GREATER CAMBRIDGE LOCAL PLAN FIRST PROPOSALS CONSULTATION 2021

NEW SITE PROPOSAL: LAND BEHIND 'THE BOUNDARY', HORNINGSEA SITE SUBMISSION - SUPPORTING INFORMATION

13th December 2021

1. Introduction

This supplement is provided in support of the application submitted online to include the above referenced land in the Horningsea village framework, to provide a limited quantity of homes to support local needs.

As can be seen from the site location plan accompanying the submission, attached as Appendix 1, the land behind 'The Boundary' is bordered by Scotsdales Garden Centre to the North and housing along the High Street to the West and relates closely to the urban aspect of the village, while bordering farmland to the South and West.

At the heart of the application is a requirement to provide housing for family members who have a longstanding connection with the village, while at the same time exploring the potential to provide a further level of windfall housing if this can be delivered sensitively to the village and existing neighbours to the proposed site, including the applicants.

Inclusion of the proposed location in the village development framework would provide what is a limited opportunity within the village for back land development, to utilise what is a relatively underused area to provide a low quantity of sustainable Eco-homes that could blend between the urban landscape to the North of the site and the countryside to the South.

It is therefore requested for the village development framework to be amended at this location to include the requested garden / land to the rear of 'The Boundary'.

2. Context

The current Planning Development Strategy and corresponding Settlement Hierarchy within the South Cambridgeshire District Council 2018 Adopted Local Plan, seeks to prioritise land use and housing allocation based on sustainability, considering:

a) Focussing growth within Cambridge as being the core most sustainable location in the District;

b) Then considering 'Edge of Cambridge' locations, including some release sites from the inner Green Belt;

c) New settlements (Northstowe, Waterbeach, Bourne Airfield etc) and;

d) More rural developments at key rural centres.

From a Settlement Hierarchy perspective this translates into Rural centres; Minor Rural centres; Group villages and infill villages.

Horningsea is classified as an Infill Village which are generally amongst the smallest in South Cambridgeshire and often have a poor range of services and facilities. Development is typically limited to infill of schemes of up to 2 dwellings and exceptionally up to about 8 dwellings.

However, conversely it is recognised that a level of development is required for even Infill Villages to ensure that communities continue to thrive and to maintain the existing level of services, which otherwise could diminish. The demand for housing around Cambridge is noted as being significant, which is also the case for Horningsea, making it difficult for communities to remain intact and for people with a local connection to obtain housing.

The Greater Cambridge Local Plan - First Proposal document reinforces the need to 'support the vitality of our villages' in a number of locations (pages 23, 31, 45, 122, 188 & 227) which also reference the need for existing communities to thrive.

This is reflected in paragraph 79 of the National Planning Policy Framework which states that "To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services."

The last significant development in Horningsea village was granted in 1973 which saw the introduction of 21 houses in Abbotts Way, shortly followed by the development of The Square a few years later, which have both proved to be positive additions to the village. Since that time there have been a very low number of niche developments that have been incorporated sympathetically within the village, such as the conversions at St Johns Lane for which permission was granted circa 2004 and the development at Kings Farm which have both been positive high quality additions to the village. Since that time there has been no development within the plan period save for the occasional infill property.

Inclusion of the requested site within the Framework would provide an opportunity to provide a low level of housing without detriment to the character of the village while supporting the National Planning Policy Framework requirement for at least 10% of our housing requirement to be accommodated on sites no larger than 1 hectare. It is noted that an allowance will also be included within housing allocations as 'Windfall' development for homes on unallocated land.

While Horningsea is also classified as an infill village to maintain its character and setting, it is uniquely placed. Unlike other such villages it is geographically close to the city and therefore residents can easily access employment and services within the city itself, or at nearby locations such as the Cambridge Science Park. Horningsea has many of the facilities required of a thriving community, which are noted below.

3. Village Services

Horningsea, while classified as an infill village is able to provide a range of services within its boundaries, such as:

- Village Hall and Millennium Green
- Parish Church
- 1 Local pub- Community owned providing food, and social activities
- 1 Pub/restaurant with accommodation

- 2 garden Centres –one of which has a restaurant and other retail outlets including clothing, a range of foods and gifts and a mobility centre.
- Children's playground
- Jubilee Garden
- Caravan site/ Glamping pods
- Mobile library
- HATs Adult and toddler playgroup
- Community allotments

There is a thriving and friendly community whose inhabitants are served by a number of groups and organisations, including the Parish Council and Residents Association who organise regular events for the community to enjoy. Appendix 4 provides a plan extract of the 2014 Services and Facilities study. Additional facilities are available at Fen Ditton, Waterbeach, Milton and in the City of Cambridge.

