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27/01/2026

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Policy Team  
South Cambridgeshire District Council  
South Cambridgeshire Hall  
Cambourne Business Park  
Cambourne  
Cambridge CB23 6EA

Dear Planning Policy,

## **DRAFT GREATER CAMBRIDGE LOCAL PLAN 2024-2025**

### **REGULATION 18 CONSULTATION DECEMBER 2025 – JANUARY 2026**

#### **LAND ADJACENT TO A1303 AND M11, RECTORY FARM**

These representations have been prepared by Bidwells LLP on behalf of Wimpole Associates Ltd in response to the Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation (2026). These representations relate to Land adjacent to A1303 and M11, Rectory Farm, Cambridge (“the Site”) which is within the ownership of Wimpole Associates Ltd. Please refer to **Appendix 1** for site location plan.

The site was submitted under the Greater Cambridge Draft Local Plan ‘Sites Hub’ on 10 December 2025 (under reference 222cfe). This submission provides additional information to support that submission. The Site was referenced as forming part of parcel HC6 within the Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment (2021).

The remainder of this letter is set out as follows:

- Site Description
- Response to the Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan

#### **The Site**

The land extends to circa 20 hectares and is located immediately to the west of the existing built up area of Cambridge, to the south of the A1303 and west of the M11. The site is available now and is within single ownership. The land comprises Rectory Farm house and a collection of associated outbuildings, surrounded by greenfield land. The land is bound by the M11 (junction 13) to the east, the A1303 to the north and existing vegetation to the south and west. There is an existing vehicular access to the site from the A1303. A Public Right of Way (PRoW) (55/5) runs along part of the southern boundary of the Site. This links Coton to Cambridge via a footbridge over the M11. Rectory Farm is currently operating as a hotel and wedding venue. The site is washed over by the Cambridge Green Belt but is not subject to any other policy designations.



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## Response to the Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan

### Policy S/JH : New Jobs and homes

Wimpole Associates Ltd **object** to Policy S/JH.

Policy S/JH sets out the level of objectively assessed needs in Greater Cambridge over the period 2024-2045 for jobs and homes. It states that 73,300 additional jobs and a minimum of 48,195 new homes are required to meet the needs for the total population.

The provision of 73,300 additional jobs and 48,195 new homes across the plan period should be regarded as the very minimum rather than a maximum or constraining target. Supporting evidence to the policy titled the 'Greater Cambridge Employment and Housing Needs Update 2024-2045' (September 2025) (EHN), states at 3.55 that the various scenarios modelled indicate a need of between 67,600 and 90,900 additional jobs over the plan period. This compares to between 66,600 and 75,800 additional jobs modelled under the previous 2023 results. This significant increase in the upper end of the modelling indicates that economic growth expectations have strengthened exponentially, not diminished.

As set out in the EHN, during the strongest phase of growth (2010–2020), the Greater Cambridge economy expanded by almost 4,000 jobs per year. The conclusion of the EHN is then based on the 'Central growth' scenario of 73,200 jobs across the plan period, representing sustained annual growth of around 3,500 jobs. Crucially, the Central growth scenario builds in assumptions of slower periods, contractions, and economic shocks, and is therefore inherently conservative rather than reflective of the full growth capacity of the Cambridge economy. It is also worth noting, at paragraph 3.62 of the EHN, it is acknowledged that the 'high' scenarios could be achieved or exceeded if there is a step change in infrastructure investment.

Greater Cambridge is one such location where there has indeed been a step change in infrastructure investment which heightens the urgency in increasing job creation and housing supply and justifies adopting a higher growth scenario. On 23rd August 2024, Matthew Pennycook reaffirmed the Government's commitment to Cambridge stating; "*The economic growth of Cambridge has been a phenomenal success and we should seek to maximise the potential contribution that Greater Cambridge could make to the UK economy.*" Pennycook goes on to say; "*Greater Cambridge has a vital role to play in this Government's mission to kickstart economic growth.*" Furthermore, the Cambridge Growth Company was established in 2024 to address barriers to growth and help unlock Greater Cambridge's full potential. In terms of approach, in October 2025, the Government announced its intention to consult on the case for a centrally led Development Corporation as one potential route for delivery (backed by £400m funding). This is to be the subject of statutory consultation in 2026. It is anticipated that Cambridge Growth Company (CGC) will publish its own evidence base ahead of the formation of the Development Corporation, which whilst yet unknown it is expected that an ambitious growth target will be identified; likely to exceed that currently envisioned by the Councils for the Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

