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Jonathan Dixon
Planning Policy Manager
Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service

[redacted]

Ref: DF / PL-1306
Number: [redacted]
Email: [redacted]
Date: 23rd September 2026

Dear Jonathan,

RE: Greater Cambridge Emerging Local Plan Regulation 19 (Submission Version) Consultation – Land at Brook Road, Bassingbourn – HELAA Site ID: 40342

This letter has been prepared by Ceres Property on behalf of Obsidian in relation to land adjacent to Brook Road, Bassingbourn, which is being promoted as part of the Greater Cambridge Emerging Local Plan as a residential site for approximately 95 dwellings.

Introduction and site overview

The submission is accompanied by a Vision Document, prepared by Mosaic, which demonstrates that the site would provide a deliverable, suitable, and sustainable site for allocation within the emerging Local Plan.

Obsidian have recently taken on the promotion of the site and they are committed to working with the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service to bring the site forward for development.

The site is situated towards the west side of Bassingbourn, to the south of Brook Road. The development boundary for Bassingbourn adjoins the eastern boundary of the site. The site also benefits from being in a very sustainable location within the village and the site is immediately adjacent to Bassingbourn Primary School, beyond which is Bassingbourn Village College. The Village College also contains community facilities, including Bassingbourn Sports Centre, which is open for community use from 5pm on weekdays.

A detailed overview of the site is contained within the Vision Document.

Suitability of the Site for Development

The site has been previously promoted as part of earlier rounds of the emerging Local Plan and has a Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) Site ID reference of 40342. As identified within the HELAA Assessment, the site scored very strongly. The HELAA determined that the site had a Green rating in respect of

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Availability and Achievability and an Amber rating in respect of Suitability. In respect of the suitability of the site, critically the site has not got a red rating for any of the 13 criteria and therefore, in accordance with the assessment methodology, it has been concluded as a suitable site for development, subject to the technical constraints being overcome.

In this regard, the Vision Document, prepared by Mosaic, demonstrates how the site can be delivered to provide a high quality development that responds well to the technical constraints of the site. A very small proportion of the site along the east boundary is within a flood zone 2/3. The masterplan of the site has been prepared to ensure that the proposed development framework is situated outside of this area, which has included the strengthening and improvement of a green corridor along the east boundary of the site.

As explained in detail within the Vision Document, the masterplan provides for a generous provision of open space, which includes a circular walking route around the site, along with a children's play area and a community orchard to the south of the site. A single point of vehicular access is proposed to the north of the site, which has good visibility in both directions.

Bassingbourn – A Sustainable Location for Growth & Response to Policies S/DS and S/SH of the Emerging Local Plan

Policy S/SH of the emerging Local Plan defines Bassingbourn as a Minor Rural Centre. As set out in the supporting text to policy S/SH, it is acknowledged that Minor Rural Centres have a greater level of services than most other settlements in Greater Cambridge and often perform a role in terms of providing services and facilities for a small rural hinterland.

The development strategy Policy S/DS within the emerging Local Plan is clear that, outside of Cambridge City and the larger towns, growth in rural areas will be focused on Rural Centres and Minor Rural Centres. No objection is raised to the five suggested locations for growth in the District as set out in Policy S/DS. However, it is not considered necessary to put them in an order of preference, given that different development in different locations will all contribute to meeting the housing and development needs for the area. For example, growth in Cambourne and within Rural Centres and Minor Rural Centres will be particularly important to ensure choice and competition for market land and it will provide, in many instances, more affordable private housing for those unable to afford to live in Cambridge City, or those that would prefer a village location. In this regard, it is considered important for sustainable and well-connected villages such as Bassingbourn to accommodate a suitable proportion of growth. This change to remove the order of preference is required in order for the plan to be sound.

Policy S/SH sets out that within Minor Rural Centres, redevelopment up to an indicative maximum scheme size of 30 dwellings will be supported in principle within settlement boundaries. This is not considered to be consistent with the NPPF (2026), which is clear as part of Policy S4 that development within settlement boundaries should be considered in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development regardless of their scale

Whilst it is acknowledged that the emerging Local Plan is being assessed under the 2024 (NPPF), having regard to the transitional arrangements for plan making, the NPPF (2026) is clear that policies that conflict with the NPPF

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(2026) should be given very limited weight. Therefore this part of policy S/SH would have very limited weight upon adoption of the plan.

In addition, having regard to the provisions within Policy S5 of the NPPF (2026), it is considered that the settlement hierarchy and proposed development boundaries should have a more flexible approach, to enable sustainable sites adjacent to Rural Service Centres and Minor Rural Service Centres to be delivered for for development, particularly when they are meeting an unmet need for housing. These amendments are considered to be required in order for the emerging Local Plan to be positively prepared, justified and in accordance with national policy.

As set out within policy S/DS, the emerging Local Plan currently focuses the vast majority of growth to large urban extensions and new settlements, with very limited growth proposed to sustainable village locations such as Bassingbourn. As a result of this strategy, the housing trajectory within the emerging Local Plan identifies lower growth within the early years of the plan period (years 2024-2029).

The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that local planning authorities should plan positively to boost their housing land supply and in 2024 the government set out '*The Case for Cambridge*' with Matthew Pennycook (Housing and Planning Minister) setting out that the government has *'ambitions for Cambridge'* and that the city has been *'constrained economically by the lack of housing.'* .

In this regard, it is considered that there is a compelling case for the allocation of a higher number of suitable sites in sustainable Rural Centres and Minor Rural Centres, such as land to the south of Brook Road, Bassingbourn, which can be delivered in the short term without the need for delivery of significant infrastructure.

This change is required in order for the plan to be justified, positively prepared and therefore sound in planning terms.

Bassingbourn benefits from being situated outside of the Cambridge Green Belt and therefore should sequentially be a preferred location to allocate housing, when compared with villages in the Green Belt.

In order to be sound, it is therefore considered that an additional allocation policy is added to the plan and the proposals map for Bassingbourn updated to include the allocation of land to the south of Brook Road as an allocation for approximately 95 dwellings, to include the delivery of open space and a Local Equipped Area of Play.

Conclusion

To conclude, land to the south of Brook Road, Bassingbourn represents a fully deliverable and sustainable site for a residential development for approximately 95 dwellings, which has the ability to be delivered in the short term within the first 5 years of the Local Plan period. The site is clearly the most sustainable site in Bassingbourn, having regard to its proximity to Bassingbourn Primary School, Bassingbourn Village College, and the Village centre. In order for the plan to be sound, land south of Brook Road should be allocated to deliver approximately 95 dwellings.

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Yours sincerely

[redacted]

David Fletcher
Partner
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