



GREATER CAMBRIDGE LOCAL PLAN: FIRST PROPOSALS CONSULTATION 2021

Land off Water Lane, Melbourn, Cambridgeshire

Prepared by Strutt & Parker on behalf of CALA Homes

December 2021

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Client Name:	CALA Homes
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Appendices

Appendix A: Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment, Site Reference: 40274;

Appendix B: Technical note – access design and highway adoption process, dated 2 January 2018;

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This representation has been prepared by Strutt & Parker on behalf of CALA Homes to support the promotion of Land off Water Lane, Melbourn as part of the Greater Cambridge First Proposals Consultation 2021.
- 1.2 The site covers an area of approximately 7.49 hectares and is capable of delivering up to 100 dwellings together with open space to serve the new and wider community.
- 1.3 In September 2021 Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service (GCSPS) published the Greater Cambridge HELAA, which provided an initial assessment of the sites put forward for allocation as part of the Call for Sites consultation within Greater Cambridge.
- 1.4 This representation provides a response to the 'First Proposals' Consultations. The representation has been structured to respond to relevant questions as set out within the First Proposals Consultation. In addition, a detailed assessment is provided in respect of the HELAA Assessment for the site.
- 1.5 The HELAA excludes the Land off Water Lane site from allocation primarily on the basis of site access issues, notably that "*The proposed site does not to have a direct link to the adopted public highway*" and there is "*no possibility of creating a safe access*".
- 1.6 A Technical Note by Peter Brett highway consultants, dated 2 January 2018, which was submitted in support of our Call for Sites submission, demonstrates a safe access can be provided and has been attached for further consideration. This details that the proposed access design has been reviewed by the Cambridgeshire County Council Highways Department Management Team who have agreed in principle that the access road to and within the site would meet the tests for Cambridge County Council to adopt the highway. An updated Transport and Access Technical Note has been prepared by Lime Transport which expands upon the highway work already carried out including engaging with the Highways Authority.
- 1.7 Additionally, it is considered that several of the assessment criteria used to assess the site should be re-categorised. It has been demonstrated in the supporting information provided that the allocation of this site would not have a significant adverse impact in relation to its access and as such that the site should be put forward for allocation. Further analysis of this is set out within section 7 of this report.
- 1.8 In support of this report, the following documents have been prepared;

- Transport and Access Technical Note by Lime Transport dated 13 December 2021

2. QUESTION: Do you agree that we should plan for an extra 550 homes per year, so that housing keeps up pressure with increased jobs in our area?

- 2.1 We agree that it is very important that housing delivery keeps up with demand for increased jobs within the Greater Cambridge area.
- 2.2 As part of the preparation of the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan, the Shared Planning Service has identified a need for 2,321 dwellings to be built per year. However, a significant proportion of this growth is made up of existing allocations within the current Local Plan.
- 2.3 The initial evidence base and spatial options assessment for the emerging Local Plan, set three growth options; 'minimum' (40,300 dwellings - based upon standard methodology); 'medium' (46,200 dwellings- based upon economic forecast based upon long term historic employment) and 'maximum' (67,700 dwellings – based upon fast economic growth in the recent past). In view of this, the housing delivery target of 44,400 new homes over the plan period alongside 58,500 new jobs would fall between the 'minimum' and 'medium' growth scenarios previously suggested.
- 2.4 The Development Strategy Topic Paper, that accompanies this consultation acknowledges that the Greater Cambridge economy is dynamic and does not readily align with national or regional forecasts for job growth; it generally exceeds it. This is in particular due to a world- renowned life sciences cluster which has the potential to drive growth beyond typical regional or national rates. It is also acknowledged that in the recent past employment growth within the region has been significantly higher than predicted. Therefore, a more ambitious growth strategy should be prepared.
- 2.5 Accounting for the evidence set out within the Development Strategy Topic Paper, it is not clearly justified why only 44,400 new homes and 58,500 new jobs are proposed over the plan period. It is considered that this approach should be re-visited to increase both housing and employment allocations within the Local Plan. It is considered that the delivery of housing should be significantly increased, in line with the 'maximum' growth forecast, to align with economic growth within the recent past. The case for maximum growth forecast is further supported by significant transport investment within the area over the plan period. This includes schemes such as East- West Rail, Cambridge South Station and the delivery of a number of Rapid Transit Routes proposed by the Greater Cambridge Partnership.