Furthermore, Greater Cambridgeshire has been, and continues to be, the location of strategic infrastructure investment that will continue to drive upwards increases in the need for new jobs and homes. This includes the proposed East West rail station as well as the proposed public transport improvements for the Cambourne to Cambridge corridor and the Cambridge Eastern Access corridor. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Growth Plan 2025 also identify priority growth sectors, and the need for further skills development.

The Employment and Housing Needs Update acknowledges a 'High' and 'High Sensitivity' scenario, whereby growth would meet or exceed the 2010–2020 trajectory. This high level of growth is feasible in Cambridge and would support the Government's direction of travel. It is therefore important to recognise

that higher-growth outcomes remain credible and should not be ruled out by policy. This requires revision to the proposed policy wording.

For these reasons, the Local Plan should consider utilising a more optimistic and realistic figure for job and housing numbers and include explicit support for higher-growth scenarios. Without these changes, Policy S/JH risks being unsound and inconsistent with national policy objectives to support sustainable economic growth and productivity.

It is requested that the Plan allocates additional sites in Greater Cambridge to directly respond to the higher growth potential and to increase the diversity of allocated sites to optimise delivery and growth potential. Land adjacent to A1303 and M11 at Rectory Farm, Cambridge can soundly assist in realising a greater and more appropriate level of growth in a sustainable way.

### **Policy S/DS: Development Strategy**

Wimpole Associates Ltd **object** to Policy S/DS.

Policy S/DS sets out the proposed strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places created in Greater Cambridge and sets out where the homes and jobs identified in Policy S/JH should be provided to meet the vision and strategic priorities of the Plan.

Firstly, as referred to in representations to Policy S/JH, the identified needs in the Plan are considered too conservative and do not reflect the growth agenda in national, regional and local contexts mandated by the incumbent Labour Government. In line with the Written Ministerial Statement made by Matthew Pennycook (Minister of State for Housing and Planning) on 23 October 2025 the ambition remains to 'supercharge growth' within the Oxford-Cambridge Corridor and realise the full potential of Greater Cambridge. Further it is anticipated that the Cambridge Growth Company (CGC) will publish its own evidence base ahead of the formation of a centrally-led Development Corporation (backed by £400m funding announced in October 2025), which, whilst yet unknown, it is expected that an ambitious growth target will be identified; likely to exceed that currently envisioned by the Councils. Collectively it remains apparent therefore that the Government have a continued agenda to deliver high levels of growth within Greater Cambridge and as such more optimistic and realistic figures for job and housing numbers are needed to support sustainable economic growth and productivity.

Secondly, the supporting text to Policy S/DS states, at paragraph 2.64, that '*drawing on our evidence and consultation feedback, we do not consider that our development needs alone provide the 'exceptional circumstances' required in national policy to justify removing land from the Green Belt in this Local Plan, having regard to the identification of other sources of land supply that can meet needs sustainably without the need for Green Belt release*'. Paragraph 146 of the NPPF (2024) identifies that one of the exceptional circumstances in which Green Belt boundaries can be altered is where an authority cannot meet its identified need for homes, commercial or other development through other means. Therefore whilst the Councils, drawing on their current evidence base, do not consider that their development needs alone provide the exceptional circumstances required to justify removing land from the Green Belt, the further evidence referred to above may well change the context within which the Councils need to consider the Plan and the potential release of Green Belt land. Those sites in locations that are defined as grey belt should be strongly considered in order to increase the supply of homes.

Thirdly, whilst in principle a strategy of seeking to deliver a large number of new jobs and homes at scale within the Plan is supported, an over reliance on too few strategic sites, particularly those that require significant, costly infrastructure to unlock and deliver them, is not supported. Indeed, it is considered that Policy S/DS sets out such a strategy and relies too heavily on allocating significant levels of growth on just a small number of very large sites. A number of these large sites rely on the timely provision of strategic scale infrastructure which must be in place before they can be constructed. For example, the

Cambourne North new settlement (13,000 dwellings and 108,000 sqm employment floorspace) relies upon a new railway station and complicated works to the A428, and Land adjacent to A11 and A1307 at Grange Farm (6,000 dwellings and 35,000 sqm employment floorspace) relying on works to the A505. The draft Plan requires the two sites to deliver 5,100 dwellings between them by 2045. We believe this is highly unlikely.

