

Greater Cambridge Local Plan 2024–2045

Regulation 18 Consultation December 2025 – January 2026

Land North of Mingle Lane and East of Hinton Way,
Stapleford, Cambridgeshire

Representations on behalf of Granta Land Ltd

Date: January 2026 | Pegasus Ref: P25-3066



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1. Introduction

- 1.1. These representations have been prepared by Pegasus Group on behalf of Granta Land Ltd in respect of their interests at Land North of Mingle Lane and East of Hinton Way, Stapleford, Cambridgeshire ('the site'). The site is recorded under 'Site ID: 115763' and 'Site ID: 115189' within the Greater Cambridge Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (2025).
- 1.2. These representations are submitted in response to the current Greater Cambridge Local Plan (GCLP) Regulation 18 consultation which sets out the emerging approach to accommodating growth across the shared Local Planning Authority areas of Cambridge City Council (CDC) and South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) over the next plan period (2024–2045).
- 1.3. The purpose of these representations is primarily to respond to the emerging Vision; Development Strategy; and Draft Allocations proposed by the consultation and to reaffirm the deliverability (suitability, availability and viability) of the above site and the exceptional circumstances in support of a revision to the Green Belt, alongside the provision of a site-specific policy that allocates the site for residential-led development in the emerging Local Plan.
- 1.4. These representations are accompanied by a Site Location Plan (**Appendix 1**); an Access Strategy (**Appendix 2**); and an emerging Concept Masterplan (**Appendix 3**) for the site. The Concept Masterplan also presents a Comprehensive Vision for Stapleford & Great Shelford to demonstrate how the site could be brought forward alongside adjoining land.
- 1.5. The Concept Masterplan has been informed by technical surveys which identify the local constraints and illustrates the opportunities presented to deliver a high-quality and sustainable residential-led development capable of contributing positively towards addressing identified housing needs and complementing the economic ambitions for Greater Cambridge.

2. Summary of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan

Our Vision for Greater Cambridge

- 2.1. The Vision for Greater Cambridge is to be supported and clearly sets out the ambition for a sustainable and prosperous future for the area.
- 2.2. The Government is clear on the importance of Cambridge internationally and to the UK economy, with successive Government's promoting the 'Case for Cambridge'¹ and the current Government reigniting plans to deliver the Oxford–Cambridge Growth Corridor². The Government has subsequently established the Cambridge Growth Company to seek to address barriers to growth and help unlock Cambridge's full potential by 2050, including through the proposed establishment of a centrally led Development Corporation³.
- 2.3. The level of growth proposed by the Case for Cambridge is unprecedented and it is therefore critical that the anticipated growth comes forward in a sustainable manner and delivers exemplar place-making, combining good design and sustainable transport with new employment and housing that benefits everyone.
- 2.4. However, as highlighted within our representations the proposed Development Strategy for achieving these goals is misguided and places too much reliance on new settlements and complex major development sites, which are in turn reliant on significant infrastructure projects to serve these new places. New infrastructure projects take time to deliver and the delays in delivery of new settlements in the Greater Cambridge area, along with the necessary strategic infrastructure are well documented, indeed necessitating the Government intervention above. It is considered that the GCLP is overly optimistic regarding the delivery timescales of many of the proposed draft allocations which represents a real risk that Greater Cambridge will fail to deliver the homes it needs within the plan period to support its economic ambitions.
- 2.5. As expanded on below, a more balanced approach to the spatial distribution of growth is required – one that recognises the role of established, sustainable settlements served by existing high-quality public transport infrastructure, which reduces the reliance on the private car. The sustainable villages of Stapleford and Great Shelford are therefore capable of playing an important role in contributing to the success of Greater Cambridge.

¹ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1d8edff11704896615973/The_Case_for_Cambridge_March_2024.pdf

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/reeves-i-am-going-further-and-faster-to-kick-start-the-economy>

³ <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2025-10-23/hcws990>

3. Development Strategy

Vision for Greater Cambridge

- 3.1. As noted in the summary above, the general Vision for Greater Cambridge and the seven Strategic Priorities are to be supported for their ambition to deliver a sustainable and prosperous future for the area.
- 3.2. The Strategic Priorities in respect of Climate Change; Biodiversity and Green Spaces; Well-Being and Social Inclusion; Great Places; Jobs; Homes; and Connectivity and Infrastructure, all align with the Government's existing and emerging overarching national planning policy objectives to deliver mutually supportive economic, social and environmental net gains through new development.
- 3.3. However, the proposed Development Strategy to achieve this Vision is misguided and overly reliant on the delivery of a small number of new settlements and complex major development projects, which are in turn reliant on significant infrastructure projects to serve these new places. The GCLP has significantly underestimated the timescales to deliver these key sites which risks the ability to deliver the stated Vision within the plan period.
- 3.4. Moreover, the proposed inclusion of a new settlement at Grange Farm is specifically challenged on sustainability grounds as it is difficult to see how this car dependent proposal aligns with the stated GCLPs climate change priorities for instance.
- 3.5. It is evident that the Development Strategy underplays the role of existing sustainable settlements and given the anticipated delays to the delivery of key sites, a more balanced approach to the spatial distribution of growth is required – one that recognises the role of the established, sustainable settlements served by existing high-quality public transport infrastructure, which reduces the reliance on the private car. The sustainable villages of Stapleford and Great Shelford are therefore capable of playing an important role in contributing to the success of Greater Cambridge.