- 2.6 The provision for lower growth scenarios does also not appear to be consistent with the government's objectives for the Ox-Cam Arc as a centre for housing and employment growth.
- 2.7 Concern is also expressed in relation to the types of sites which have been allocated. Recently the St Albans Local Plan was withdrawn in November 2020 following a number of serious concerns raised by the Inspectors which included an overreliance on a small number of large strategic allocations (500 dwellings or more, or over 14 ha) at the expense of smaller scale subareas. The Inspectors noted that such sites, provide choice and flexibility in the housing market and secure affordable housing more immediately as advocated in national planning policy. The findings of the Inspector in 2020, in respect of the examination of the Uttlesford Local Plan were very similar and also resulted in their Local Plan being withdrawn.
- 2.8 The current GCSPS housing growth strategy is reliant on a handful of very large allocations to deliver the proposed proportion of the growth in predominantly urban areas. It is considered that it would be more sustainable to distribute a wider range of housing growth/allocations across the Greater Cambridge area, as this will provide sustainable benefits for the existing settlements and communities in terms of existing businesses, facilities, and give people greater choice over where to live. National planning policies recognises that rural communities need to be able to grow and thrive to avoid decline. The inclusion of smaller sites will also aid delivery and more competition in the housing market.

3. QUESTION: Do you agree that new development should mainly focus on sites where car travel, and therefore emissions, can be minimised?

- 3.1 Yes, in principle the proposal to focus development on sites where car travel can be minimised is supported. Consistent with this strategy, it is considered to be very important that some growth is delivered in villages that are located outside of the Green Belt, such as Melbourn. National policy is clear within paragraph 79 of the NPPF that planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where they will support local services.
- 3.2 The CPIER report (2018), which is referenced as a key document within the evidence base provides a detailed analysis regarding the potential benefits of focusing growth along key transport corridors. The proposed Cambridge South Station proposes significant sustainable transport improvements between Cambridge and Meldreth Station, which is within walking distance to Melbourn.
- 3.3 In addition, Melbourn, benefits from being a sustainable settlement in its own right. Melbourn is a Minor Rural Centre (as defined within the adopted Local Plan) that is not situated within the Green Belt. It is also benefits from both primary and secondary education facilities and a large range of services, including shops, pubs, restaurants and community facilities.
- 3.4 One of the 19 new sites being considered for allocation in the local plan is located to the north east of Melbourn (Land to the West of Cambridge Road, 120 housing units). It is considered that Land off Water Lane is in a more sustainable location, being closer to the village centre. Furthermore, the Water Lane site is located further from any listed buildings and the Melbourn Conservation Area than the West of Cambridge Road site, reducing the chance of adverse effect on these heritage assets. Unlike at the Water Lane site, archaeological evaluation has identified significant archaeology of Roman date at the West of Cambridge Road site. This could lead to complications in delivering the site. Given the acute need for housing in the area, it is considered that making multiple allocations at Melbourn could also be a suitable approach to ensure much need housing is delivered in this sustainable settlement.
- 3.5 Section 3 of the Technical Note (2021) provide a transport assessment on the sustainability of the site in terms of accessibility to local services and facilities. It demonstrates that the site is well located to access the wide range of existing facilities

and public transport links not just in Melbourn but also further afield without the need to use a private car.

- 3.6 For the above reasons, it is considered that additional growth within Melbourn would be consistent with the objectives of the Local Plan, which seeks to minimise car travel. Of the sites submitted within Melbourn as part of the Call for Sites process, Land off Water Lane, is considered to be a particularly sustainable and suitable site for development. The site would better integrate into the existing built form and relate to the housing development to the north-east.

4. QUESTION: We feel that we should support the development of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus, with space for more healthcare facilities, research and housing. What housing, facilities or open spaces should be created around the campus?

4.1 We strongly agree that supporting the development and further expansion of Cambridge Biomedical Campus should be one of the key principles of the new local plan. To support this objective, it is imperative therefore that new housing growth is located along sustainable transport corridors from the Biomedical Campus, to support the objective of the local plan outlined above (in section 3 of this statement), which seeks to minimise car travel.

4.2 It is also very important that the emerging Local Plan 2041 aligns housing and employment growth, with major transport schemes that are being promoted in and around Cambridge. The First Proposals provide a number of references to East- West Rail and the provision for Cambridge South Station, both of which are important new transport infrastructure projects. Of particularly relevance to the Biomedical Campus expansion, is the Cambridge South Station which is the subject of a Transport for Works Order which is currently under consideration by the Secretary of State. Once built the Cambridge South Station would create a high-speed sustainable transport link between the Biomedical Campus and Meldreth Station. It is considered important that substantial housing growth is provided to the south-west of Cambridge, with access to the railway, to ensure ease of access to the Biomedical Campus by sustainable transport means. Therefore, growth in Melbourn would be consistent with one of the key objectives of the Local Plan, which seeks to minimise car travel by focusing growth on locations with good transport infrastructure.