Primary School education is served by Fen Ditton Primary School which is a short 5 minute cycle ride along the cycleway which starts just across the High Street. For secondary education, Horningsea Lies within the catchment for Bottisham Village College which is served by an existing school bus service.

Horningsea is well connected with Waterbeach and Cambridge North stations within easy cycling distance, in 10 and 14 minutes respectively. There is a convenient cycle path to Fen Ditton and the City which connects to the Chisolm Trail, linked below. A Bus service also connects to Cambridge and Waterbeach.



Link: Chisholm Trail - Greater Cambridge Partnership

The sentiment of the '15 minute City' can generally be applied as most needs can be accessed within a 15 minute cycle ride from the proposed site. Further afield, Cambridge city can be reached in 19 minutes by active transport and the Biomedical Campus, including Addenbrookes Hospital and The Royal Papworth Hospital, in 25 minutes.

With many employees opting for a flexible working pattern and increasingly working from home, this is supported by a range of mobile service providers with coverage in the village and broadband landline services available from BT Openreach which currently provides a circa 40mb line, sufficient for home working.

Provision of gigabit capability is underway via the Government Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme which was approved for Horningsea in September 2021. This has to be completed within 1 year of application and so should be operational by Sep 2022. Cambridge Fibre has confirmed that there will be additional capacity available in the village.

4. Conservation area

A comprehensive review of the Horningsea conservation area was undertaken by South Cambridgeshire District Council in 2005, which highlights the wealth of architectural and historic interest that contributes to the essential character of the village. The conservation area is shown on South Cambridge District Council Inset Village map no 59 for Horningsea at the following link:

inset-59-horningsea.pdf

Much of the Horningsea village is contained within the conservation area, except for Priory Road / Abbots Way and areas at the Northern and Southern ends of the village, limiting the availability of suitable infill plots.

The proposed site lies outside the Horningsea conservation area and therefore offers the opportunity for a sensitive back land development without compromising the conservation area or character of the village.

5. Green Belt

The land under review currently sits outside of the village development framework and is therefore classified as residing within the Green Belt.

The National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 139 and 140 state that Green Belt boundaries should only be altered through the preparation or updating of Local Plans. It continues to state that "once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans. Strategic policies should establish the need for any changes to Green Belt boundaries having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so they can endure beyond the plan period".

The Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment conducted for South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council includes the proposed site within its Final Report dated August 2021 as Parcel reference H05. The report concludes that the parcel makes a relatively limited contribution to maintaining and enhancing the setting of Cambridge, or preventing communities from merging with each other. The additional impact on the adjacent Green Belt of the release of the parcel is found to be minor.

It is proposed that the principle of allocating the site for residential development through review of the current Green Belt boundaries and inclusion within the village Development Framework as part of this Local Plan review process would be acceptable.

6. The Site

The site is bordered by Scotsdales Garden Centre to the North and housing along the High Street to the West and is therefore considered to be back land development, with a narrow presentation to the farm land to the East.

In the past the land has been used as a market garden and a Caravan Club registered site but is currently underutilised amenity land. Historically, the west end of the site housed greenhouses and market garden buildings. The land currently comprises of garden, grassland and ageing fruit trees.

It is initially proposed to include up to 3 custom / self-build houses to address a local need. However, there is potential for a mix of both custom and self-build housing, including a level of market housing, up to the maximum currently being set by the South Cambridgeshire District Council 2018 Adopted Local Plan Policy S11 for Infill villages of exceptionally up to about 8 dwellings.

The exact mix and quantity should be determined through high quality design study to ensure maximum assimilation to the village, to blend with the countryside and remain sensitive to existing residents and neighbours (including the applicants), while providing sustainable solutions and maximising biodiversity.

It is requested that the area marked in red within the Site Plan at Appendix 1 be included in the Village Development Framework.

It has been stated that where possible boundaries should follow a natural border and would benefit from being regularised along the southern boundary hedge to meet the High Street.

a) Garden land and subdivision of existing plots

The National Planning Policy Framework advises that plans should consider the case for setting out policies that resist inappropriate development of residential gardens, which is reflected in paragraph 7.62 of the South Cambridgeshire District Council 2018 Adopted Local Plan.

The emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan – First Proposals Policy H/GL will continue the approach of the adopted Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Local Plans by resisting inappropriate development of residential gardens and the subdivision of existing plots.

However, it is also noted in the emerging Local Plan that gardens can also provide scope for new residential development without the loss of countryside. This can be a particular advantage in rural communities where residential development opportunities can be constrained.

Policy H16 of the South Cambridgeshire District Council 2018 Adopted Local Plan addresses Development of Residential Gardens and sets out the circumstances under which the development of land used or last used as residential gardens for new dwellings will be permitted.

Paragraph 7.61 of the South Cambridgeshire District Council 2018 Adopted Local plan recognises that there are limited opportunities for new development in many villages and

that there can be some situations where there can be development in residential gardens without harm to the local area.

Considering the context and subject to the provisions of an appropriate design layout, the inclusion of Garden Land or subdivision of the existing plot is not considered inappropriate at this location.

b) Housing Density

Policy H8 (1) of the South Cambridgeshire District Council 2018 Adopted Local Plan sets out a general requirement to achieve an average net density of 30 dwellings per hectare (dph). However, this is qualified under Policy H8 (2), as "The net density on a site may vary from the above where justified by the character of the locality, the scale of the development, or other local circumstances."

This is further reinforced by paragraph 7.35 of the 2018 adopted Local Plan which notes that density guidelines are not needed for developments in Infill villages where a design-led approach taking account of local circumstances including the character of the locality and the scale of the development should be followed.

It is understood that these principles will be carried forward to the current emerging Local Plan – First Proposals which supports a design-led approach to determining capacity which considers a number of factors, including; the sites context, local character and local circumstances.

A delicate balance needs to be struck between land use and the need to assimilate into the village location, recognising the classification as an infill village.

Following confirmation of inclusion within the Village Development Framework, a detailed design study should be undertaken to identify the optimum design, layout and approach.

c) Climate change

House design should be optimised to ensure any homes constructed are high quality sustainable Eco-homes, with consideration given to climate change to ensure any new buildings are carbon 'net zero', designed with water efficiency in mind and to cater for the changing climate.

Provision will also be required to cater for charging points for electric vehicles and remote working.

7. Suitability – Site features and constraints

With the exclusion of the current Green Belt designation, subject of this request, there are no significant constraints which would be at a level sufficient to prevent successful conclusion of the chosen layout. Other constraints are set out below which should be considered in relation to the proposed development, noting that it is anticipated that a comprehensive study would be undertaken to ascertain the optimum approach and layout:

a) Contaminated land

No areas of contaminated land are expected on the site which represents a mix of greenfield and land that has not been exposed to likely contamination sources.

b) Biodiversity

The site contains a number of ageing fruit trees that are nearing the end of life and progressively falling or being cleared to avoid safety risk. The land also includes some old unproductive fruit trees that have been retained as small copse to promote bio diversity, in addition to the surrounding hedges. It is envisaged that the proposed layout in blending between the urban aspects of the village and the countryside will arrive at a layout that will be rich in biodiversity and at least maintain, if not improve on the existing levels.

c) Flood Risk and drainage

Attached as Appendix 2 is a copy of the relevant Flood map for planning which shows the land to be in flood zone 1, an area with a low probability of flooding. For an area less than 1 hectare no further flood assessment is understood to be required unless the area could be affected by other sources of flooding, which is not the case.

d) Heritage

The site does not include any heritage assets or listed buildings which could restrict the proposed inclusion within the village framework and is noted as being outside the conservation area.

e) Landscape impacts

It is not intended for there to be any significant landscape impacts. The approach towards Horningsea from the South is dominated by the urban views of The Garden Centre that are diluted in part by the existing hedging. Careful consideration will be required to arrive at a blend between the urban nature of the village and the countryside, where possible seeking to further dilute the urban views from the South.

f) Services and utilities

The site is adjacent to the High Street and nearby properties where there are existing services including electricity, telecoms, water and drainage that are anticipated to be available for the site. Fibre broadband up to 1gb is in the process of being mobilised (project confirmed and government vouchers issued Sep 2021) and expected to be introduced to Horningsea within 1 year by Sep 2022. It has been confirmed that additional capacity will be available for new additions to the village.

g) Public rights of way

There are no public rights of way on the site.

h) Access

Access is available via the High Street. The proposed site is just across the road from the start of the cycle path into Fen Ditton and Cambridge. Vehicular access could also be provided via the High Street.

i) Topography

The area is generally flat with no significant changes in levels that might cause concern or prevent development.

j) Availability

The land is fully owned by the applicants on a freehold basis and can be made available to suit the most appropriate timescales. It is anticipated that the schedule will be reviewed alongside the proposed solution once the timing of inclusion within the framework is known.

k) Deliverability

The land is fully owned by the applicants on a freehold basis and can be made available to suit the most appropriate timescales. There are no significant constraints anticipated that would prevent delivery within the period. It is envisaged that the schedule will be reviewed alongside the proposed solution once the timing of inclusion within the framework is known.

