Land north of Mill Lane, Sawston
Northwest Biotheraputics Capital
September 2026

BIDWELLS

LAND NORTH OF MILL LANE, SAWSTON, HELAA ID: 40341 SITE SUITABILITY REPORT

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Quality Assurance

Site name:	Land north of Mill Lane, Sawston
Client name:	Northwest Biotherapeutics Capital
Type of report:	Site Suitability Report
Prepared by:	Sam Gerry (MRTPI)
Signed	[redacted]
Date	24 September 2026
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Signed	[redacted]
Date	24 September 2026

SMARTER PLANNING CHAMPION

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Site Suitability Report has been prepared by Bidwells on behalf of Northwest Biotherapeutics Capital ('NWBio') in response to the Greater Cambridge Local Plan Regulation 19 Consultation. The Report relates to land north of Mill Lane, Sawston (HELAA Site ID: 40341) ('the Site').

1.2 The purpose of this Report is to demonstrate that the Site is suitable, available and achievable for development. It should be read alongside the following document, which has also been submitted in support of the submission:

1.3 Representations to the Greater Cambridge Regulation 19 Consultation, prepared by Bidwells (including the Housing Needs and Supply Matters Report).

1.4 A suite of technical evidence and documents underpins this Report and is submitted in support of the submission. The following documents are located in the respective Appendices:

- Vision Document prepared by Bidwells (Appendix A);
- Transport Technical Note prepared by EAS (Appendix B);
- Flood Risk and Drainage Technical Note prepared by EAS (Appendix C);
- Landscape and Visual Study prepared by Bidwells (Appendix D); and
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal prepared by ArbTech (Appendix E);
- Tree Survey prepared by ArbTech (Appendix F);
- Heritage Technical Note prepared by Iceni (Appendix G);
- Archaeology Technical Note prepared by Iceni (Appendix H); and
- Grey Belt Assessment prepared by Bidwells (Appendix I).

1.1.1 The remainder of this Report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 – Site Context and Promotion History;
- Section 3 – Green Belt / Grey Belt Assessment;

- Section 4 – The Vision;
- Section 5 – Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment;
- Section 6 – Benefits of Allocation and Development; and
- Section 7 – Summary.

2.0 Site Context and Promotion History

Site Description & Context

2.1 The Site is located on the north-western edge of Sawston, outside but immediately adjacent to the existing settlement boundary, as defined by the South Cambridgeshire District Local Plan (2018) policies map. The Site comprises agricultural fields and is tree-lined around its perimeter. A tree belt is protected by a group Tree Preservation Order (ref. TPO 0003).

2.2 The Site is bounded to the north by agricultural fields, to the west by the A1301, to the east by residential dwellings along White Field Close and by Sawston Village College, and to the south by Mill Lane.

2.3 The Site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1 and hence is not at risk of flooding from fluvial sources (rivers and the sea). In terms of surface water flooding the Site contains several isolated patches assessed as being at ‘high’, ‘medium’ and ‘low’ risk of surface water flooding.

2.4 The Site contains no Listed Buildings or designated heritage assets and is not located within or immediately adjacent to a Conservation Area.

2.5 The Site lies entirely within the Cambridge Green Belt but is designated as ‘provisional grey belt’ in the Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment – Review Following Changes to National Policy and Guidance (2026).

Promotion History

2.6 NWBio has actively promoted the Site through the emerging GCLP process, demonstrating that the Site is suitable, available and achievable for development.

2.7 Most recently, representations were submitted pursuant to the Regulation 18 consultation on the GCLP, which concluded in January 2026.

3.0 Green Belt / Grey Belt Assessment

3.1 A Grey Belt Assessment has been prepared by Bidwells and is located in **Appendix I.**

3.2 The findings and conclusions are that the Site constitutes grey belt land as defined within the NPPF (2024 & 2026). Bidwells' findings are supported by the Authority's Green Belt Assessment (2026) which identifies the site as 'provisional grey belt'.

3.3 It is acknowledged that the Authority's Green Belt Assessment identifies the Site as the worst-performing parcel of Green Belt in Sawston, with an assessment of 'weak contribution to purpose D'. We therefore advocate that, should the Authority be minded to release Green Belt land in Sawston to meet development needs, the Site must be prioritised for release.