5. QUESTION: We think we should be very limited about the development we allow in villages, with only a few allocated sites in villages, with good public transport connections and local services. Which villages do you think should see new development of any kind?

5.1 Growth should be focused in villages, such as Melbourn, which benefit from having a range of services and are located outside of the Cambridge Green Belt. The local plan should also take account of new transport links such as the Cambridge South Station, which creates strong sustainable public transport links between villages like Melbourn and the Cambridge Biomedical Campus.

5.2 It is considered very important that the Local Plan makes provision for a proportion of growth to be delivered from villages that are situated outside the Green Belt. As set out above, the current approach to allocating only a very limited number of larger sites is not considered to be sound in its current form. In particular, it is considered that additional growth should be provided within the most sustainable villages that are situated outside of the Green Belt, such as Melbourn.

5.3 It is considered that the provision for increasing the range of sites modestly to include smaller and medium sites in the rural area would provide significant benefits. For example, they could be delivered more quickly without requiring additional infrastructure, provide choice and flexibility in the housing market and secure affordable housing more immediately. This is a point recognised by the Inspector that examined the 2018 Local Plan for South Cambridgeshire as referenced within paragraph 31 of the report:

“In order to arrive at a sound strategy, we consider that as a primary consideration, the Council would need to allocate more small and medium sized sites that could deliver homes in the short to medium term and help to bolster the 5-year HLS, until the Garden Communities begin to deliver housing. This would have the benefit of providing flexibility and choice in the market and the earlier provision of more affordable housing” (paragraph 114).

5.4 It is not clear why the Shared Planning Service have deviated from a clear recommendation provided by the Planning Inspectorate.

5.5 However, it is also important to acknowledge the employment sites/areas in Melbourn which will benefit from increased housing provision. The additional housing will allow people to live closer to work thus reducing car travel and increase employment opportunities. Additional housing would also contribute towards the local economy through spending on local provisions.

6. QUESTION: What housing, jobs, facilities or open spaces do you think should be provided in and around these villages?

- 6.1 It is important that a range of housing, jobs and facilities are provided within larger villages as part of new allocations to allow them to thrive and remain vibrant. CALA Homes are responsible for the promotion of Land of Water Lane, Melbourn, and have a track record of delivering high quality housing developments, which provide a mix of dwellings to meet Objectively Assessed Housing Needs. CALA Homes are fully committed, to engagement with the GCSPS and Melbourn Parish Council regarding the mix and type of housing to be delivered on Land off Water Lane, Melbourn. The site also has the potential to provide open space to serve the new and wider local community and would trigger contributions towards improvements towards local facilities

7. QUESTION: Are there any sites which you think should be developed for housing or business use, which we haven't got on our map so far?

- 7.1 Yes, Land off Water Lane, Melbourn should be allocated for development and would be a sound allocation as part of the emerging Local Plan. The Land off Water Lane, Melbourn site was promoted originally at Call for Sites stage. We have also demonstrated with the agreement of Cambridgeshire County Highways that access from the site to the adopted highway can be achieved without any significant impact.
- 7.2 To the north of the Site, Water Lane gives access to increasingly recent housing development as it runs south from its junction with Melbourn High Street. From the High Street until its junction with Greengage Road, Water Lane is a metalled road bounded by a footway on one or both sides of the carriageway. South of its junction with Greengage Road, the lane changes in character to a rough surfaced track bounded on both sides by mature hedgerows.
- 7.3 CALA's access arrangements to serve the proposed development is to provide vehicular access via Water Lane, in effect extending the road southwards along the lane from the junction with Greengage Road to a point of access to the development formed at an appropriate point along the eastern boundary of the site.
- 7.4 While the lane is classified as BOAT 15 (Byway Open to All Traffic), it is highway maintainable at the public expense and capable of being upgraded to an appropriate standard for its subsequent adoption by the highway authority to serve CALA's housing development.
- 7.5 The fact that BOAT 15 is presently only roughly surfaced and very lightly maintained, with the boundary hedges being allowed to encroach into the highway, is simply indicative of the fact that it has hitherto been maintained to a standard that is commensurate with its present use by the public. Its current condition does not preclude Cambridgeshire County Council's from entering into a section 278 agreement to upgrade the lane in order to serve the site. Therefore the principle of providing a safe highway connection to the adopted highway on Water Lane is acceptable for the quantum of development proposed (circa 100 dwellings).
- 7.6 The Technical Note (2021) includes the results of a speed survey carried out in November 2021, approximately 75 metres north of the access into Greengage Rise.