Policy S/JH: New Jobs and Homes

- 3.6. The general ambition of Draft Policy S/JH/: New Jobs and Homes is supported.
- 3.7. The National Planning Policy Framework (2024) seeks to significantly boost the supply of new homes (para 61) informed by a local housing need assessment using the standard method in national planning guidance. Moreover, the National Planning Guidance highlights there will be circumstances where it is appropriate to consider whether actual housing need is higher than that indicated by the standard method.
- 3.8. As highlighted within the 'Greater Cambridge Employment and Housing Needs Updated 2024-2025 (September 2025)', the economic-led housing need for Greater Cambridge broadly aligns with the standard method. The GCLP therefore appropriately identifies its housing needs for the period 2024-2045 based on the Government's standard method as 2,295 net new homes per annum totalling 48,195 homes over the plan period. The GCLP anticipates that the existing allocations within the adopted 2018 plan will deliver around 37,865 homes by 2045 and as such identifies new sites to deliver the shortfall of around 13,460 new homes and provide a buffer.
- 3.9. It is worth noting that the 'Case for Cambridge' envisaged growth scenarios of between 100,000-150,000 new homes for Cambridge by 2050 – potentially doubling or even tripling the number of homes currently being planned for in the GCLP. Whilst further details are yet to be published, there is clearly a potential misalignment of the growth scenarios being planned for in GCLP and which would plainly trigger a need for an immediate review of the Plan. However, until such time as the Cambridge Growth Company's plans are made public, the current approach of seeking to meet objectively assessed local housing needs in full and ensuring a buffer to overall housing provision is welcome to provide flexibility and resilience in delivery. Although some of the sites relied upon to deliver new homes and the anticipated rate of housing delivery are challenged, as explored below under Draft Policy S/DS: Development Strategy. As highlighted below, it is critical that housing need and delivery keeps pace with anticipated jobs growth in order to deliver the economic ambitions for Greater Cambridge and the Mayor for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough's target of tripling the size of the local economy by 2050 as set out within the Local Growth Plan (2025)⁴.
- 3.10. Whilst the overall provision of housing is supported, it is noted that the supporting text to Draft Policy S/JH: New jobs and homes, provides housing requirements for neighbourhood areas as set out in Appendix D. Appendix D identifies a need for just c.134 net new homes for Stapleford and Great Shelford. The Local Plan supporting text also confirms that the Neighbourhood Plan areas can choose to meet or exceed the housing requirement but that the delivery of allocations already included in the GCLP cannot be used to meet the housing requirement of a neighbourhood area. The Stapleford and Great Shelford Neighbourhood Plan was 'Made' on 2nd October 2025 but does not contain any existing Local Plan allocations or seek to allocate any new sites for housing. Accordingly, there is an anticipation in the GCLP that some new growth will be directed to Stapleford and Great Shelford, which is supported. However, the level of anticipated growth (c.134 net new homes) is considered to significantly underplay the role of the villages and the potential

⁴ https://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/C221033-CPCA-Local-Growth-Plan-Stage-7_v21_Acc.pdf



these highly sustainable settlements can play towards delivering the Vision for Greater Cambridge, as further explored under Draft Policy S/DS: Development Strategy.

Policy S/DS: Development Strategy

3.11. The Development Strategy for the Greater Cambridge Local Plan states on page 16:

“Our development strategy aims to direct development to where active and public transport is the natural choice, where green infrastructure can be delivered alongside new development, and where jobs, services and facilities can be located near to where people live.” [our emphasis]

3.12. However, most of the proposed allocations, both existing and proposed, are in locations where the required public transport does not currently exist and the delivery of which is outside the control of the Greater Cambridge authorities. For instance, Cambourne North is reliant on the delivery of East–West Rail; Bourn Airfield is reliant on the delivery of the Cambourne to Cambridge Busway; Waterbeach is reliant on the delivery of a new railway station; and Cambridge East is reliant on the Cambridge Eastern Access busway and a potential new railway station.

3.13. Whilst there is no objection in principle to the inclusion of these particular allocations, the key point is firstly, that the Development Strategy underplays the role that the existing public transport network can and should play in delivering sustainable development, particularly along existing railway corridors which provide ‘day one’ access to rapid transit; and secondly, that the GCLP evidently underestimates the time involved to deliver the necessary public transport infrastructure to serve the draft allocations and overestimates the delivery rates for the associated new homes.

3.14. In respect of the first point, the GCLP states (para 2.88) that the proposed strategy is ‘heavily informed by the location of existing and committed public transport schemes’, however as highlighted above, in many instances, the funding and necessary approvals for the supporting infrastructure are still unconfirmed and therefore uncertain. The reliance on such locations for growth in favour of directing proportionate growth to established sustainable settlements is therefore unsound.

3.15. Delays to the delivery of new infrastructure and the knock-on effects for the delivery of new housing is well documented in the Greater Cambridge area. Appendix E of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan highlights a reliance on a spike in housing delivery in 2028–2030 from strategic sites such as Northstowe, which assumes some very ambitious delivery rates of up to 300 dwellings per annum (dpa) for individual parcels. However as reported by Lichfields⁵, the mean annual build-out rates on large sites have continued to fall and now stands at c.100–188 dpa due to persistent challenging market conditions, particularly for new settlements where demand can be more muted given the absence of established communities and the slow pace of delivering supporting infrastructure.

3.16. Figure 12 of the GCLP illustrates the over-reliance now placed on new settlements in meeting housing needs. 44% of the proposed distribution in housing growth in the Greater Cambridge Local Plan is now anticipated to come forward at the new settlements, compared to 23% in the adopted Local Plan and 18% in the previous Structure Plan. The previous more balanced approach to the distribution of development is considered to be the key to Greater Cambridge’s success to date, providing inherent flexibility and resilience

⁵ https://lichfields.uk/media/w3wjmw0/start-to-finish-3_how-quickly-do-large-scale-housing-sites-deliver.pdf

to ensure housing delivery continued to come forward across the Greater Cambridge area, even where unexpected delays have been experienced at some key sites. In this context, the GCLP is considered to be overly dependent on a limited number of large and complex sites to achieve its stated strategic objective of meeting identified development needs in the plan period.

- 3.17. Furthermore, whilst the proposed allocation of major sites within the Cambridge Urban Area is supported in principle given the inherent sustainability of these locations, the GCLP recognises the challenges in delivering sites such as North East Cambridge in light of recent Government announcements that it will not be funding the relocation of the Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plan (CWWTP). This has created significant uncertainty and whilst North East Cambridge is retained as a potential allocation at this Regulation 18 stage, it is considered that should no alternative funding become available ahead of the Regulation 19 stage later in 2026, it would be unsound to continue to include the site for allocation in the Plan.
- 3.18. With regard to the proposed allocations on the edge of Cambridge, it is also questioned whether the assumptions in the GCLP for Cambridge East are realistic given recent announcements that Marshalls has cancelled its planned move from Cambridge Airport to Cranfield. Whilst it is understood that Marshalls still aims to vacate the site by 2030 to enable the new neighbourhood at Cambridge East to come forward, this is predicated on now identifying and relocating to a new premises for its aerospace operations. Such sensitive commercial negotiations take time and accordingly the delivery trajectory for Cambridge East is considered to be similarly uncertain.
- 3.19. The above remarks do not seek to object in principle to the inclusion of these particular draft allocations but seek to highlight the inherent uncertainty associated with the presumed delivery rates for these major development sites which are heavily reliant on new public transport infrastructure provision to serve them; or are subject to unresolved viability constraints; or subject to factors outside the control of the planning system, all of which take time to resolve. These draft allocations will undoubtedly take longer to deliver than anticipated and it is therefore essential for the GCLP to allocate additional suitable and sustainable sites to ensure identified housing needs are addressed now and to support the ambitious economic growth objectives for the Greater Cambridge area.

