



THAKEHAM

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning
Planning Policy Team
Cambridge City Council
PO Box 700
Cambridge
CB1 0JH

By email only: localplan@greatercambridgeplanning.org

30 January 2026

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Re: Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan 2024 to 2042 - Regulation 18 Consultation South West Cambridgeshire 'Wetherbrook'

These representations are made on behalf of Thakeham Homes Limited ('Thakeham') in relation to the Draft Local Plan for Greater Cambridge Regulation 18 consultation (1 December 2025 – 30 January 2026), specifically in relation to South West Cambridgeshire 'Wetherbrook', a proposal for a new town containing approximately 40,000 new homes.

Alongside the promotion of Wetherbrook within the Draft Local Plan for Greater Cambridge Regulation 18 consultation, Wetherbrook has been promoted as part of the New Towns Taskforce. Whilst the Site continues to be promoted through the New Towns Taskforce, this representation sets out a clear vision for the Site and how it aligns with the core principles of the emerging Local Plan.

About Thakeham

Thakeham build for the future, for communities and for individuals. Our approach sets us apart from our competitors. We deliver our schemes with a focus on quality and sustainable development, looking ahead of current housing standards where possible. We have recently partnered with Octopus Energy to deliver pioneering 'zero bills' homes at our Templegate site in Sussex. These homes feature additional sustainability measures such as solar panels, air source heat pumps, and a battery – enabling customers to live in a comfortable, warm home with no energy bills for at least five years.

All Thakeham developments consider incorporation of sustainable energy features, and where appropriate these can include a combination of air source heat pumps, solar PV panels with links for battery storage, renewable energy tariffs, and highly efficient heating and hot water systems as well as wastewater recycling measures ensuring incorporate sustainable features, which ensure we exceed the requirements set out in Building Regulations.

Furthermore, Thakeham's sustainability approach is not just focussed on the final buildings, but starts with our approach to the whole construction process, including:

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- Following industry best-practice by taking a ‘fabric first approach,’ which looks at how design and materials can contribute to the energy performance of the completed building.
- Thakeham uses a UK-based factory which manufactures panels using timber from sustainable sources. The off-site panelised system improves efficiency, speed of construction, quality and reduced carbon emissions.
- Our sustainable Procurement Policy encourages the use of recycled materials such as otherwise nonrecyclable waste plastics (one tonne of MacRebur mix contains the equivalent of 80,000 plastic bottles) as well as utilise products part of the circular economy.
- We ensure that our whole supply chain is as local as possible. We have gold membership with the Supply Chain Sustainability School.
- On site, we monitor and aim to minimise construction travel emissions, construction waste and energy consumption and are registered with the Considerate Constructors Scheme.

Consultation Response

Thakeham has reviewed the consultation documents and generally supports the principles of the draft Regulation 18 Local Plan. As outlined within the representations, Thakeham recognises the Council’s ambition to plan for:

- Climate change
- Biodiversity and green spaces
- Great places
- Wellbeing and social inclusion
- Homes
- Jobs
- Infrastructure

These representations comment on key observations where relevant to Thakeham’s current and potential future interests within the authority area. Therefore, for ease, the below responses have been made to specific questions/policies as indicated, where Thakeham has no comment to make at this stage, questions have been omitted.

Chapter 2: Development Strategy

Policy S/JH: New Jobs and Homes

As set out within draft Policy S/JH, the emerging Local Plan seeks to deliver at least 48,195 new homes within the Plan Period (2024-2045). In accordance with paragraph 62 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), this has been derived through the use of a standard method, which sets an annual requirement of 2,295 dwellings (1,103 in Cambridge and 1,192 in South Cambridge)

Whilst the Council has used the Standard Method to derive its housing requirement, the Council has failed to consider the unmet needs of neighbouring authorities and the role the Council can play in supporting these unmet needs. The importance of this was raised within the 27 November 2025 Written Ministerial Statement (‘WMS’) that stated that “*Local planning*

authorities should continue to collaborate across their boundaries, including on unmet development needs from neighbouring areas, and we expect Planning Inspectors to continue to examine plans in line with the policies in the NPPF on ‘maintaining effective co-operation’.

