British Land response to S/JH

Site ID 115169 / HELAA Site ID: 40048

These Representations (submitted on behalf of British Land) offer a response to the Regulation 19 draft of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan ('GCLP') of which consultation extends to 25 September 2026.

These Representations consider the GCLP against the criteria for soundless of a Local Plan as set out in Paragraph 36 of the NPPF (2024) and offers comment on how Land at South Trumpington can contribute to the emerging aims and growth ambitions of the GCLP.

Overall British Land welcome an approach to direct development to where active and public transport is a 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. Furthermore, British Land welcome the Seven Strategic priorities for the plan which are as follows:

- Climate change.
- Biodiversity and green spaces.
- Wellbeing and social inclusion.
- Great places.
- Jobs.
- Homes.
- Connectivity and infrastructure.

However, British Land have concerns over the process that the Councils have taken to arrange at the overall Development Strategy and with the approach towards the allocation of sites at sustainable locations at the edge of Cambridge. Policies S/JH and S/DS together effectively represent the Development Strategy for the draft Plan.

Introduction

British Land supports the Councils' ambition to deliver a Local Plan capable of supporting Greater Cambridge's continued economic success whilst meeting identified housing needs.

Greater Cambridge occupies a unique role within the national economy. It remains one of the United Kingdom's most significant centres for research, innovation, life sciences and technology-based employment. Government policy continues to recognise the strategic importance of Cambridge as a driver of national economic growth and productivity. The emerging Local Plan therefore performs a function beyond simply meeting minimum housing requirements; it must also provide an appropriate framework capable of supporting future economic growth and associated housing demand.

The question for the Examination is therefore not solely whether the Plan identifies sufficient land to meet current minimum requirements, but whether the proposed strategy is sufficiently flexible, resilient and deliverable to respond to future growth opportunities and potential changes in housing and employment demand over the Plan period.

Housing Need and Economic Growth

The Councils' evidence identifies a relationship between future employment growth and housing provision. However, there remains uncertainty regarding the scale of future economic growth that Greater Cambridge may experience over the Plan period.

In previous responses to the emerging Plan, British Land have raised concerns that the Plan is informed primarily by a central growth scenario and may not adequately account for the potential for higher levels of economic growth. These concerns are particularly relevant given the continued Government focus on Cambridge as a location of national economic importance and the significant public and private sector investment being directed towards the area.

It is not necessary for the Examination to conclude that the Councils' housing requirement is incorrect in order to recognise that uncertainty exists. Rather, such uncertainty reinforces the importance of ensuring that the development strategy contains an appropriate degree of flexibility and includes a sufficient range of deliverable growth opportunities.

In British Land's view, the Local Plan should seek to avoid circumstances where housing provision becomes a constraint on economic growth. The provision of additional sustainable and deliverable development opportunities close to major employment locations represents an appropriate response to such uncertainty.

Delivery Risk and Supply Resilience

The draft Local Plan places substantial reliance on a relatively limited number of strategic allocations and large-scale development opportunities.

British Land recognises the important role these allocations will play in delivering homes and jobs throughout the Plan period. However, large strategic sites are inherently complex and frequently dependent upon substantial infrastructure investment, multiple landownerships, significant upfront costs and long delivery programmes. As a result, there can often be a considerable gap between allocation and delivery.

The preparation of a sound Local Plan should therefore recognise that delivery trajectories are forecasts rather than certainties. A robust strategy should contain sufficient flexibility to accommodate delays, market changes and unforeseen delivery constraints.

In this context, additional deliverable sites such as South Trumpington, which are capable of contributing alongside the strategic allocations can play an important role in strengthening the resilience of the overall development strategy. The purpose of additional sites is not to replace existing allocations but to diversify the supply portfolio and provide contingency should delivery rates differ from those

currently forecast. Such flexibility is an important component of a positively prepared and effective Local Plan.

The Role of Land at South Trumpington

Land at South Trumpington represents precisely this type of opportunity.

The Site is controlled by a single landowner and is available for development. Previous assessments have also confirmed that the Site is achievable. British Land has submitted a substantial body of technical evidence demonstrating that the Site is suitable, available and achievable and capable of making a meaningful contribution to Greater Cambridge's housing and employment needs.

The Site occupies a highly sustainable edge-of-Cambridge location adjacent to existing development and close to key employment destinations including the Cambridge Biomedical Campus. It benefits from existing and emerging sustainable transport infrastructure, including proximity to Cambridge South Station, the Guided Busway, Trumpington Park and Ride and strategic active travel routes.

Future development at South Trumpington would provide the opportunity to deliver housing and employment in close proximity to one another, reducing reliance on longer-distance commuting and supporting more sustainable patterns of growth.

Importantly, allocation of the Site would not require any change to the fundamental structure of the Development Strategy or undermine existing allocations. Rather, it would reinforce the Plan's preferred approach of directing growth to sustainable locations on the edge of Cambridge whilst increasing flexibility and reducing reliance upon a relatively limited number of major sites.

Conclusion

British Land considers that the emerging Local Plan should be assessed not only against minimum housing requirements but also against its ability to respond positively to uncertainty in future housing and employment demand.

Given the scale of proposed economic growth within Greater Cambridge, the reliance on a relatively small number of large strategic sites and the Government's continued emphasis on supporting growth in Cambridge, it is appropriate that the Plan incorporates additional sustainable and deliverable opportunities capable of strengthening housing and employment delivery.

Land at South Trumpington represents such an opportunity. Allocation of the Site would improve the resilience, flexibility and effectiveness of the Development Strategy whilst remaining consistent with the Plan's stated preference for sustainable growth on the edge of Cambridge.