Objection to Grange Farm

- 3.20. Granta Land Ltd wish to register their formal objection to the proposed allocation under Policy S/DS at point “2.c. new settlements”, “ii. Land adjacent to the A11 and A1307 at Grange Farm in the Rural Southern Cluster”.
- 3.21. National planning policy seeks to direct growth to locations that limit the need to travel and offer a genuine choice of transport modes. However, Grange Farm is fundamentally a car dependent and inherently unsustainable location.
- 3.22. The proposed allocation of Grange Farm is entirely predicated on the Cambridge South East Transport (CSET) busway to make it sustainable as a location for a new settlement. However, in the event that CSET is approved, the planned route currently stops short of Grange Farm, terminating to the west of the A11 and would therefore necessitate a further extension of the busway and a new Transport Hub to the east of the A11 to serve the new settlement. The timescales for the necessary planning approvals and construction of any route extension are similarly uncertain.

- 3.23. Experience demonstrates that new transport infrastructure often lags years behind housing delivery. If CSET is delayed or scaled back, then Grange Farm will have no viable public transport alternative, leading to severe impacts on the local road network. Experience also suggests that reliance on bus-led public transport strategies alone rarely achieves the desired modal shifts required to make a new settlement of this scale sustainable. It is therefore difficult to understand how the proposed allocation of Grange Farm aligns with the GCLP strategy to direct development to where active and public transport is the 'natural choice'.
- 3.24. The sustainability credentials for Grange Farm and the assumption that the site could deliver 2,550 homes within the plan period is therefore reasonably challenged given the reliance on the CSET busway and its necessary extension. Should Grange Farm be retained as a proposed allocation, then it is clear that occupation should be restricted to align with the completion of CSET and its proposed extension in order to offer a choice of transport modes on day one, as required by national planning policy. In such circumstances, it is questioned whether Grange Farm will be capable of delivering any new homes within the plan period and its inclusion within the GCLP therefore becomes untenable.
- 3.25. It is appropriate for the GCLP to adopt an alternative Development Strategy which offers a more balanced approach to the distribution of growth, which recognises the role of existing sustainable settlements, particularly those on existing railway corridors, to contribute positively towards a sustainable future for Greater Cambridge.

Proposed Alternative Development Strategy – The Rural Southern Cluster and the Role of Sustainable Villages

- 3.26. The above demonstrates the uncertainties associated with the proposed Development Strategy and the need to allocate additional suitable and sustainable sites to make up the anticipated shortfall in housing delivery within the plan period.
- 3.27. As highlighted at paragraph 2.26 of the GCLP, meeting the requirement for new homes and jobs brings the need to support development with the right infrastructure. However, the GCLP is currently overly reliant on potential new public transport infrastructure which will take time to deliver (if approved). A more balanced approach would be to recognise the role of existing sustainable locations, such as the villages along the existing railway corridors, which are already served by a choice of public transport modes. Such locations are evidently capable of contributing positively to the development needs of Greater Cambridge.
- 3.28. The Development Strategy is driven by the stated objective to protect the Green Belt, however this overlooks the recent changes in national planning policy and the introduction of 'Grey Belt' which explicitly seeks to bring forward suitable Green Belt land in sustainable locations, which do not contribute strongly to Green Belt purposes. The Development Strategy is also heavily reliant on bus-led public transport strategies to serve the proposed allocations, such as Grange Farm, however emerging national planning policy is also clear that the priority should be to focus new development around train stations.
- 3.29. National planning policy states that Green Belt boundaries may be altered through the Local Plan-making process (para 145); where exceptional circumstances exist, including instances where an authority cannot meet its identified development needs (para 146); having examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified needs (para 147); and the need to promote sustainable patterns of development (para 148).

- 3.30. Whilst the GCLP suggests at para 2.64 that the identified development needs alone are not considered to provide the 'exceptional circumstances' required in national planning policy to justify removing land from the Green Belt, this is based on the presumption that the proposed allocations will deliver as anticipated. However, our representations cast significant doubt over the ability of the proposed allocations to deliver new homes within a timely manner and reasonably challenges the justification for the inclusion of Grange Farm within the Plan.
- 3.31. As a consequence, the GCLP is not planning positively to meet its identified needs as required by national planning policy (para 36) and has failed to consider all reasonable options for meeting its identified needs in a sustainable way, including directing growth to the villages along the existing railway corridors. It is our view therefore that exceptional circumstances do exist at a strategic level to justify amendments to the Green Belt and that directing appropriate growth towards sustainable villages which benefit from existing public transport provision, such as Stapleford and Great Shelford, aligns with the national planning policy objective to promote sustainable patterns of development.

Policy S/GB: The Cambridge Green Belt

Objection to Policy S/GB: The Cambridge Green Belt

- 3.32. Policy S/GB sets out the Green Belt policy for Cambridge. Whilst it is appropriate for local policies to interpret national policy in the local context, local policies must still be consistent with the purposes of the Green Belt as established at para 143 of the NPPF.
- 3.33. National planning policy confirms the second purpose of Green Belt as “*b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another*”. However, the third purpose of GCLP Policy S/GB is stated at 1.c. as to “*prevent communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with the city*”.
- 3.34. Purpose 1c is therefore inconsistent with the second purpose of Green Belt as set out in national planning policy as it refers to ‘communities’ and not ‘towns’. Reference to communities could have wider implications for the effective application of Green Belt and Grey Belt policy, inconsistent with the national policy objectives of delivering sustainable patterns of development.

Requested Change

- 3.35. It is requested that Purpose 1c in Policy S/GB is amended to refer to ‘towns’ and not ‘communities’.
- 3.36. The amended text should be as follows: “*prevent towns in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with the city*”.

