

# Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan 2024-2045

Comments on behalf of Martin Grant Land Limited

Land at Silverdale Close, Coton

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## **Policy BG/TC: Improving Tree Canopy Cover and Tree Population**

- 1.1. These representations have been prepared by Stantec on behalf of Martin Grant Land Limited (formerly Martin Grant Homes) pursuant to their land interests at Silverdale Close, Coton. The site has been assessed within the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment 2025 (HELAA). The Site ID is 115148 and the HELAA Site ID is 40079.
- 1.2. These representations provide updated information regarding the site, and should be read in conjunction with the following submissions:
  - Call for Sites March 2019
  - Regulation 18 Issues and Options February 2020
  - Regulation 18 First Proposals December 2021
  - Call for Sites Submission Update March 2025
- 1.3. Policy BG/TC confirms that major development must demonstrate how it will achieve a minimum future tree canopy cover of 30% on site unless otherwise justified. There are serious concerns regarding how this may impact layouts and the viability of sites given the need to include additional tree planting and the necessary space needed to accommodate this.
- 1.4. Within major developments, there are several competing aspects needed on site including open space, outdoor sports, areas to achieve biodiversity net gain (which draft policy BG/BG suggests is needed on site) etc. Placing a mandatory requirement that 30% of a site area is to be planted will squeeze sites, resulting in poorer quality open space (they will all be treed) and a likely result of higher densities on available building areas.
- 1.5. There is also a clear conflict between this policy and biodiversity net gain. There are certain land uses that it is beneficial to replace on site as part of a wider layout, for example, wildflower meadow or grassland. These areas would benefit from a lack of tree shading. However, if developers are under pressure to plant further trees, there is a clear danger these will either replace or significantly affect other biodiversity net gain areas.
- 1.6. Paragraph 5.44 of the emerging Local Plan notes the Councils may also explore implications of applying an alternative policy approach of requiring a canopy cover percentage increase. This approach, subject to appropriate wording, is likely to provide developers more flexibility and would guarantee tree planting without potentially conflicting with other land uses as noted above. It is therefore suggested that points 1 and 2 of policy BG/TC is amended to the following:

*'Major development proposals must demonstrate, via a Tree Canopy Cover Assessment, how it will provide additional tree cover compared to the existing provision'*