to re-assess the strategy for delivering the quantum of housing required by the new Standard Method. Logically, to minimise the amount of time in which Greater Cambridge cannot demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply, it would be prudent to focus on smaller and medium-scale sites that are located in sustainable locations and can come forward quickly. Crucially, smaller and medium sized sites can often come forward without the need to provide significant additional infrastructure prior to delivery commencing.
- 1.9 The fastest, and most cost-effective method of boosting supply in the short and medium term, would be to focus on locations which benefit from existing and committed infrastructure. This includes villages such as Linton, which benefits from significant investment as part of the Greenways project. As a result, the village now benefits from excellent connectivity to Granta Park and Babraham Research Campus, which provides access to high-quality employment opportunities, alongside wider connectivity to Cambridge along Babraham Road. Furthermore, committed infrastructure enhancements, including the CSET Busway will further enhance wider connectivity in the area. The village already benefits from good range of shops and services, and these existing and committed developments will further enhance the range of employment, shops and services which are accessible by public transport.
- 1.10 Endurance Estates would like to highlight that capitalising on this existing and committed infrastructure investments is clearly the most effective method of boosting housing supply in the shortest timeframe.

2. SITE ASSESSMENT

- 2.1 The site has been previously submitted and assessed in the 2021 HELAA document under the Site Reference 40554. The assessment concluded the following:

Criteria	Outcome
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Suitable	Red
Available	Green
Achievable	Green

- 2.2 Since this assessment was made, Endurance Estates have progressed technical works relating to the site in support of continued representation to the Local Plan preparation. Accordingly, this note should be read in conjunction with the updated landscape document which seeks to address the Council's concerns regarding landscape impact. Further technical works are underway, and can be provided in support of later representations to the emerging plan preparation process.

Suitability

- 2.3 In terms of Suitability, the 2021 HELAA gave the site a 'Red' rating.
- 2.4 At the time of the assessment, the adjacent site to the west, marketed as The Pastures, had not yet been fully built out, which resulted in the proposed site appearing disconnected from the village edge. Since then, the adjacent site to the west has been fully built out, and the Abbey Homes site, marketed as Poppyfields, has also completed to the South. Accordingly, development of the promotion site would now be adjacent to the existing edge of the built form of Linton, with the land now adjoining existing development on two sides.
- 2.5 The HELAA commentary notes that the site "forms part of a defined entrance and landscape setting to Linton, with views over the village to the south, west and north-west to Rivey Hill and woodlands". However, the HELAA goes on to state that "the site is fairly well screened by vegetation and landform in wider views". This continues to be accurate, and the proposals can incorporate further landscape enhancements to mitigate any potential impact upon views from the wider countryside as outlined in the submitted landscape document. It is considered the development around the promotion site will have diminished the importance of the promotion site as an entrance to the village and landscape setting, and initial landscape works indicate that subject to mitigation the site can have a minimal impact upon landscape and townscape.
- 2.6 In terms of accessibility to key services and facilities, Linton is a highly sustainable settlement. Linton benefits from a Junior and Secondary Schools, a Library, several shops and cafes, public houses, a GP Surgery, dental practice, and an excellent range of sports and recreation facilities, including a skate park, swimming pool, sports pavilion and a Zoological garden. It is therefore considered that the site, and by extension the village of Linton, benefits from sufficient accessibility to essential shops and services, alongside the ability to travel sustainably further afield for a full array of services in Cambridge.
- 2.7 In addition, Linton now benefits from two schemes which have come forward in the intervening years since the last HELAA. There has been significant transport infrastructure investment brought forward by the Greater Cambridge Partnership which include the Linton Greenway and Cambridge South East Transport Scheme (CSET). The Greenway is understood to now be nearing completion, with the majority of the route between Linton and the Abingtons in the west now in use. Linton therefore now benefits from a high-quality, direct, safe and segregated pedestrian and cycle route to both Granta Park and the Babraham Research Campus - two of the largest employment sites in the District. In addition, the CSET scheme, which at the time of writing is being determined by the Department for Transport, will provide fast and direct public transport connections from a new Travel Hub on the junction of the A11 and the A1307, which will be easily accessible via the Greenway. There is no reason to assume that the CSET scheme will not come forward as envisaged in advance of the development of the site.

2.8 Accordingly, the site is **Suitable** for the residential development proposed.

Availability

- 2.9 The site is currently in agricultural use, and Endurance Estates control the site. There are no known legal or ownership impediments to the development of the site.
- 2.10 There are no planning permissions relevant to the site which would preclude the development, or which would cast doubt upon the intentions of the landowner or promoter.
- 2.11 The site is available to commence development immediately upon of the grant of detailed permission, i.e., within years 0-5 of the plan period.
- 2.12 Endurance Estates may pursue a speculative application ahead of, or in tandem with the later stages of, the Local Plan process. As such, the site could begin delivery of dwellings within the first years of the plan period, helping to ensure the trajectory remains robust.
- 1.11 The site is therefore **Available** for development.

Achievability

- 2.13 The details previously submitted still stand. The site is in agricultural use and accordingly has a low existing use value. At present, there are no known viability constraints which would preclude development in line with both adopted and emerging planning policies.
- 1.12 The site is therefore **Achievable**.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The site at Land South of Horseheath Road, Linton is promoted by Endurance Estates as a residential development site of up to 120 dwellings, alongside open space and supporting infrastructure.
- 3.2 Land South of Horseheath Road remains **Available** and **Achievable** as outlined in the HELAA 2021 document. In addition, the updated landscape technical works, recently consented and completed developments adjacent to the site, and the significant enhancements in infrastructure in Linton by way of the Greenways and CSET mean that the site is undoubtably **Suitable** for a residential development of the quantum proposed.
- 3.3 Endurance Estates therefore hope that the site will be given further consideration as part of the updated HELAA. The Site could help meet unmet Local Housing Needs over the Plan period and therefore we hope it will be considered for a housing allocation in the new Local plan.

Yours sincerely



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