4. Site Allocations

Policy S/RSC: Other Site Allocations in the Rural Southern Cluster

Requested Change – Allocation of Land North of Mingle Lane and East of Hinton Way, Stapleford

- 4.1. The above representations demonstrate that exceptional circumstances exist at a strategic level to justify amendments to the Green Belt by virtue of the need for the GCLP to identify additional suitable and sustainable sites for development to meet identified needs; and that directing appropriate growth towards sustainable villages which benefit from existing public transport provision, such as Stapleford and Great Shelford, aligns with the national planning policy objective to promote sustainable patterns of development.
- 4.2. In light of the above, it is requested that Policy S/DS: Development Strategy, part d. In the Rural Southern Cluster and/or Policy S/RSC: Other Site Allocations in the Rural Southern Cluster is amended to include a minor amendment to the Green Belt and the allocation of Land North of Mingle Lane and East of Hinton Way (HELAA, 2025 – Site ID: 115763 and Site ID: 115189) for residential-led development.
- 4.3. The following therefore seeks to highlight the sustainability and deliverability credentials of the site and presents the opportunity to contribute positively towards addressing the identified housing needs of Greater Cambridge.

Sustainability

- 4.4. The GCLP confirms at paragraph 2.70 that the previously identified Draft Allocation at Mingle Lane (GCLP – First Proposals site reference: S/RSC site HW) represented a “*highly sustainable location*”, but which has subsequently been removed on the basis that the Greater Cambridge authorities do not consider the exceptional circumstances exist to justify its release from the Green Belt, due to the inclusion of Grange Farm. We address the flawed inclusion of Grange Farm and the justification for exceptional circumstances above.
- 4.5. The site put forward by Granta Land Ltd (**Appendix 1**) directly adjoins the previous Draft Allocation at Mingle Lane (site reference: S/RSC site HW) and as such the overarching conclusion that the villages of Stapleford and Great Shelford represent a highly sustainable location is fully supported.
- 4.6. The evidence base⁶ accompanying the GCLP further reaffirms the sustainability of the villages as benefitting from a good range of local services and facilities to serve the local community, including existing sustainable travel options provided by Shelford train station, existing bus services and the DNA cycle path, linking the villages to key employment centres in and around Cambridge. Whilst Stapleford and Great Shelford are not reliant on the proposed CSET busway, should the scheme be approved, then the villages will evidently

⁶ Greater Cambridge Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (2025)

benefit from additional sustainable travel options, whilst also supporting the business case for the CSET project.

- 4.7. National planning policy seeks to focus significant development towards locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes (para 110). The villages of Stapleford and Great Shelford are plainly sustainable and offer a wide choice of sustainable travel options. It is therefore appropriate for the GCLP to give greater consideration to the role these sustainable villages can play in contributing positively towards addressing the identified needs of Greater Cambridge.

Alignment with the National Strategy for Cambridge Biomedical Campus

- 4.8. The proximity to local employment opportunities is particularly important in the Greater Cambridge context.
- 4.9. The GCLP is correct to highlight that the south of Cambridge is home to a range of major business parks with world-leading facilities, benefiting from some excellent and improving public transport links. Indeed, it is noted that while previous Local Plans have tended to focus additional housing growth to the west (Cambourne), north west (Northstowe) and north east (Waterbeach) of the city, most of the jobs growth has taken place to the south and south-east of the city in locations such as the Cambridge Biomedical Campus (CBC), Babraham Research Campus, Granta Park, the Genome Campus, Melbourn Science Park and the Chesterford Research Park. Given the significant jobs growth to the south of Cambridge (both past and future) it is clear that some additional housing growth should be directed to these areas, particularly in locations that benefit from existing public transport infrastructure, rather than relying on proposed public transport infrastructure that is yet to be built and which there is currently no certainty of delivery.
- 4.10. Of particular note, the CBC is recognised to be of national and international importance as an employment and innovation centre. The GCLP seeks to support the evolution of the CBC as a globally significant centre of healthcare, life sciences research and innovation, with the number of people working at CBC anticipated to grow from 22,000 now to 40,000 in the coming years.
- 4.11. The CBC Vision 2050 (July 2024) within the GCLP evidence base highlights that many of its key workers, scientists and business people commute in every day, with many travelling long distances having been squeezed out of the city by high housing costs. These pressures are having detrimental effects on the CBC institutions, who struggle to retain key staff; and local communities, by pushing up house prices, creating congestion and generally impacting the quality of life of local people. However, the life sciences sector in Cambridge will continue to grow, and it is critical for the local, regional and national economy that it continues to do so, and attempting to constrain its growth by limiting opportunity will only serve to add heat to housing markets and further stress to local services.
- 4.12. As a sustainable location for new development, it is proposed for CBC to accommodate approximately 1,000 new homes on-site to support the future growth and success of the campus. However, the CBC Housing Study (April 2024) highlights a need for 4–5,000 affordable homes across all tenures. The CBC Vision 2050 identifies the need for solutions elsewhere within a reasonable, affordable and environmentally friendly commuting distance. Clearly it would be beneficial both to CBC and employees alike for new homes to be built close to these new jobs and with access via existing sustainable transport. As highlighted

below, the site, benefits from a range of excellent sustainable travel options, which are set to improve further following the opening of Cambridge South Train Station in 2026 and potentially further still should the CSET busway be approved.

- 4.13. The growth of CBC is of national importance and recognised as such by successive governments. One of the principal barriers to growth is identified to be the availability of affordable and accessible housing in close proximity to the CBC. The site therefore represents a highly sustainable location and would make a positive contribution towards addressing the identified need for both market and affordable housing in a location just minutes from the Campus via existing and proposed high quality public transport and sustainable travel corridors.