The results concluded an average north bound speed of 24mph and a speed of 25mph for south bound. As a result, based upon Manual for Streets, the required visibility splays are 31.4 metres to the south for north bound traffic, and 33 metres to the north for south bound traffic. These visibility splays can be achieved within the highway land as shown in Appendix F of the note.

- 7.7 In terms of pedestrian access, it was originally proposed in the TPA design that a 2 metre wide footpath could be provided on the eastern side of Water Lane with a 5.5 metre wide carriageway. However, upon reflecting on the Highway Authority's feedback, where advised it would be preferable for the pedestrian access to be created on the western side to avoid pedestrians having to cross two carriageways to connect to the existing footpath, the design was amended.
- 7.8 A 2 metre wide footpath along the western side of the site within the highway boundary can be achieved and provision for two crossing points has been included. Therefore, safe pedestrian access can be provided from the site into the village.
- 7.9 In summary, as the principle of a safe and adoptable access can be provided from the site to the adopted highway including a 2 metre wide pedestrian link, this should be sufficient to overcoming the access concern with this site. The next stage would involve preparing detailed concept plans in agreement with GCSPS and the Highways Authority before preparing a detailed application. Beyond the application process, further work would be required to iron out the highways details through a S278 agreement. Developer funding through an obligation in the S106 could be used to make a contribution towards the highway improvements.

Response to HELAA

- 7.10 The key concern raised in the HELAA towards the site's allocation was with site access and not being able to connect to the adopted highway. It has been clear demonstrated through in the Technical Note provided by Peter Brett that a connection to the adopted highway on Water Lane.
- 7.11 The Technical Note includes a plan showing how a 5.5 metre wide (with 1.8 m footpaths either side) access can be provided including visibility splays to link the site to the adoptable highway on Water Lane. The proposed access, its design and the quantum of development off the proposed site was also considered acceptable to the Highways

Authority during our initial pre-application discussions. The Technical Note includes correspondence from the Highways Authority confirming this.

7.12 Therefore, unless officers are able to demonstrate otherwise, the site allocation has resolved the key concern with site access and as such the site is suitable for development.

7.13 A detailed review of the HELAA assessment in respect of the Land off Water Lane, Melbourn site is set out below.

Site Assessment Summary

Criteria	Outcome
Suitable	Red
Available	Green
Achievable	Green

7.14 It is considered that the findings of the HELAA Report in relation to this site were on the whole positive. The HELAA Report found the site was both available and achievable. It was accepted that the development could be made available in the next 0-5 years and can also be completed within this timescale. The HELAA Report did find that the site was not suitable, however, it is considered that the reasons given for this outcome can be addressed as explained below.

Site Assessment

Issue	Assessment	Response	Amended Assessment
Adopted Development Plan Policies	Amber	The site abuts Melbourn's Development Framework immediately to the south of the Saxon Way employment area. The Development Framework for Melbourn has remained relatively unaltered since the Adopted Proposals Map Published January 2010, with only a small alteration in relation to a site for 65 dwellings (H/1 (e)). This tight	Green

		<p>Development Framework has artificially constrained development in a village from growth even though it has a good range of services and facilities to support it. It is considered that the site would form a logical extension to Melbourn, resulting in a site that is well related to the existing village, and that would not create amenity issues for existing residential properties.</p> <p>The site is within 20 metres of the allocation H/1 (e). This is viewed as an advantage, as it would allow new development to be concentrated in one area, away from the historic centre of Melbourn, which is protected by a Conservation Area.</p>	
Flood Risk	Green	No flood risk issues identified.	-
Landscape and Townscape	Amber	<p>TPO 0017, is located to the north of the site and is considered unlikely to be affected by development of the site.</p> <p>The site is not within the Green Belt or any protected area and is well related to the existing settlement. Any development would respect the Local Character and</p>	Green

		<p>Landscape Character of the area. For example, in relation to the nearby H/1 (e) site The adopted South Cambridgeshire District Council Local Plan required the 'creation of a significant landscape buffer along the boundary of the site where it adjoins or could be seen from open countryside to provide a soft green village edge'. A similar approach could be adopted at this site, which would provide a much gentler transition between the open countryside and the built-form of Melbourn than is currently the case. In addition, the local topography screens the site from long-range views from the south. It is considered that a sympathetic approach to the site, including appropriate densities and design, would result in an excellent development which would enhance the character of the area.</p>	
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	Amber	<p>The site is wholly within Flood Zone 1, and a suitable Surface Water Drainage Strategy based on sustainable drainage systems would be produced at application stage.</p> <p>The nearest SSSIs are Holland Hall (Melbourn)</p>	Green