A combination of approaches to the distribution of spatial growth are considered likely to be necessary in order to allow for sufficient flexibility when considering the locations and scale of new housing and employment development in the Greater Cambridge area. This should include for proportionate growth and expansion of existing settlements. Development is also best suited to being located along transport corridors, in accordance with national planning policy and guidance which encourages development to be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes.

### **Policy S/GB: The Cambridge Green Belt**

Wimpole Associates Ltd **object** to Policy S/GB.

Firstly, although the Policy states that supporting evidence studies include the Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment (2021), it is understood that a revised Green Belt Assessment will be completed and published after the Regulation 18 Consultation closes. It is argued the revised Green Belt Assessment should have informed the Draft Local Plan and been published as part of and the Regulation 18 Consultation.

Secondly, the omission of any reference to 'Grey Belt' within the Draft Policy S/GB is challenged. The NPPF (2024) introduced a clear duty for Grey Belt land to be identified when undertaking Green Belt Assessments for the purposes of determining applications; reinforced within the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (Para 001 ref.001 64-001-20250225). The direction of travel towards authorities being required to identify Grey Belt land within local plans is further evidenced within the forthcoming Consultation Draft NPPF (2025) (GB2[3]) and at Appendix E where the criteria for undertaking Green Belt Assessments is outlined). Hence, regardless of whether the Draft Local Plan can meet the identified needs for growth without Green Belt release, the relevant Plan Policy (S/GB) should include explicit reference to Grey Belt (consistent with the NPPF) and the identification of Grey Belt land within Greater Cambridge. To ensure the longevity of the Local Plan, it is recommended the revised Green Belt Assessment is undertaken with regard to Appendix E of the NPPF 2025.

Thirdly, Bidwells understand that the Council's consultants (LDA) are currently considering the process of examining Grey Belt issues and possibly Grey Belt sites across Greater Cambridge. Officers have stated at various committees that Grey Belt sites are not required to accommodate housing allocations and the Draft Local Plan 'is not configured for this'. However, the fact LDA are considering an assessment of Grey Belt suggests the Draft Local Plan does need to cover this important issue given the increasing importance of Grey Belt policy in the current NPPF (2024) and the Consultation Draft (2025).

Identifying Grey Belt land within the revised Green Belt Assessment and Draft Local Plan is hence both a policy requirement and crucial to ensuring the Local Plan promotes sustainable patterns of growth (as required by the NPPF) and is robust and flexible in providing a sufficient supply of suitable land in order to meet the 'supercharged growth' mandated for the Greater Cambridge by Government.

Overall, it is considered that Draft Policy S/GB is not consistent with national policy, does not reflect a positively prepared plan and is not justified. Pertinent to ensuring the Plan is sound will require:

- The publication of a revised Green Belt Assessment to support the Local Plan
- A consideration of higher growth targets and subsequent review of the Green Belt / Grey Belt where necessary
- The identification and inclusion of the Cambridge Grey Belt within the Local Plan to guide development to sustainable Grey Belt sites.

The Council must take a positive approach to the preparation of the Plan. Its failure to engage properly with the Green Belt has not led the plan to an effective spatial strategy. There is a superior sustainable plan to be formed by properly considering Green Belt sites that can better underpin sustainable development.

### **Policy S/EOC: Other site allocations on the edge of Cambridge**

The Plan proposes to allocate significant levels of growth in the west and north-west of Cambridge, notably:

- Eddington, Cambridge (Policy S/NWC)
  - 5,500 homes, 2,000 student rooms, district centre and ancillary local centres
- West Cambridge (Policy S/WC)
  - Up to 370,000 sqm of academic floorspace, 170,000 sqm of commercial R&D floorspace, nursery, retail/food and drink, assembly and leisure, sui generis uses, residential and associated infrastructure
- Land between Huntingdon Road and Histon Road (Policy S/HHR)
  - Approximately 2,700 homes, secondary school, two primary schools, community facilities, retail units, library.