Green Belt / Grey Belt

- 4.14. As highlighted above, it is our view that exceptional circumstances exist at the strategic level to amend the Cambridge Green Belt by virtue of the failure of the GCLP to plan positively to meet its identified housing needs.
- 4.15. Moreover, national planning policy states (para 148) where it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give priority to previously developed land, then consider 'Grey Belt' which is not previously developed, and then other Green Belt locations, to promote sustainable patterns of development.
- 4.16. In addition, it is to be noted that emerging national planning policy further states that the preparation of Local Plans should be informed by an assessment which identifies Grey Belt and informs any Green Belt boundary alterations (Draft National Development Management Policy GB2); and Green Belt boundaries should be altered through the Local Plan-making process where this would enable the development of land around stations (Draft National Development Management Policy GB3). Accordingly, there is a clear expectation in current and emerging national planning policy for Local Plans to consider the role of Grey Belt in identifying suitable and sustainable sites to contribute towards identified development needs, and particularly near train stations. The GCLP currently fails to give Grey Belt any consideration in informing the proposed Development Strategy.
- 4.17. Grey Belt is defined in national planning policy as:
- "Land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not **strongly** contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143. 'Grey belt' excludes land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development"* [our emphasis]
- 4.18. It is noted that the Greater Cambridge authorities have commissioned an update to the Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment (GCGBA, 2021) in order to respond to changes in national planning policy, particularly in response to 'Grey Belt'. However, the 2021 GBA nonetheless considered the relative contribution of the site to Green Belt purposes, concluding that the site provides a 'moderate' contribution at best.
- 4.19. National planning practice guidance (NPPG) provides further guidance for assessing Green Belt to identify Grey Belt land. The following therefore provides a high-level assessment of the site against the definition of Grey Belt as set out within national planning policy.

Table 1: Assessment of the Site Against Grey Belt Tests

Grey Belt Purposes Test	Assessment	Conclusion
<p>Does the site strongly contribute to Green Belt purpose (a) – to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas?</p>	<p>NPPG paragraph 64-005-20250225 states that villages should not be considered large built-up areas.</p> <p>Stapleford and Great Shelford are acknowledged within the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans to be highly sustainable villages. Notwithstanding this, the GBA, 2021 assessed the site as making only a ‘moderate’ contribution to Green Belt purpose a).</p> <p>The site represents the sustainable extension of a village, not a large built-up area, being enclosed by existing built form to the south, east and west and a committed countryside park to the north, creating strong defensible boundaries.</p> <p>Should the CSET busway be approved then this will introduce a further significant urbanising feature within the landscape to the north of the site.</p>	<p>The site is Grey Belt.</p>
<p>Does the site strongly contribute to Green Belt purpose (b) – to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another?</p>	<p>NPPG paragraph 64-005-20250225 states that this purpose relates to the merging of towns, not villages.</p> <p>Moreover, the villages of Stapleford and Great Shelford have already merged with no physical differentiation now between them.</p> <p>The site does not form a gap between towns and its development will not result in the merging of neighbouring towns.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the above, the GBA, 2021 assessed the site as making only a ‘limited/no contribution’ to Green Belt purpose b).</p>	<p>The site is Grey Belt.</p>
<p>Does the site strongly contribute to Green Belt purpose (d) – to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns?</p>	<p>NPPG paragraph 64-005-20250225 states this purpose relates to historic towns, not villages.</p> <p>The site adjoins the villages of Stapleford and Great Shelford and therefore does not form part of the setting of, or make a strong contribution to, the special character of a ‘historic town’.</p> <p>The GBA, 2021 supports this view having assessed the site as making only a ‘relatively limited’ contribution to Green Belt purpose d).</p>	<p>The site is Grey Belt.</p>

Do any policy exclusions within Framework footnote 7 provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development?	The site is within the Green Belt, however in line with Footnote 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework, there are no strong reasons in respect of Green Belt, ecology, landscape, heritage; or flood risk, for restricting development at this location.	The site is Grey Belt.
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4.20. Accordingly, the site is considered to represent a sequentially preferable location for release from the Green Belt and allocation for development by virtue of its Grey Belt status, alongside the site’s sustainability and deliverability (suitable, available and viable) credentials, as expanded upon further below.

Site Deliverability

4.21. Having established the case for directing growth towards the sustainable villages, including Stapleford and Great Shelford, the following demonstrates the deliverability of the site, being capable of contributing positively towards the identified development needs of Greater Cambridge.

4.22. These representations are accompanied by an Access Strategy (**Appendix 2**) and high-level Concept Masterplan (**Appendix 3**) to illustrate the emerging vision for the site, informed by detailed investigation of the site’s constraints and opportunities as summarised below.

Table 2: Deliverability Assessment

Suitability		Updated HELAA RAG Rating
Landscape	<p>The site lies to the north of the villages of Stapleford and Great Shelford and is bound to the north by the ‘countryside park’ delivered as part of the recently constructed Strawberry Fields care village (ref: 20/02929/OUT); to the east by the care village itself and residential dwellings at Chalk Hill (off Gog Magog Way); to the south by residential dwellings to the north of Gog Magog Way, Dukes Meadow and Mingle Lane, and to the west by residential dwellings to the east of Hinton Way. The site is therefore contained on three sides by existing development, and the CSET busway is proposed to pass along the site’s northern boundary with the countryside park immediately beyond, thereby fully enclosing the site from the wider countryside (if delivered).</p> <p>The landform rises from the Granta Valley to the south which is generally located below the 20m contour up to the Gog Magog Chalk Hills to the north where the maximum elevation is circa 74m AOD at Magog Down and Wandlebury Ring. There are intervening areas of higher ground and chalk hills near the Site – i.e. at Fox Hill above the 50m contour, at Clarke’s Hill above the 45m contour, and at Little Trees Hill above the 70m contour.</p>	Green

