

British Land response to CP/ST

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The GCLP's ambition to optimise density and support higher-density development in locations where existing services and transport infrastructure can sustain it is welcome. Clear recognition of the benefits associated with higher density is an important and positive step.

British Land firmly supports the use of appropriate and high-quality density as a mechanism for delivering additional housing and commercial space in sustainable locations, while strengthening the viability of public transport and public services like healthcare.

The continued commitment to high-quality, well-designed places and buildings is welcome. The GCLP's emphasis on high-quality development provides important assurance; well-designed and well-built places help attract and retain talent, support thriving communities, and this ultimately underpins sustainable economic growth.

Well-executed densification in suitable places is essential for a growing city such as Cambridge. Higher-density development in areas with strong transport and public service provision is fundamental to ensuring long-term viability. Concentrating densification around existing infrastructure also provides significant environmental benefits by improving mobility and reducing reliance on private car travel.

However, there are significant concerns about some of the limits and constraints specified in the current approach to density within the Local Plan, particularly the emphasis on conformity and heritage considerations. The automatic assessment triggers linked to building heights across different location types (as per Appendix H: Skyline and tall buildings guidance) risks unduly constraining well-justified higher density developments which would deliver clear benefits in terms of amenity, future transport provision, and long-term viability and sustainability.

The requirement to protect views of historic tall elements by preventing any obstruction or detracting from distant, strategic, or local views of key landmarks has the potential to unnecessarily restrict opportunities for sustainable and strategic growth, and to limit the wider benefits associated with increased density. Although we do note that Land at South Trumpington does not fall within any of the strategic views or the foreground or immediate background of any sensitive view cones identified at Figures 35 and 36.

Greater flexibility on density is needed, including through reframing GP/ST. We would welcome the policy being revised to allow for taller buildings in a wider range of locations than currently specified or greater clarity on the application of Appendix H in the determination of planning applications.