Eddington was released from the Green Belt in 2009 to help meet the needs of the University of Cambridge for academic buildings, business space and homes. Eddington is developing into a dynamic new quarter for Cambridge, with around 1850 homes already built. Reflecting on how the site has been built so far, and looking at how it will meet needs in the future, it has been established that it can accommodate more homes than was originally envisaged in the 2009 plan. The new policy in the draft plan is proposed to ensure that the long-term needs of the University of Cambridge, as a centre of excellence and a world leader in higher education and research, are met throughout the plan period, while also providing for the wider community.

The West Cambridge site is operated by the University of Cambridge and is also undergoing major change as it develops its role as a development cluster for university science and technology research, knowledge transfer and open innovation. The site has been developed incrementally since the 1950s, with its first masterplan in 1966. In 1999 the first outline planning permission was granted for the site leading to a number of developments. A revised and more densely developed scheme has more recently been granted planning permission in 2024, providing a long-term vision and strategy for the comprehensive development of the site, and creation of the West Cambridge Innovation District. Policy S/WC in the draft Plan is proposed to carry forward the existing site allocation policy to support the continued development of the site, whilst also enabling and encouraging the addition of residential development for the purpose of bringing vitality to the district.

The Madingley Park and Ride site is located between Eddington and West Cambridge and is becoming increasingly under pressure. This pressure will increase in light of the planned growth across the Greater Cambridge area in the Draft Plan. Indeed, as referred to in representations to Policies S/JH and S/DS, the identified needs in the Plan are considered too conservative so even greater levels of growth should be accommodated.

Land adjacent to A1303 and M11 at Rectory Farm (see enclosed Site Location Plan) presents an ideal opportunity to form a further allocation on the edge of Cambridge and accommodate the additional sustainable growth that is considered necessary for the Plan, in particular for the west of Cambridge. It is located immediately adjoining the existing built edge of Cambridge, within the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor and also located within the proposed Cambourne to Cambridge bus route, with the nearest proposed bus stops to the site being at Coton and Cambridge West (to the south of the site).

Given its highly sustainable location in close proximity to the services and facilities within Cambridge, with good links to existing and future planned public transport provision and access to open spaces to promote active, healthy living, the site is considered suitable to accommodate residential development. Alternatively, given the site benefits from excellent access to the strategic road network it provides an attractive location for commercial operations.

It could also serve as a Travel Hub that either alleviates pressure on Maddingley Park and Ride or replaces it entirely, thus allowing the existing Maddingley Park and Ride site (a highly sustainable, brownfield site) to be freed up and used to accommodate much needed housing or employment growth at Eddington or West Cambridge. This would be a similar proposal to the Cambridge South West Travel Hub (CSWTH), to the west of M11 junction 11 and within the Cambridge Green Belt. The CSWTH benefits from planning permission and enabling works are now underway. The Draft Plan also includes a policy that supports the development of new travel hub sites and seeks to support improvements to the quality and attractiveness of existing park and ride sites in order to optimise their contribution towards delivering modal shifts away from private car use within the City in line with the adopted Transport Strategy objectives (Policy I/TH). Furthermore, local transport infrastructure, such as a Travel Hub, could also be considered as not 'inappropriate' development within the Green Belt having regard to paragraph 154 criterion h (iii) of the NPPF (2024) '*provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it*'.

The land extends to circa 20 hectares and is located immediately to the west of the existing built up area of Cambridge, to the south of the A1303 and west of the M11. The site is available now and is within single ownership. The land comprises Rectory Farm house and a collection of associated outbuildings, surrounded by greenfield land. The land is bound by the M11 (junction 13) to the east, the A1303 to the north and existing vegetation to the south and west. There is an existing vehicular access to the site from the A1303. A Public Right of Way (PRoW) (55/5) runs along part of the southern boundary of the Site. This links Coton to Cambridge via a footbridge over the M11. Rectory Farm is currently operating as a hotel and wedding venue. The site is washed over by the Cambridge Green Belt but is not subject to any other policy designations. The site was submitted under the Greater Cambridge Draft Local Plan 'Sites Hub' on 10 December 2025 (under reference 222cfe). This submission provides additional information to support that submission.