	<p>The land use within the site and surrounding area comprises a number of large rectilinear arable fields which extend onto both the chalk landscape that rises upwards to the north-east and within the Granta Valley to the south-east. The fields are bound by native hedgerows which are typically clipped at c 1.5–2.5m in height. There are few hedgerow trees. In places the field boundaries are unmarked with no hedgerows which creates a larger and more open scale to the landscape – i.e. to the south-east of Haverhill Road. The arable fields typically extend up to the edge of Stapleford, where the settlement edge demonstrates a soft vegetated edge resulting from the numerous trees and hedges in back gardens that address the surrounding landscape.</p> <p>Woodland and tree cover is concentrated around the chalk hills as typified at Wandlebury, Fox Hill and Clarke’s Hill. These include shelter belts and hilltop copses. In the case of Fox Hill and Clarke’s Hill the tree cover is also associated with a small number of larger properties set in mature gardens, including tree avenues and established formal gardens – i.e. those at Middlefield, Hillstead and The Uplands.</p> <p>The village of Stapleford primarily comprises residential development, including a number of individual detached properties both within the historic core of the village (i.e. along Mingle Lane and Gog Magog Way) and also as linear ribbon development spreading north along Hinton Way. The southern boundary of the site adjoins the Stapleford Conservation Area that covers the historic core of the village and includes the Grade II* Listed Church of St Andrew and its churchyard that also adjoin the site’s southern boundary. Stapleford Cemetery is located in a detached position from the village, adjoining the south-western corner of the site, and is accessed along a narrow single-track road. There are a number of trees around the perimeter of the cemetery which contain and filter views to the arable landscape beyond.</p> <p>There are few public footpaths and bridleways in the locality and none passing through the site. Approximately 1km to the north-east of the site, Magog Down offers wider public accessibility and partial views towards the site are available from the North Down, and in particular from the top of Little Trees Hill. From this higher ground, the recently delivered Strawberry Fields care village forms a noticeable component within wider panoramic views and serves to partially screen the eastern part of the site, whilst the western parts of the site are largely obscured by hilltop woodland at Fox Hill.</p> <p>Overall, the site is very well-contained by existing built form and vegetation, and there are very few opportunities to observe the site from the surrounding countryside. Road users in the locality have little perception of the site given the extent of roadside vegetation and residential development around the perimeter of the site; however, there are occasional gaps between dwellings along Gog Magog Way and Mingle Lane that allow glimpsed views into the site.</p> <p>The emerging Concept Masterplan for the site demonstrates how the site could be developed to deliver new homes on the lower-lying land within the site. Development would extend no further north than existing built form along Hinton Way and the northern edge of</p>	
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	<p>Strawberry Fields, following the landform within the site to avoid areas of higher ground. The new settlement edge would be delivered to sensitively address the wider landscape, in particular a substantial area of public open space (POS) proposed for the northern edge of the site.</p> <p>To the south, another large area of POS would be included to protect the setting of both the Conservation Area and St Andrew’s Church. This landscape buffer would ensure that Conservation Area maintains its rural setting and would allow for a stronger relationship with Stapleford Cemetery. A wide viewing corridor would also be introduced to maintain existing longer views from the churchyard looking northwards towards the rising chalkland, and the property at Hillstead.</p> <p>Additional sightlines and pedestrian/cycle routes would be included where there are existing gaps between dwellings on Gog Magog Way and Mingle Lane. The proposed development parcels within the site would be shaped by these routes, creating opportunities for new green corridors, avenues, and other publicly accessible places within the site.</p>	
Heritage	<p>The site lies to the north of the Stapleford Conservation Area. This is a relatively small Conservation Area focussed on the historic core of the village. Within the Conservation Area are three listed buildings, including the Church of St Andrew listed at Grade II*. The church is situated on the northern side of Mingle Lane, with views outwards from the churchyard towards the site; views towards the church are filtered by the well vegetated boundary.</p> <p>To maintain a green character to the immediate setting of the Conservation Area and church, a landscaped offset has been incorporated within the southern portion abutting the Conservation Area boundary. This will maintain a green and undeveloped character to the immediate setting of both designated heritage assets.</p> <p>Recognising the sensitivity of longer views to the rising chalkland, the green infrastructure plan incorporates a viewing corridor connecting the retained open space at the southern end to the higher ground at the northern end of the site and beyond. This will help to mitigate the impacts of the introduction of built form within the wider setting of the Conservation Area to the north.</p>	Green
Access	<p>The site represents an exceptional opportunity to provide housing in a location which will become uniquely well connected to many thousands of nationally and locally important jobs at CBC and other science parks within the Cambridge Southern Cluster. As highlighted above, the villages of Stapleford and Great Shelford benefit from a range of existing sustainable travel options, including train, bus and cycle provisions linking to key employment centres in and around Cambridge. The site is located only 500 metres from Shelford Railway station which provides access to Cambridge Central, Cambridge North, Cambridge South (once opened in 2026) and London. The importance of rail access is reflected in the most</p>	Green

	<p>recently updated NPPF. Using the DfT’s Connectivity Tool, the site scores above average as a national comparison even before the inclusion of CSET is accounted for.</p> <p>The connectivity of the site would be further enhanced should the Cambridge South East Transport (CSET) project be approved, which proposes a fully segregated busway between Granta Park and the Cambridge Biomedical Campus from which the existing Cambridge Guided Busway continues to central Cambridge. The site is located adjacent to CSET and the proposed Stapleford Halt with anticipated journey times of 11–12 minutes to CBC and Cambridge South Railway Station.</p> <p>Directing new homes to sustainable locations that relate to existing transport infrastructure represents the best opportunity Cambridge has to address the connectivity and infrastructure challenges with threaten to undermine its success and national importance. This site clearly complements that ambition and the potential delivery of CSET only further enhances its sustainable credentials.</p> <p>Away from more strategic connectivity, the site is accessed from Hinton Way and the enclosed access designs (Appendix 2) have been developed to demonstrate deliverability. Hinton Way provides footways and therefore safe, walkable access to Shelford village centre which functions as a local service centre with amenities like shops, schools, and the railway station, which adds to its prominence in the area.</p> <p>The vision for the site is structured around green corridors which will also cater for walking and cycling. The site’s location and this permeability is important because the site therefore provides a connection between Hinton Way and Haverhill Road where the CSET Halt is located. This connectivity means that CSET becomes much more easily accessible to the existing communities on Hinton Road than it otherwise would have been should the site not be delivered.</p> <p>In summary, this site already provides an excellent transport proposition which both benefits from a range of existing sustainable travel options and would further support the business case for the CSET project alongside helping to support some of Cambridge’s most important employment locations with the provision of housing in a location where owning a car is not essential.</p>	
Ecology	<p>The site is not subject to any statutory environmental or ecological designations.</p> <p>Given the current agricultural use, it is considered that the delivery of the site would provide improved wildlife habitats and ecological corridors to deliver biodiversity net gains and improve the function of the site as part of the wider Green Infrastructure network</p>	Green
Flood Risk	<p>The site is located within Flood Zone 1 (lowest risk) and is therefore sequentially preferable for residential development.</p>	Green

