

### **Policy S/DS: Development Strategy (Sources of Housing Supply) (P32)**

Very few sites for housing are identified outside of the strategic allocations. No sites are identified to contribute to Cottenham's future vitality and viability.

It is evident that existing planning permissions in Cottenham will be built out over the next few years. The Plan then envisages no further development in Cottenham through to 2041. This is not a proactive strategy for maintaining and enhancing the vitality of a sustainable location. The Plan must set out options for the longer term future of sustainable locations such as Cottenham

Delivering extensions to existing communities and continuing to build on the strong cultural and social aspects of the larger settlements is vital in the progress towards achieving healthier communities. Proposing modern homes that create improved sustainable credentials and add vitality to existing neighbourhoods is not only a requirement of local and regional policy, but one that is adopted within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Limiting growth to just a few strategic allocations presents risks with disproportionate settlement growth presenting a real threat to settlements such as Cottenham resulting in stagnated growth and poor support for local facilities. Furthermore the over reliance on strategy allocations is high risk in terms of continual supply and draw down for 5 year land supply. It is suggested that at the very least Green Belt is reviewed and where sites may be suitable for removal from this designation this should be identified and acknowledged and such sites should safeguarded for future residential development should it be required.

As per the proposals presented in the Vision Document submitted alongside these representations it is proposed that Land off Beach Road, Cottenham is identified in the Greater Cambridge Local Plan for the development of up to 80 houses.

It is considered that the development of the site could contribute substantially to the social and economic growth of Cottenham Its significance as an important settlement within the district. Extensive assessments of the site have concluded that its development would result in minor impacts to the character and openness of the Green Belt and the wider landscape, whilst also outlining the opportunity to provide policy compliant levels of biodiversity enhancement and affordable housing.

It is clear that development of this site will not impinge on the environs of Cambridge. A Green Belt review has been undertaken having regard the potential development of the site concluding that the release of the parcel for residential development would have no impact on 4 of the 5 functions of Green Belt and only minor impacts on the purposes of the Cambridge Green Belt as identified in the Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

Similarly, given the nature of the site and the surrounding landscape, a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment has also been prepared for the site. It notes that the site is within a transitional area at the edge of the Fen Edge Village and bordered by a series of orchards,

hedges and trees to the southeast, by (mostly modern 2-storey brick) housing on Brenda Gautry Way to the north and further residential areas to the west. To its northeast and eastern edge, the site fronts Beach Road and includes a number of dwellings on the road frontage, with further estate development beyond. It is considered that development of the site can be managed sensitively so as to be read as part of the existing settlement and minimise any impacts on the local landscape.

The vision document demonstrates that the site can accommodate new rural housing in an environmentally sensitive, sustainable and responsible manor. It is proposed that development of the site can deliver approximately 80 new homes offering opportunities across a range of house types, sizes and tenures including an appropriate proportion of affordable housing and green open space. The proposals as outlined through the Vision Document would deliver new high quality homes and open space in a sustainable and deliverable location, with access to essential local services and facilities, employment, public transport, education and leisure.

To conclude, Cottenham's sustainable location within the district, in combination with the highly accessible transport connections, make the village an appropriate location for future growth. The site itself represents a wholly viable option for residential development and it is recommended therefore, that this site be allocated for residential development in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

**Recommendation:** Land off Beach Road, Cottenham be identified as a site suitable for the development of up to 80 new homes.

A Green Belt Review should be undertaken and where to identify locations where the removal of sites from this designation will be appropriate in time. These sites should then be safeguarded for future development either in case there is an issue with delivery of strategic allocations or to inform future iterations of the plan.