Land adjacent to A1303 and M11 at Rectory Farm has been assessed within the Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment (2021) and the majority of the site falls within parcel HC6, with a small area at the southern end of the site within parcel CT7. The Assessment identifies that very high harm would result from parcels HC6 and CT7 being released from the Green Belt. However, as referred to under representations to Policy S/JH, it is considered the identified needs in the Plan are too conservative and do not reflect the growth agenda in national, regional and local contexts mandated by the incumbent Labour government. Paragraph 146 (NPPF, 2024) identifies that one of the exceptional circumstances in which Green Belt boundaries can be altered is where an authority cannot meet its identified need for homes, commercial or other development through other means. Whilst the Councils, drawing on their current evidence base, do not consider that their development needs alone provide the exceptional circumstances required to justify removing land from the Green Belt, the development needs are considered too conservative and the Local Plan should consider utilising a more optimistic and realistic figure for job and housing numbers and include explicit support for higher-growth scenarios. This may require the need to consider release of Green Belt sites.

## **Policy I/TH: Travel Hub facilities**

Wimpole Associates Ltd support Policy I/TH and the development of new travel hub sites and/or improvements to the quality and attractiveness of existing park and ride sites. The supporting text to Policy I/TH states, at paragraph 10.17, that *“There is great potential for the function of traditional P&R sites to be expanded to become “travel hubs” (or “mobility hubs”) that enable interchange between a range of modes transport and in a range of directions, rather than solely moving people from their car to a bus, or from Cambridge’s periphery to the city centre...The creation of travel hubs and the creation of linked trips can play an important role in reducing road-traffic congestion in urban areas, vehicle-related pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, and the risks of road traffic accidents.”*

Land adjacent to A1303 and M11 at Rectory Farm (see enclosed Site Location Plan) presents an ideal opportunity to for a new Travel Hub, should the Councils consider it is not appropriate for residential or commercial development. It is located immediately adjoining the existing built edge of Cambridge, within the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor and also located within the proposed Cambourne to Cambridge bus route, with the nearest proposed bus stops to the site being at Coton and Cambridge West (to the south of the site).

The site extends to circa 20 hectares, is available now and is within single ownership. The land comprises Rectory Farm house and a collection of associated outbuildings, surrounded by greenfield land. The land is bound by the M11 (junction 13) to the east, the A1303 to the north and existing vegetation to the south and west. There is an existing vehicular access to the site from the A1303. A Public Right of Way (PRoW) (55/5) runs along part of the southern boundary of the Site. This links Coton to Cambridge via a footbridge over the M11. Rectory Farm is currently operating as a hotel and wedding venue. The site is washed over by the Cambridge Green Belt but is not subject to any other policy designations. The site was submitted under the Greater Cambridge Draft Local Plan ‘Sites Hub’ on 10 December 2025 (under reference 222cfe). This submission provides additional information to support that submission.

The site could serve as a Travel Hub that either alleviates pressure on Madingley Park and Ride or replaces it entirely, thus allowing the existing Madingley Park and Ride site (a highly sustainable, brownfield site) to be freed up and used to accommodate much needed housing or employment growth at Eddington or West Cambridge. This would be a similar proposal to the Cambridge South West Travel Hub (CSWTH), to the west of M11 junction 11 and within the Cambridge Green Belt. The CSWTH benefits from planning permission and enabling works are now underway. Furthermore, local transport infrastructure, such as a Travel Hub, could also be considered as not ‘inappropriate’ development within the Green Belt having regard to paragraph 154 criterion h (iii) of the NPPF (2024) *‘provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it’*.

## **Summary**

These representations have been submitted to respond to the transformed policy context of the Site both in terms of the emerging Draft Local Plan. Bidwells have identified the Draft Local Plan over relies on large strategic sites which have historically failed to start their delivery in a timely manner and then at much slower rates than the Council anticipated and relied upon. The Site is highly sustainable and is suitable, available and achievable for development to support the growing needs of Greater Cambridge and should be prioritised for allocation.