	<p>The site is subject to small pockets of surface water flood risk which can be mitigated through the incorporation of appropriate sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) within any future scheme.</p>	
<p>Availability</p>		
	<p>The site is controlled and is being promoted by Granta Land Ltd and there are no legal constraints to the availability of the land for development.</p> <p>The landowner is willing to make the site available for development and is actively promoting the site through the Local Plan-making process and working collaboratively with adjoining landowners also.</p> <p>The accompanying Concept Masterplan highlights how the site could come forward alongside adjoining land to the east and west as part of a comprehensive and masterplanned approach to development at this location.</p>	<p>Green</p>
<p>Viability</p>		
	<p>The site comprises managed agricultural (greenfield) land and accordingly there are no anticipated abnormal remediation or construction costs associated with the development of this site, as may be expected on previously developed (brownfield) land.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the site would be subject to significant developer interest and should it be released from the Green Belt and allocated for development, it is reasonable to expect this site to be capable of delivering the GCLP policies, including with regards to affordable housing provision.</p> <p>Granta Land Ltd has a proven track record of delivering major development in Stapleford, having previously secured outline planning permission for the Strawberry Fields Retirement Village in 2021 (application reference: 20/02929/OUT). The Retirement Village is currently nearing completion.</p>	<p>Green</p>

The Opportunity

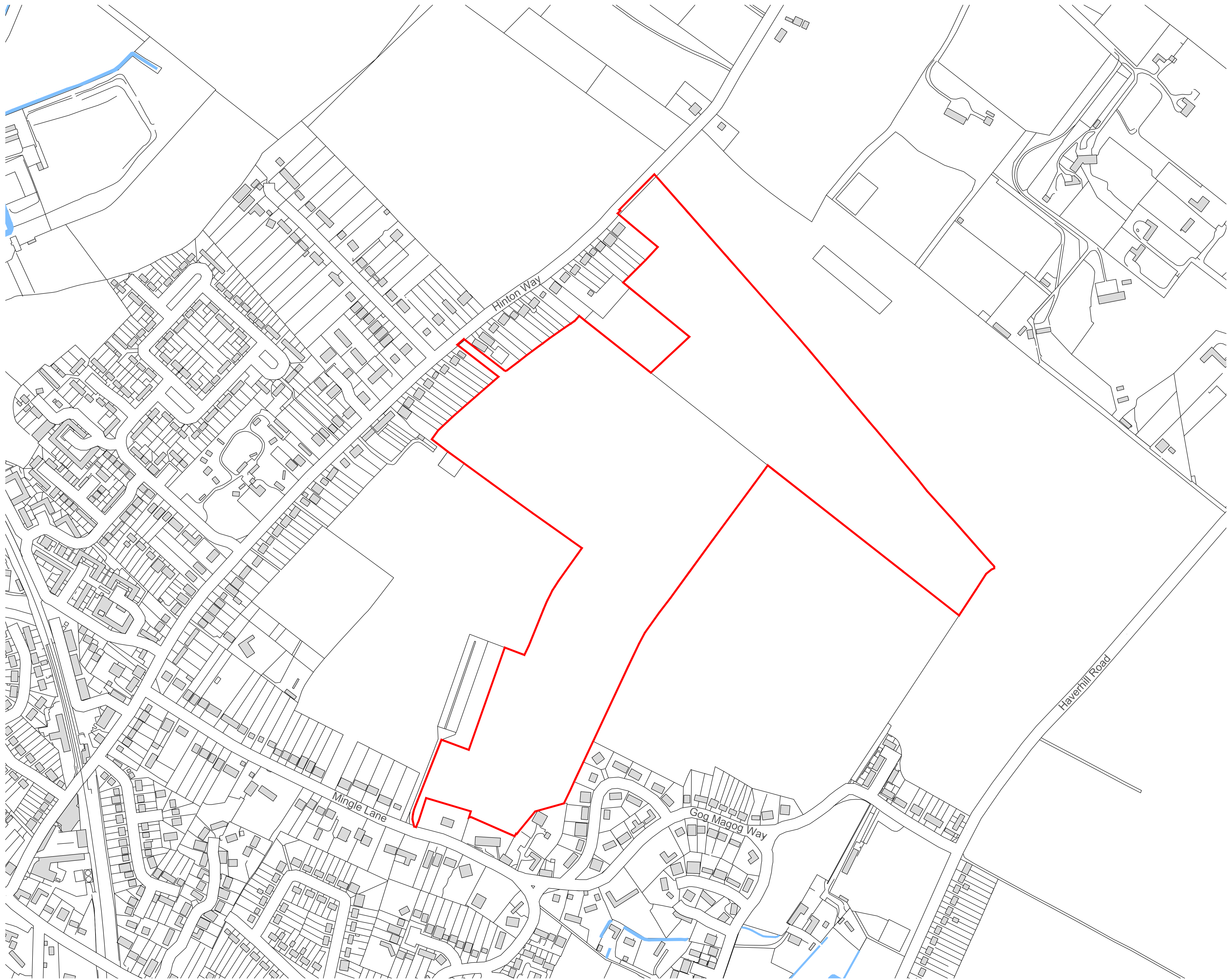
- 4.23. The Concept Masterplan (**Appendix 3**) illustrates how the site could be brought forward for residential-led development for approximately 500 new homes, alongside a substantial public open space and green infrastructure network and appropriate supporting community uses.
- 4.24. The Concept Masterplan also illustrates how the site could come forward alongside adjoining land to the east and west as part of a comprehensive vision and masterplanned approach to development in Stapleford and Great Shelford.
- 4.25. The Concept Masterplan represents a deliverable (suitable, available and viable) and sustainable vision for the future of Stapleford and Great Shelford, delivering exemplar place-making that is sympathetic of, and contributes positively towards the character of the local area.



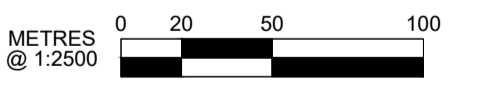
- 4.26. The site represents an excellent opportunity for the GCLP to allocate growth for a sustainable development that can be delivered early in the plan period; that supports the growth of the CBC and other employment zones throughout the wider Southern Rural Cluster; and lies on an existing high quality public transport corridor within a few minutes of the Cambridge stations. The site lies adjacent to the proposed CSET busway and the development of the site would further enhance the business case for the project.
- 4.27. The site and the adjoining land should therefore play a significant and positive role in delivering sustainable development to support the continued success of Greater Cambridge.



