
SAWSTON PARISH COUNCIL

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Responses to Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation

Policy S/GF: Land adjacent to A11 and A1307 at Grange Farm - OBJECT

General Comments

- The Authority is already managing the growth of three new rural settlements within its area (Cambourne, Northstowe and Waterbeach), posing the question of whether it has the capacity to manage a fourth on an isolated rural site. The two district authorities preparing this combined local plan are facing compulsory amalgamation into a new unitary authority, involving the assumption of existing County Council responsibilities in addition to their current functions. Two of the three options currently on the table would also require amalgamation with a third district authority. The organisational upheaval will affect all departments, whichever model is eventually adopted. Before a new settlement is contemplated, further consideration should be given to meeting the necessary housing delivery numbers by increasing the rate of land release and build out on existing new settlement sites.
- Whilst it is proposed that the new settlement will be self-sufficient, previous experience at Cambourne and Northstowe has shown that it is many years after the start of construction that this ideal is likely to be achieved (Platt, A., 2007, *Lessons from Cambourne*, Cambridge Architectural Research Ltd., *Northstowe: The broken-promise new town built 'with no heart'*, BBC East, 2023 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cambridgeshire-66156561>). The social dislocation, mental health issues and anomie in the early stages of new town development have been well documented (Berkley, G.E., 1973, *Britain's new town Blues*. Nat Civic Rev, **62**: 479-485). This solution to meeting housing delivery targets should therefore only be contemplated as a last resort.

Built Form:

- Para 5.196 of the Sustainability Appraisal states that '*The development of the site is also required to ensure that distinction remains between the new settlement and nearby existing settlements including Little Abington and Babraham.*' Since Little Abington will be separated from the site solely by the A1307, this objective is impossible to achieve in respect of that village.
- The proposed housing densities of 55dph are well above the 40dph hitherto considered appropriate for a new settlement (*SCDC Adopted Local Plan, 2018, Policy H8*) and suggest a cramped, urban form of development. Experience at Trumpington Meadows and the other Cambridge Southern Fringe developments

suggests that In order to achieve these densities, building heights of at least four storeys will be required over substantial parts of the site (eg. *Trumpington Meadows Design Code, 2010*). The site contours rise from about 30m to 70m towards the East, making development on this scale particularly prominent in this otherwise open rural landscape

Education:

- The Department of Education pupil yields dashboard for South Cambridgeshire (<https://department-for-education.shinyapps.io/pupil-yields-dashboard/>) suggests that, by completion, 480 Early Years, 2,160 Primary and 1,060 Secondary School places would be needed for a development of 6,000 dwellings. Since there is very little spare capacity in existing schools, this provision would need to be entirely on site and adequate provision put in place before the first occupations
- Whilst the Sustainability Assessment (*Para. 5.913*) acknowledges, in passing, the need for adequate provision within the development, the policy is silent on the considerable land take needed provide these schools on an already congested site, or how the objective of incorporating 'high-quality open spaces' (*Para.5.194*) will be achieved. (By comparison, Trumpington Meadows Primary School, Capacity 270 pupils occupies 2.27Ha, on this basis, 8 new primary schools with a total land take of around 18 Ha would be required, plus about 10 Ha for a secondary school, based on Cambourne Village College, Capacity 1,250)

Access and Transport:

- The two accesses to the site would both be on to the same short section of the A1307, approximately 600m apart. The vulnerability of such an arrangement to blockage by congestion or a traffic incident on the A1307 should be obvious.
- A monitoring point on the A1307 south of the junction with the A11, i.e. the section on which the access roads to the proposed development would be located, has been shown to have the heaviest traffic flow of 15 points between Haverhill and Cambridge (*A1307 Haverhill to Cambridge Monitoring Report, 2017 , Fig. 4.3, monitoring Point 11*) (A1307 Report)
- Traffic flows on this section are likely to be boosted by further development in Haverhill (*Adopted West Suffolk Local Plan, July, 2025, Policies, AP13, AP14, AP15; 3560 proposed dwellings*) and by the proposed construction of a travel hub in the SW arm of this junction as part of the Cambridge South East Transport (CSET) proposals.
- It is assumed that the transport needs of the Grange Farm will be fully met by the CSET Phase 2 proposals. At the time of writing, a date has yet to be set for the examination in public of the relevant public works order. Inclusion of Policy S/GF in the Submission Local Plan is therefore contingent on CSET Phase 2 gaining approval.
- The CSET Phase 2 business plan is based on meeting current transport needs and is unlikely to be able to accommodate the extra demands generated by Policy S/GF. This conclusion is supported by recent experience; occupations at Northstowe Phase 2 which increased its size from 1,500 to 5,000 dwellings (*Application*

S/2011/14/OL) were prohibited by condition until the A14 upgrade was completed, despite the new settlement being served by an existing busway.

Water and Drainage

- The site is located on the Holywell Nodular and New Pit Chalk formations; (*BGS, 1:50,000 Series, Sheet 205*) which places it over a major aquifer highly sensitive to contamination from pollutant runoff (*NRA Groundwater Vulnerability, 1:100,000 Map Series Sheet 32*). The extent to which this risk can be mitigated is unclear, but a major development in this location is clearly undesirable in this water-stressed region.
- The natural pattern of drainage of the site is towards the River Granta which flows through Great Abington. This river is vulnerable to flooding at its confluence with the Western tributary of the Cam at Stapleford and any increased flows in the system are likely to exacerbate this problem.

Yours sincerely,

Kind regards



Mrs Jo Keeler
Sawston Parish Clerk