I) Viability

Considering the nature of the proposed inclusion site no issues with viability are envisaged but following inclusion of the land within the framework close attention will be required to the proposed layout and mix to offer the best overall solution.

8. Surroundings

As noted in the Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment Aug 2021, the landform and land cover within the subject site do not create any additional distinction from the village of Horningsea. Overall the subject site has a weak distinction from the edge of Horningsea, meaning it has a strong relationship with the inset area of the village.

a) North of the site

To the North of the site is Scotsdales Garden Centre which, as can be seen from the Green Belt Assessment aerial photo, represents an urban development running the length of the parcel. While there is a Leylandii hedge running along the north border which assists with visual separation, the urbanising influence of the inset area dominates.

b) South of the Site

To the South of the site is open farmland which contributes to the characteristic rural landscape and provides a strong distinction between the countryside and the Horningsea village inset area.

Beyond the adjacent parcel to the South of the site and East of Horningsea Road, is the area currently proposed for relocation of the Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Works (CWWTW), comprising of a construction access to the North of Low Fen Drove and the Treatment Plant to the South of Low Fen Drove. It is also proposed that a transfer tunnel to Waterbeach be laid to the East of Horningsea transiting the length of the village, including to the East of the subject inclusion site.

It is understood that the proposed CWWTW relocation should be considered in terms of potential impact that relocation could have on inclusion of the requested site in the village Framework which is set out further below:

c) Waste Water Treatment Works Relocation

It is understood to be the desire of Cambridge City and South Cambridge District Councils, under the strategic partnership of Cambridge Greater Shared Planning, to develop the site at North East Cambridge which currently houses the long established Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Works (CWWTW). Relocation of the CWWTW from land owned by Anglian Water Services Limited (AWSL), in addition to neighbouring Cambridge City Council land, is proposed to make way for residential development and other mixed uses, forming part of the proposed North East Cambridge Area Action Plan (NECAAP).

Investigations into the relocation of the CWWTW are currently being undertaken by AWSL supported by funding through a Homes England Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) Forward Funding Grant of £227m made to Cambridge City Council for the relocation and corresponding enabling works that are underway. It is explained in the HIF Business Case that external funding is required as the existing CWWTW remains fully operational for the future and AWSL is therefore unable to raise the necessary capital from shareholders and existing funds.

The proposed relocation site to the South of Horningsea is characterised by its open fenland landscape. Historically, Green Belt studies have been conducted in 2002 and 2015 which reinforce the importance of maintaining the open rural landscape forming the Fen edge. More recently the Greater Cambridge Green Belt Review - Aug 2021, conducted for South Cambridgeshire District Council, identifies the proposed location site (reference OA2) as having a rating for Green Belt releases of 'Very High Harm'. As the proposed development is currently planned to be contained within a bund up to 7m in height with a 4m screen atop and contain a number of digester towers potentially as high as 26m, this will introduce a significant visual intrusion at this location and even with the introduction of visual mitigation would appear to be contrary to a wide range of adopted and proposed planning policies forming the current planning legislation.

Relocation to the proposed site will also bring a substantial increase in the amount of Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) traffic for both construction and subsequent operation of the CWWTW, including sludge being imported from county wide sites, which is not suited to the village roads generally accepted as serving as a connection between villages and to trunk roads. The B1047 and C210 roads are the subject of a 7 tonne weight limit which reinforces the intended purpose of these roads. The construction entrance proposed to the North of Low

Fen Drove will encroach further on the village of Horningsea and require significant adaptation in the form of a ghost junction that is entirely out of keeping with the environs and intended purpose of the road network at this location.

The potential for odour has been highlighted as a significant risk. Track record for the existing CWWTW site is poor. To date AWSL is only offering a solution that offers 'negligible' levels of odour and has stated that one of the benefits of the proposed location is a perception of fewer 'receptors' and is therefore considered to provide an opportunity for a reduced technology solution. It is understood that the HIF application submitted in 2018 was based on existing technology to meet the available budget. In addition, other forms of pollution are likely to be present in operation of the plant including light, noise, fumes and dust, all of which are at odds with the countryside Green Belt location.

