

Greater Cambridge Local Plan – The First Proposals

Comments on Section/Policy

by Imperial War Museum (IWM) and Gonville and Caius College (Caius)

13 December 2021

S/RRP: Policy areas in the rest of the rural area

S/RRP/E/7: Imperial War Museum, Duxford

IWM agrees with the GCLP that “... *The Imperial War Museum site at Duxford Airfield is a major tourist / visitor attraction, educational and commercial facility. It is of national significance and requires a clear policy approach recognising both the sensitivity of the site but also the importance of allowing it to evolve*”.

IWM wishes to explore this policy being supported in the GCLP with a future Supplementary Planning Document based on the IWM Masterplan for the site.

IWM has commenced delivery of its masterplan to increase visitation and economic impact at IWM Duxford and enhance its core role as a museum, visitor attraction and centre for learning. The first new visitor experiences under the masterplan opened in 2020 and a programme of development will see new attractions opened annually for the next 10 years. IWM has delivered the most efficient Passivhaus building in the world, an award-winning centre for the care of its national collections at IWMD. Relocation of IWM jobs from London to Duxford, making best use of the historic estate for employment is planned. IWM will continue implementing transformational change to preserve and sustain this unique national asset with significant investment in decarbonising infrastructure, and in economic developments such as the proposed hotel for which planning permission has been sought.

IWM's ability to invest in not just preserving but providing public access to its historic assets at IWMD is made possible by the unique combination of activities on the site and the ability to realise creative economic opportunities. This is a core strategy of the IWMD Masterplan – making the most effective use of the assets.

In addition, IWM and Caius are working on major commercial proposals (**S/RRP/E/7**: recognises commercial uses are part of the IWM offer) which would be complementary to the character, vitality and sustainability of the site as a branch of the Imperial War Museum. These commercial proposals would deliver a first phase

of a new globally significant aviation and air mobility innovation cluster (“Avtech”) at IWM Duxford for which initial occupiers have already been secured.

IWM and Caius intend to make a pre-application submission for the Phase 1 Avtech proposals which involve the comprehensive and coordinated development of the most western part of IWM land within adopted Local Plan Policy E/7 (i.e. the site of the current Land Warfare Hall and previously consented Large Objects Store), together with Caius land immediately to the west (the “cabbage patch”) which lies outside Policy E/7.

IWM and Caius therefore ask that the GCLP extends the red line boundary of proposed Policy S/RRP/E/7 as part of its “special case” status (adopted Local Plan Policy E/7), to include the Caius land immediately west of the current Land Warfare Hall for the following reasons:

- Named Avtech occupiers are already secured and have started operations at IWM Duxford
- There is a need to plan the Avtech IWM/Caius first phase comprehensively to demonstrate to investors and occupiers that IWM Duxford will have the “critical mass” to meet current and future requirements
- Avtech requirements involve office, research and redevelopment, manufacturing and hanger space requiring access to the existing runway, to design, manufacture and test new forms of low carbon air mobility and aviation platforms
- As Cambridge Airport’s operational facilities wind down and occupiers relocate, IWM Duxford represents the only airfield of significance within Greater Cambridge to maintain existing businesses, skill sets and supply chains as well as capture part of the rapidly growing international air mobility advanced technologies sector
- Unlike Cambridge Airport, there would be no passenger or cargo operations at Duxford airfield as this would not be compatible with IWM’s existing/growing visitor role and the emerging Avtech role
- Avtech’s full requirements cannot be physically accommodated and serviced within the existing E/7 policy boundary, as the bulk of IWM operations remain firmly focused on its core visitor, tourist, and conservation roles. Extending the boundary enables IWM to relocate inappropriate, but operationally or economically essential activity from within the historic core of the site, improving visitor experiences, and improving the setting of the heritage assets and their preservation
- The proposed extension of the E/7 boundary covers an area historically part of the original airfield. As a result, the continuous operation of the airfield for the same historic aviation as took place before the land boundary was reinstated, has resulted in a lease of this land between IWM and Caius for uses ancillary to the airfield operation. In effect it is already supporting the activities protected by policy E/7 without the benefit of being put to full use in providing greater economic sustainability, or permanent operational facilities.
- As required by S/RRP/E/7, Avtech would be complementary to the character, vitality and sustainability of the site as a branch of the Imperial War Museum

- In combining the land resources of IWM and Caius, the Avtech development is of sufficient scale to be commercially viable and accommodate design for climate change and any environmental mitigations
- The proposal would align with the South Cambridge local plan adopted policies which treat IWM Duxford as special case (E/7), support for innovation clusters (E/9), and support for growth of Aviation where it brings economic benefits (T1/5), the NPPF support at Paras 81, 82, 83 and 104 for economic growth and aviation and the emerging OxCam ARC corridor focus on supporting innovation clusters as well as the objectives set out in the UK Innovation Corridor (London- Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough) and the Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor.