BIDWELLS

POLICY S/JH (NEW JOBS AND HOMES)

On behalf of our client, Railpen, we submit the following representation in response to policy S/JH part 1 (a and b) of the emerging Local Plan policy wording relating to new jobs and homes.

Railpen objects to Policy S/JH as unsound and considers its drafting raises legal compliance concerns under section 19(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (regard to national policy). The objection is tested against the four soundness tests set out in national planning policy: positively prepared, justified, effective, and consistent with national policy.

"73,300 additional jobs" is undefined. Policy S/JH(1)(a) requires development to meet "73,300 additional jobs to support…knowledge intensive sectors, and also provide a diverse range of local jobs," but states no baseline year and does not clarify whether the figure is net or gross, or a single combined total. A figure used to trigger monitoring action, and against which planning decisions may be tested, must be capable of consistent, objective interpretation (*Tesco Stores v Dundee CC* [2012] UKSC 13). As drafted, it is not, failing the Effective test).

The central, not the upper, growth scenario is the right basis for "need." The Employment and Housing Evidence Update 2025 (EHNU 2025) identifies both a "central" (c.3,500 jobs/year) and a higher forecast. Railpen objects to the Councils' reliance on the central scenario (para 2.10) and supports the upper growth scenario as the proportionate, evidence-based measure of objectively assessed need.

The figure must be a minimum, not a ceiling. Criterion 1(a) omits "minimum" for jobs. This is inconsistent with NPPF Policy S1(1)(a), which requires plans to meet objectively assessed needs for "housing, business and other uses…as a minimum," and risks the figure being applied in decision-taking as an upper bound against which further employment proposals could wrongly be resisted as unnecessary once 73,300 is reached." Policy S/JH(1)(a) should be modified to read "a minimum of 73,300 additional jobs."

The plan does not lodge the need for growth beyond current supply. Despite the plan acknowledging a greater level of flexibility built into the existing growth scenario (2.32), the policy still provides an overall cap on the growth of jobs which mitigates the ultimate flexibility that national policy seeks to achieve and is unrepresentative a city with growth ambitions that Cambridge has.

Without these changes, the plan is neither positively prepared, justified nor effective, and Railpen requests that Policy S/JH be modified accordingly.

Growth for Greater Cambridge is also set to be delivered by the Greater Cambridge Development Corporation (GCDC). A body that is now legally formed.

The approach of the LPA may be that the GCDC will deliver the growth over-and-above the minimum provision in the Draft Local Plan, but; the GCDC is yet to receive plan-making powers; it will prepare a Plan after the adoption of the Draft GCLP; it will need to undertake formal consultation and examination in public in the normal way to lead to a formally adopted “successor” Plan. Such a successor Plan will be many years away, while the growth ambition is now. The GCLP needs to address growth now and not rely on a possible GCDC Plan.

Summary of why Railpen consider the plan is not legally compliant or is unsound

Railpen considers Policy S/JH unsound and raises legal compliance concerns. The “73,300 additional jobs” figure is undefined, with no baseline or confirmation whether it is net, gross or a combined total, undermining effective monitoring and decision-making. The Councils’ central employment growth scenario is the appropriate evidence-based

measure of need; the higher scenario should be treated as flexibility rather than requirement. The jobs figure should be expressed as “a minimum of 73,300” to avoid operating as a ceiling. The Plan should further acknowledge potential growth beyond identified capacity and provide a mechanism, such as allocations or early review, to accommodate it.

Railpen proposes the following amended wording to replace the existing text in the draft Local Plan:

1. Development will meet the objectively assessed needs in Greater Cambridge over the period 2024-2045 for:

a. a minimum of 73,300 net additional jobs (against a 2024 baseline) to support the Greater Cambridge’s knowledge intensive sectors, and also provide a diverse range of local jobs; and

6. Where monitoring or updated economic evidence indicates that jobs growth in Greater Cambridge is tracking above, or is likely to exceed, the central forecast underpinning criterion 1(a), the Councils will support the timely identification of additional employment land, including through a partial or early review of this Plan, to meet that growth need.

If you wish to participate in the hearing session(s), please outline why you consider this to be necessary

Railpen wishes to participate in the relevant hearing session(s) because its representations raise a number of concerns regarding the soundness, effectiveness and deliverability of policies across the Plan. These concerns relate to matters including policy justification, proportionality, flexibility, implementation and the practical implications of applying the proposed policy framework to development sites at different stages of the planning and delivery process.

Participation in the hearings would allow Railpen to explain these concerns in greater detail, respond to the Council’s evidence and clarify how particular policy requirements may operate in practice. It would also provide an opportunity to discuss potential modifications that could improve the clarity, effectiveness and deliverability of the Plan while still achieving its overarching objectives.

Given the breadth of Railpen’s representations and its direct interest in the implementation of the Plan, participation would assist the Inspector by providing a landowner and development perspective on the practical consequences of the proposed policies. Railpen therefore considers that its involvement in the relevant hearing sessions would make a useful contribution to the examination of whether the Plan has been positively prepared, is justified, effective and consistent with national policy.