The proposed CWWTW location is currently contrary to a number of policies within the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan and corresponding National Planning Policy Framework and seeks to relocate the CWWTW safeguarded under the Minerals and Waste Plan adopted July 2021. However, due to the development timescales required by the HIF grant application, the preference of the joint venture between Cambridge City Council and AWSL is to seek consent via application for a Development Consent Order, which is perceived as being the most expedient process holding the greatest chance of success. AWSL has calculated that the potential growth that would be served by the proposed CWWTW meets the significant increase required from the current plant capacity to meet the 500,000 population necessary to qualify as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). It is understood that this volume in combination with relocation of the sludge processing plant permits the project to be classified as an NSIP and an application to be made for a Development Consent Order.

In terms of Local Plans and the Policies driving relocation of the CWWTW, the current 2018 Adopted South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council Local Plans include employment led Policies (SS/4 and Policy 15 respectively) for what was then the Cambridge Northern Fringe East, which refer to the creation of an Area Action Plan which will determine the amount of development, site capacity, viability, timescales and phasing of development. Since then the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan (NECAAP) has been issued for consultation at the Issues and Options / Regulation 18 phases and the Regulation 19 document is currently available in draft form for review by the Joint Local Planning Advisory Group. The NECAAP consultation phase is understood to be held pending the outcome of the CWWTW DCO review.

From a local planning perspective the permission required for relocation of the CWWTW will be determined by the Planning Inspectorate via the DCO process and consequently, is excluded from Local Plans. As a result the Greater Cambridge Emerging Local Plan references the brownfield benefits of the North East Cambridge (NEC) development but is silent on the corresponding Green Belt and environmental cost. It is currently unclear how and where the consultation will take place regarding choices on land use.

In the interim, as the DCO applicant, AWSL is responsible for the consultation process for relocation of the CWWTW and for demonstrating its sufficiency.

Having considered the area to the South of the proposed inclusion site, it is evident that significant concerns exist regarding the proposed relocation of the CWWTW. However, in the context of this request to include the subject plot within the village framework, the concerns held by surrounding villages and communities are likely to remain the same for the requested site, consequently the investigation currently being undertaken by AWSL should not prohibit inclusion of the proposed site within the Village Framework.

9. Conclusion

In summary, the site proposed at Appendix 1 is considered appropriate for the provision of 3 local self-build / custom homes and potentially a further 5 additional homes as determined by the Infill village classification, because:

- The requested inclusion site represents back land development and able to provide a level of housing without detriment to the surrounding countryside;
- The site is well connected, within a friendly village community, closely located to the Science Park, the City, local employment and the nearby cycleway;
- The land is relatively constraint free and any site specific matters can be addressed via a comprehensive design study to ensure that any resultant development will be appropriate for the village prior to commencement;
- The site sits outside of the Conservation area and has the potential to blend the village edge between the urban inset area of the village and the fenland countryside;
- The land is available for use as appropriate and is suitable and deliverable.

It is therefore proposed for the Development Framework for Horningsea village to be amended at this location to include the requested site shown on the site plan at Appendix 1.

Appendix 1

SITE LOCATION PLAN



Appendix 1 – Site Plan

Appendix 2

FLOOD MAPPING ASSESSMENT



Flood map for planning

Your reference Horningsea Location (easting/northing) Created 549367/262151 9 Dec 20

Created 9 Dec 2021 16:18

Your selected location is in flood zone 1, an area with a low probability of flooding.

This means:

- you don't need to do a flood risk assessment if your development is smaller than 1
 hectare and not affected by other sources of flooding
- you may need to do a flood risk assessment if your development is larger than 1
 hectare or affected by other sources of flooding or in an area with critical drainage
 problems

Notes

The flood map for planning shows river and sea flooding data only. It doesn't include other sources of flooding. It is for use in development planning and flood risk assessments.

This information relates to the selected location and is not specific to any property within it. The map is updated regularly and is correct at the time of printing.

Flood risk data is covered by the Open Government Licence which sets out the terms and conditions for using government data. https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-governmentlicence/version/3/

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Appendix 2 - Flood Mapping Assessment



Appendix 2 - Flood Mapping Assessment

Appendix 3

VILLAGE AMENITIES STUDY - PLAN & KEY



Map Key: Services & Facilities Study March 2014