Greater Cambridge adjoins the following local authorities:

- Huntingdonshire District Council
- Central Bedfordshire Council
- North Hertfordshire Council
- Uttlesford District Council
- West Suffolk Council
- East Cambridgeshire District Council

A number of these Local Authorities cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, with Huntingdonshire having a 1,562-home shortfall and North Hertfordshire having a 3,347-home shortfall. There is therefore a shortfall of 4,909 dwellings currently being unmet by adjoining local authorities.

Whilst the WMS suggests that Duty to Cooperate will cease following changes to the necessary regulations, Local Planning Authorities will still need to undertake cooperation with adjoining authorities to demonstrate ‘soundness’, as there will remain a policy requirement under paragraph 24 of the 2024 NPPF (which this draft Local Plan will be examined under). Draft policies PM10 and PM11 of the draft 2025 NPPF, currently out for consultation, also suggest that this policy requirement will remain. To ensure that the emerging Local Plan is positively prepared and can be found sound, the Council must ensure that it works with the above local authorities to ensure there is not an unmet housing need and to ensure that strategic cross-boundary matters are considered as part of the Local Plan.

Policy S/DS: Development Strategy

The proposed development strategy outlined within draft Policy S/DS seeks to rely on existing allocations and permissions to deliver 37,865 homes, with an additional 13,463 dwellings identified through brownfield redevelopment, new towns, large-scale strategic allocations and smaller rural development. Whilst Thakeham acknowledges and supports the Council in choosing a wide range of sources to meet its housing requirement, as set out above, the Council has failed to consider the unmet need of the adjoining local authorities. The emerging Local Plan therefore needs to identify additional homes to meet its housing requirement.

Policy S/SH: Settlement Hierarchy

Thakeham supports the inclusion of a settlement hierarchy within the emerging Local Plan, that reflects the size and sustainability of the settlements within the District. Whilst a settlement hierarchy is included within the draft Local Plan, the draft policy seeks to limit the size of new development at ‘minor rural centres’ and lower tiers.

Whilst new development should reflect the size and scale of existing developments, the draft policy should not restrict the scale of growth for rural settlements, as this may affect the settlement's ability to maintain its existing facilities and support necessary growth.

For existing facilities to remain viable, and for additional services and facilities to be delivered to meet new and growing needs of a settlement, there needs to be strategic growth; which the current drafting of the policy does not support.

As seen across the county, where settlements have not been able to grow, they have lost facilities such as primary schools or local shops, as there has not been the need within the settlement to keep the facilities viable and therefore, operational.

The Council should therefore consider the delivery of services and facilities alongside the planned strategic growth of settlements to ensure new facilities remain viable and work with Parish Council's and the local community to ensure these facilities are appropriately located, meet the needs and demands of a locality, as well as emphasising that new development is required to be able to deliver these improvements.

Policy S/DE: Defined Development Extents

Whilst the emerging Local Plan will be assessed against the 2024 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), draft Policy S/DE should seek to accord with draft Policy S5 of the 2025 NPPF. This would ensure that the Local Plan, upon adoption would not conflict with National Policy, but also widen the scope of where the principle of development would be applied allowed outside of settlements. This would subsequently allow housing to come forward where the Local Plan fails to ensure a five-year housing land supply is maintained.

Policy S/GB: The Cambridge Green Belt

The 2024 NPPF included the introduction of Grey Belt, with this defined 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'. These purposes are:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas
- To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; and
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Thakeham supports and endorses to the Government's desire to see land which does not contribute fully to the purposes of Green Belt, make a meaningful contribution to housing supply. In a recent letter to The Planning Inspectorate (PINS) dated 9 October 2025, Matthew Pennycook MP, the Minister of State for Housing and Planning, emphasised the important of Green Belt reviews in the plan making process, increasing the powers of PINS to enable recommendation of Green Belt reviews during Local Plan examination to identify additional sites where necessary.

The NPPF sets out within paragraph 146 that land outside of the Green Belt should be utilised to meet a Councils LHN. Where it is not possible to achieve this, Council should first seek to release previously developed land, then consider grey belt which is not previously developed, and then other Green Belt locations.

