

RESPONSE TO THE GREATER CAMBRIDGESHIRE SHARED PLANNING 'CALL FOR SITES (MARCH 2025)' CONSULTATION

Site Location:	Land East of Glebe Way, Histon
Site Promoter:	Cambridgeshire County Council - in the capacity of Landowner Only
JDI no:	40192
Date:	7th March 2025

1. These representations look to update Carter Jonas' previous submission (2019) on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council (Rural Assets Team) in its capacity as landowner only, relating to JDI Number 40192 for the proposed residential development of Land east of Glebe Way, Histon 'the Site'.
2. This update is made on the grounds that 'there are other material changes to the site', namely:
 - a. the granting of detailed planning permission for the erection of a 2FE primary school and pre-school nursery (S/0101/18/CC), on 2.2ha of the original 12.5ha site boundary (as submitted), see **Appendix 1**.
 - b. the school is now built and operational
 - c. the subsequent reduction in potential development area for the land promotion (which is now 10.3ha: owing to 12.5 – 2.2ha)
3. It is considered relevant to remind Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Services ('GCSPS') on some of the assessment conclusions that officers from the Local Planning Authority reached in determining planning application S/0101/18/CC. Relevant extracts from the committee report are provided below:
 - a. Unrestricted sprawl: officers considered that whilst there would be an alteration to the Green Belt, it would not be significant when viewed in the context of the surrounding existing development, and would appear to form a rationalised extension of the existing village
 - b. Coalescence: Officers considered that it would not lead to coalescence between Histon/Impington and Cottenham or Landbeach
 - c. Countryside encroachment: officers considered that the harm to the Green Belt from the proposal would be limited by virtue of its compact scale and location, it being a relatively small school site, located on the development edge of Histon, close to existing development being bound on its western boundary by Glebe Way and on its southern boundary by existing residential properties.
 - d. Setting/special character of historic towns: officers did not consider that the proposed development would have a detrimental impact on the unique character of Cambridge or the surrounding area by way of its location and scale:
 - i. The site would be approximately 8km from the market square of Cambridge
 - ii. The existing topography is generally flat

- iii. The proposed development would be under 22m (to ridge)
 - e. Prioritising brownfield sites: Officers considered that now alternative sites to meet the identified need were available.
4. It is considered that the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') (December 2024) definition of Grey Belt (together with the 27 February 2025 update on Planning Practice Guidance (*assessing Grey Belt*), should now be applied to the Site, on the basis that it is other land that does not strongly contribute to (1) preventing unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; (2) prevent neighbouring town coalescence; (3) preserving the setting and special character of historic towns):
- a. Unrestricted sprawl: paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 64-005-20250225 of the Green Belt PPG states that *'villages should not be considered large built-up areas'*. Accordingly, the village of Histon would not be applicable to the consideration of unrestricted sprawl.
 - b. Coalescence: paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 64-005-20250225 of the Green Belt PPG states that this *'relates to the merging of towns, not villages.'* Accordingly, the village of Histon would not be applicable to the consideration of coalescence.
 - c. Setting/special character of historic towns: paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 64-005-20250225 of the Green Belt PPG states that this purpose only applies to historic towns, not villages. The only historic town in the Plan area (GCLP) is Cambridge. In reference to the S/0101/18/CC assessment, officers did not consider that the proposed development would have a detrimental impact on the unique character of Cambridge by way of its location and scale. Subject to ensuring appropriate heights for new development here, the same arguments would hold for the Site.
5. Furthermore, in terms of footnote 7 of the NPPF, the Site is not a defined habitat site, SSSI, Local Green Space, National Landscape, National Park, Heritage Coast, irreplaceable habitat, designated heritage asset, or an area at risk of flooding or coastal change.
6. The Site should therefore be defined as Grey Belt.
7. Development of the Site (10.3ha – of which a large proportion would be for landscaping, public open space, BNG, drainage attenuation) would not undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt across the plan area.
8. The Site is in a sustainable location: Histon is defined in the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 (SCLP2018) as a Rural Centre, which ranks third in the Development Strategy, behind 'On the Edge of Cambridge', 'At New Settlements' for the provision of new jobs and homes. Para 2.55 of the SCLP2018 states that *Rural Centres are the largest, most sustainable villages of the district. They have good access to a secondary school (either within the village or accessible by good public transport), employment opportunities, a variety of services and facilities and have good public transport services to Cambridge or a market town.* The delivery of a new primary school and nursery adjacent to the Site will only enhance the sustainability argument here further. Policy S/8 of the SCLP2018 states that *'Development and redevelopment without any limit on individual scheme size will be permitted within the development frameworks of Rural Centres'*. The interpretation of this is that the sustainability offered within the village would be sufficient to accommodate a Major/Strategic-scale development.
9. Proposed development on the Site would need to satisfy the 'Golden Rules' for Green Belt development, unless viability considerations determine otherwise.

10. It is considered that the size of the Site (10.3ha) could feasibly accommodate 250 – 300 homes (subject to further testing / masterplanning).
11. In summary, it is considered that the Site should be categorised as Grey Belt and would not constitute Inappropriate Development in the Green Belt.
12. It is therefore advocated that the Site would be appropriate for allocation in the Greater Cambridge Local Plan for the residential-led development.

APPENDIX 1 – APPROVED SCHOOL SITE

Carter Jonas