		<p>Railway Cutting, approximately 1.5 kilometres west of the site, and Foulmere Watercress Beds approximately 2 kilometres east of the site. It is considered that the increased visitor pressure on nearby SSSI associated with 100 new dwellings would not be significant, and if necessary mitigation could be provided.</p> <p>Any development would look to retain Habitats of Principle Importance/priority habitat of high ecological value, and the proposed development would ensure a net gain in biodiversity on site.</p> <p>As acknowledged, any impact on designated sites, or those with a regional or local protection could be reasonably mitigated or compensated. For the above reasons it is considered that the site cannot be considered unsuitable for reasons of biodiversity or geodiversity.</p>	
Open Space/Green Infrastructure	Green	The site has the potential to provide open space to serve the new and wider local community.	-

Historic Environment	Green	It was acknowledged that the site would have either a neutral or positive impact on designated or non-designated heritage assets.	-
Archaeology	Amber	The presence of a Saxon cemetery and prehistoric trackway in the area are considered to be matters which can be dealt with at the application stage. As this site is limited in size and would only be delivering up to 100 dwellings, any delays associated with archaeology would be unlikely to be significant and would not undermine the overarching housing delivery strategy.	Green
Accessibility to Services and Facilities	Amber	The site has good accessibility to key local services, community facilities, transport links and employment opportunities. The development of the site would therefore not require the delivery of accompanying key services. However, the development would contribute towards the improvement of existing services and facilities in Melbourn. For these reasons it is considered that the location of the site should weigh in its favour.	Green
Site Access	Red	As set out in our Call for Sites submission	Green

		<p>(Technical Note, dated 2 January 2018 reattached), a safe access to the site can be provided. An updated Technical Note has been prepared which includes a speed survey to determine the visibility splays required which can be achieved and the provision of a 5.5. metre carriageway and 2 metre wide pedestrian footpath on the western side linking the site to the adoptable highway on Water Lane.</p> <p>A proposed design including the quantum of development has been reviewed by Cambridgeshire County Council Highways Development Management who have agreed in principle that the design is suitable to support a proposed development of up to 100 units.</p> <p>A further detailed design and a Transport Assessment would be provided as part of any future planning application. An assessment of Red in this context is therefore considered unjustified and on the evidence provided should be made Green.</p>	
Transport and Roads	Amber	As acknowledged, any potential impact on the	Green

		functioning of trunk roads and/or local roads could be reasonably mitigated. Contributions arising from any development could be used to help improve transport and roads in the area.	
Noise, Vibration, Odour and Light Pollution	Amber	As acknowledged, noise from nearby industrial/commercial activities could be considered and mitigated at detail design stage. As mentioned above, the site is not located in close proximity to existing residential properties, so difficulties are unlikely to arise with regard to residential amenity.	Green
Air Quality	Green	No issues identified. The site is located in a sustainable location with good access to services.	-
Contamination and Ground Stability	Amber	The site has been in agricultural use. If any contamination is detected this could be suitably dealt with following the grant of planning permission.	Green

Further Constraints

Issue	Assessment	Response
Constraints to development	-	No issues identified.
Strategic Highways Impact	Green	No issues identified.
Employment	-	No issues identified.

Green Belt - - Assessment of Harm of Green Belt Release		N/A
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8. CONCLUSION

8.1 This representation has been prepared by Strutt & Parker, on behalf of CALA Homes to support the allocation of a housing site for up to 100 dwellings and associated landscaping. The promotion of the site has sought to clearly respond to the HELAA Assessment of the site.

8.2 The site has a number of favourable attributes that would demonstrate it is a sound allocation for housing growth, within the emerging Local Plan:

- It is located in a sustainable location in terms of its proximity to the village core and employment areas;
- Melbourn is a very sustainable village to accommodate further growth and already has a range of services, community facilities such as excellent education opportunities;
- Housing development on the site would provide economic boost to the existing facilities and businesses, provide an increased range of housing including affordable, and has the opportunity to provide biodiversity enhancements and create a softer edge to the village;
- The application site is being put forward for residential, with a substantial proportion of the site proposed as open space;
- The site is unconstrained and fully deliverable in planning terms;
- CALA Homes are committed to detailed engagement with both Planning Officers and statutory and non- statutory consultees, including working closely with the local community in the evolution of the vision for the site.

8.3 In light of the above, it there therefore considered that Land off Water Lane, Melbourn provides an excellent location for development and would be a sound basis for allocation as part of the emerging Local Plan.