Should you require any further information regarding the Site or these representations please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

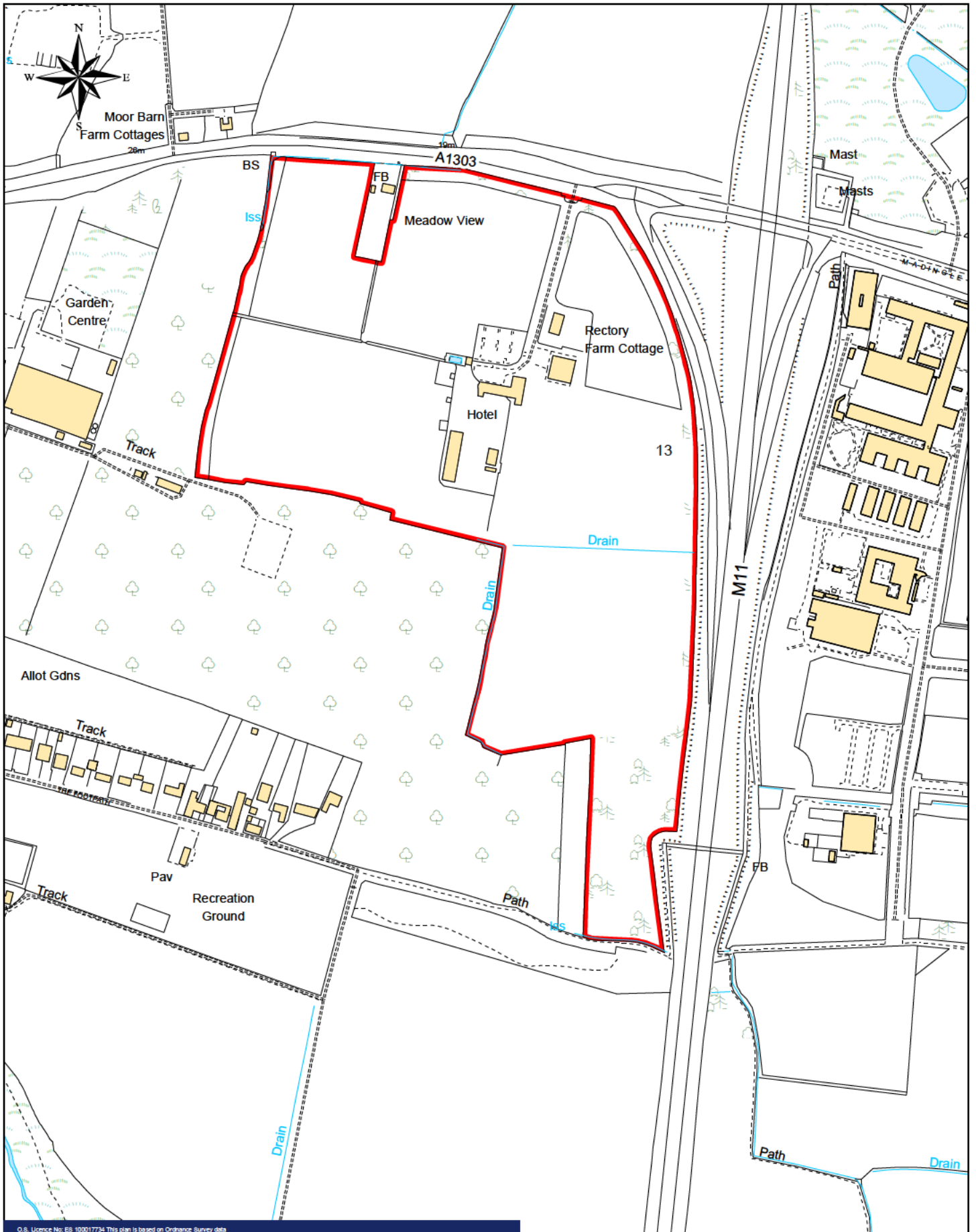


Appendix 1

Site Location Plan : Land adjacent to A1303 and M11 at Rectory Farm,  
Cambridge



# Land adjacent to A1303 and M11, Rectory Farm



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Scale: 1:5,000 @A4 OS Ref: TL 4159 Drawing No: A.60,608 Date: 26/01/2026

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## Legend

Area : 20.375ha (50.35ac)