Appendix 1: Site Location Plan



— Site Boundary

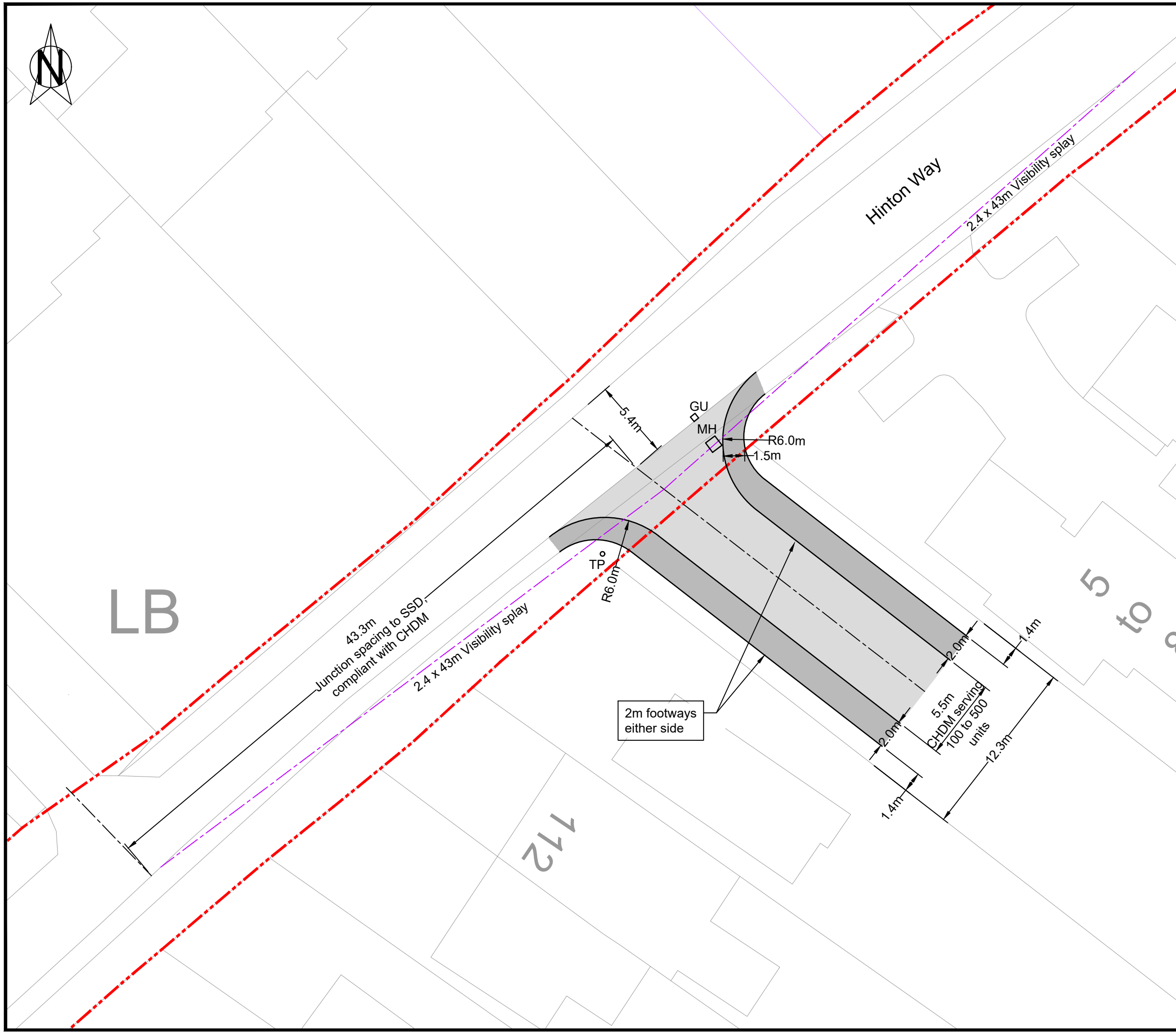


Project
**Land North of Mingle Lane and
East of Hinton Way, Stapleford**
Drawing Title
Site Location Plan

Date	Scale	Drawn by	Check by
23/01/2026	1:2,500 at A1	JL	JB
Project No	Drawing No	Revision	
1357	001	V2	



Appendix 2: Access Strategy



- NOTES :**
1. (C) This drawing is copyright.
 2. All dimensions to be checked on site.
 3. Do not scale from this drawing; only figured dimensions are to be worked from.
 4. Any discrepancies must be reported immediately before proceeding.
 5. This drawing to be read & printed in colour.
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KEY

- - - Highway boundary
- Site boundary

REV	DATE	DESCRIPTION	DRN	CHKD	APRD
P01	11.12.2024	FIRST ISSUE		OAS	LF

Issue Status

<input type="checkbox"/> CONCEPT	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSTRUCTION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRELIMINARY	<input type="checkbox"/> AS BUILT
<input type="checkbox"/> TENDER	<input type="checkbox"/> H&S FILE ISSUE

Client
Granta Land

Project
Land Between Hinton Way and Haverhill Rd
Stapleford

Drawing Title
Hinton Way Access Appraisal
Option 1

Scale @ A3	Drwn	OAS	Chkd	LF
1:250	Aprd	LF	Date	11.12.2024

Drawing Ref	Rev
24151-KMC-HGN-XX-DR-CH-001	P01





Appendix 3: Concept Masterplan



- Key
- Land under applicants control
 - Adjoining land
 - 01 Primary vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access point
 - 02 Secondary vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access point
 - 03 Pedestrian and/or cycle access point
 - 04 Retained and enhanced tree planting
 - 05 Retained and enhanced hedgerow
 - 06 Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS)
 - 07 Green corridor with views from St Andrew's Church towards the wider countryside to the north
 - 08 Nature park with naturalistic tree planting and semi-wetland habitats
 - 09 Buffer planting
 - 10 Meadow planting and species rich landscapes
 - 11 Neighbourhood green
 - 12 Extension to countryside park
 - Important Positive View (ref. Stapleford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2021)
 - ★ Children's play space
 - Footpaths that could include trim trails and/or 'play on the way'
 - Boardwalks
 - Indicative alignment of Cambridge South East Transport Phase 2 Busway
 - ⚡ Shelford Train Station
 - Proposed CSET busway bus stop

CLIENT:
Granta Land

PROJECT:
Land North of Mingle Lane and East of Hinton Way, Stapleford, Cambridgeshire
DRAWING:
Concept Masterplan

PROJECT NUMBER:
1357

DRAWING NUMBER: 004
CHECKED BY: SR

REVISION: V4
STATUS: Draft

DATE: 23/01/2025
SCALE: 1:5,000



Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

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