Whilst the draft Policy S/GB aligns with National Policy, the Council should ensure that consideration is given to promoted sites within the Green Belt that can come forward to meet the Local Housing Need, whilst not strongly contributing to purposes a), b) or d) of the Green Belt.

About Wetherbrook

Alongside Cambridgeshire County Council, Thakeham controls circa 1,800 hectares of land in South Cambridgeshire, located between Shepreth to the east and Kneesworth to the west, that is intended to deliver a zero carbon new town of more than 25,000 new homes, alongside new employment, services, amenities and requisite infrastructure to support a thriving community, the details of which can be found in our accompanying Vision Document. Furthermore, we have the potential ability to increase this to circa. 40,000 homes with the inclusion of the adjacent Ministry of Defence land at Bassingbourn. The 40,000 homes proposed are therefore an upper limit on the potential for Wetherbrook.

Supporting Regional Economic Growth

The Oxford to Cambridge region is one of the most successful and productive areas of the UK and is Britain's life science capital. The region will be a key driver of the country's economic growth and investment in the coming decades. This growth can only occur with the corresponding employment and housing alongside delivery of sustainable transport and water scarcity solutions.

Wetherbrook New Town will support the growth aspirations of the region, providing much needed housing to support economic growth but also provide production and manufacturing facilities, incubator and flexible workspace supporting the life science, bio-tech and medical sectors.

A Truly Sustainable New Town

Thakeham raises the bar on sustainable living across all our developments and will continue to do so at Wetherbrook. It is designed with community creation and placemaking at its heart, encouraging local living and internalisation through an interconnected network of 15-minute neighbourhoods.

The scale of Wetherbrook provides an opportunity to think comprehensively about the relationships between infrastructure and sustainable development between new and existing communities, to deliver on the principles of zero carbon placemaking.

Sustainable and Active Travel

Wetherbrook would be supported by a package of measures and initiatives to encourage sustainable travel choices. Wetherbrook is well-connected by the existing rail network providing access to Cambridge and London via the East Coast mainline, and shortly Oxford via the new East West Rail line. Existing buses operate between Royston and Cambridge with direct connectivity to the Trumpington park and ride interchange. Further the scheme is well-connected to a number of proposed public transport initiatives that would enhance sustainability credentials, namely; Cambridge South West travel hub, New Cambridge South Station and travel hub, Whittlesford Parkway Station travel hub, and the Cambourne to Cambridge Better Public Transport initiative

Wetherbrook's sustainable offering would include internal active travel greenways to extend the local Greater Cambridge Greenways initiative and provide attractive movement corridors, provision of dedicated public transport routes and internal neighbourhood hubs for

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interchange. Wetherbrook offers an excellent opportunity to deliver a smart, well-connected, sustainable settlement.

Deliverability of homes

Thakeham are in a strong position to deliver Wetherbrook quickly as we already control the majority of land through long-term option agreements, with the remaining parcels owned by the County Council.

We anticipate being able to deliver at scale early in the build programme due in part to our vision for multiple villages surrounding a core town centre. By masterplanning the settlement in this way, we would be able to commence work across two or three villages at the same time, delivering circa 250 - 300 dwellings per annum, as well as delivering higher density development within the town area at circa 500 dwellings per annum. Therefore, with the right economic situation we could expect maximum outputs exceeding a thousand homes a year within the next 5-10 years and consistent delivery for the next two decades.

In light of the above, we believe Wetherbrook can come forward quickly once the Taskforce has identified the appropriate mechanism for delivery of these new towns.

Affordable Homes

Wetherbrook will be a sustainable and mixed community, where we do not differentiate between the quality of private and affordable homes. We will deliver an appropriate proportion of tenures, in accordance with the locally identified needs.

We have always delivered policy compliant schemes, which delivers the amount and tenure that is required locally. We never resort to a viability exercise to deliver affordable homes and Wetherbrook will be no exception.

We will deliver a tenure-blind approach, meaning there is no difference in build quality or external finish between the homes delivered for private sale and those delivered as affordable. We will evenly distribute affordable housing throughout the New Town to create a genuinely mixed and sustainable community.

We trust that our representation is useful and clear, and we would be grateful for confirmation of receipt of our submission. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further queries or require any further information.

Yours faithfully,



Rhett Flashman
Planner