3.4 The Authority's grey belt map of Sawston, including the Site (SA20 and part of SA21), is shown below:

Figure B.45: Sawston grey belt map

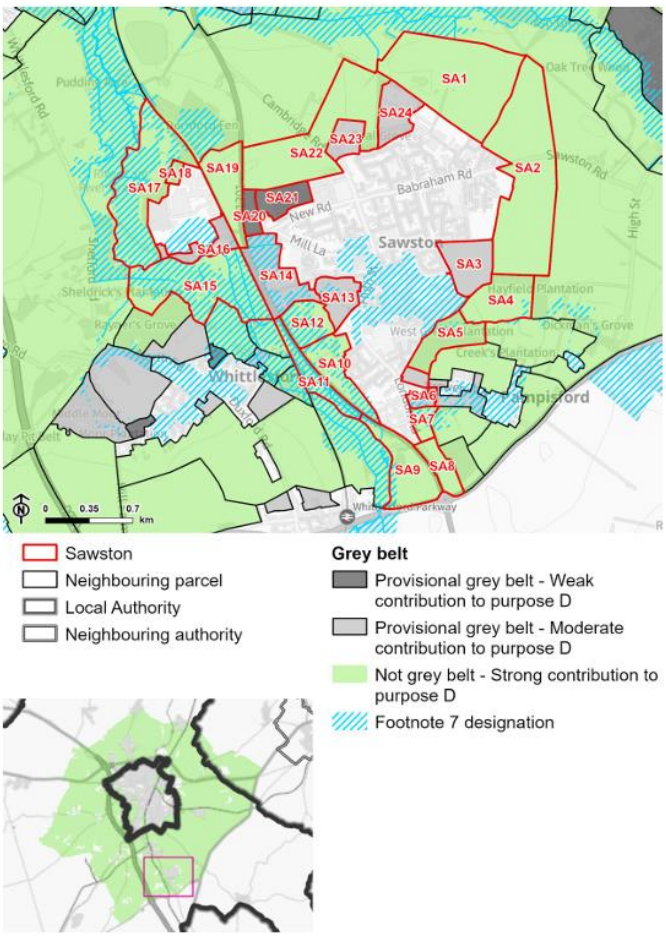


Figure 1: Sawston grey belt map (GCGBA, 2026)

4.0 The Vision

Developing the Vision

4.1 NWBio has instructed a design and technical team to develop a Framework Masterplan for the Site to demonstrate its suitability, deliverability and achievability for residential development. The vision for the Site is set out comprehensively in the Vision Document (**Appendix A**) and explains how the Site can successfully accommodate approximately 200 dwellings. The emerging Framework Masterplan is shown below:



Figure 2: Framework Masterplan

4.2 The emerging Vision for the Site is set out below:

Vision Statement

Land at Mill Lane, Sawston presents a unquie opportunity to create a high-quality adition to the village within a well-xonnecteed, landscape led approach.

Development will establish a distinctive green gateway into Sawston, retaining and reinforcing existing tree belts and vegetation to create an attractive, characterful entrance to the village. Building on this landscape-led foundation, the development will strengthen connections across Sawston and beyond — combining outdoor recreation spaces with key active travel corridors to integrate seamlessly with the village's existing built form, community, and wider network linking Sawston Business Park, Great Shelford, and Cambridge.

Together, these principles underpin the delivery of sustainable housing growth: a considered mix of homes that meet local housing needs early in the Local Plan period, while supporting strategic ecological enhancements and Biodiversity Net Gain that contribute to a wider biodiversity strategy

4.3 The Scheme has been developed utilising three interdependent principles which have informed the emerging vision:

Green Gateway

Enhancing the entrance to Sawston by retaining and reinforcing tree belts, creating an attractive green character, and introducing residential frontages that reflect the village's local character. A landscape-led approach will protect and enhance existing vegetation, strengthen ecological networks across the wider landscape, and establish a distinctive green gateway into the village.

Connection Focussed

Integrating seamlessly into Sawston's existing urban and landscape fabric, strengthening links between Sawston Business Park, Sawston Village, Great Shelford, and Cambridge. Enhanced active travel routes and thoughtfully placed public amenities will foster accessibility, connectivity, and a vibrant, community-focused environment for current and future residents

Delivering Sustainable Housing Growth

Delivering a neighbourhood that complements Sawston's established sense of place, with homes that help meet local housing needs early in the Local Plan period. A considered mix of sustainable homes will support existing and planned community facilities, creating a balanced addition to Sawston that reinforces the village's long-term growth.

4.4 The Framework Masterplan has been developed to accommodate approximately 200 dwellings and is supported by a suite of robust technical evidence. A commentary relating to each discipline that has informed design proposals is set out below:

Transport and Highways

4.5 A Transport Technical Note has been prepared by EAS and is located in **Appendix B**. The Technical Note identifies the Site as a highly sustainable and accessible location capable of accommodating approximately 200 new dwellings without giving rise to any fundamental transport, access or highway constraints. The Site is positioned immediately adjacent to the existing built form of Sawston and benefits from direct connections to the local and strategic highway network via Mill Lane, the A1301, A505 and M11. The Technical Note also identifies that, by virtue of its location, the Site benefits from strong pedestrian connections to an array of services and facilities, including schools, healthcare, shops and employment opportunities within Sawston, thereby reducing reliance on private vehicles.

4.6 The Site also benefits from access to the Sawston Greenway, National Cycle Route 11, local Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) and regular bus services providing frequent connections to Cambridge and surrounding settlements.

4.7 The Technical Note also addresses proposed access to the Site. Primary access is proposed from Mill Lane, as indicated on the Framework Masterplan, in the form of a priority junction, with initial assessments demonstrating that appropriate visibility splays can be achieved. A secondary emergency access is proposed via White Field Way.

4.8 Active travel improvements, including widening the existing footway along the Site frontage to a minimum of 3 metres, can also be delivered within the highway boundary.

4.9 Traffic generation associated with approximately 200 dwellings is forecast to be relatively modest, with around 104 two-way vehicle movements during the weekday morning peak and 92 during the evening peak. The report indicates that most traffic would route directly onto the nearby strategic road network via the A1301 rather than through residential areas of Sawston. Whilst detailed junction modelling will be completed as part of a future planning application, no evidence has been identified at this stage to suggest that severe highway impacts would arise. The anticipated level of walking, cycling and public transport trips can also be readily accommodated within the existing network and enhanced through proportionate improvements delivered as part of development.

Flood Risk and Drainage

4.10 A Flood Risk and Drainage Technical Note has been prepared by EAS and is located in **Appendix C.** The Technical Note concludes that the land north of Mill Lane, Sawston, is suitable for residential development from both flood-risk and drainage perspectives and is capable of accommodating approximately 200 dwellings without creating unacceptable flood risk on or off

the Site. The assessment identifies that the Site lies wholly within Flood Zone 1. A small area along the southern boundary and at the access point falls within a future climate-change flood extent. This has informed the Framework Masterplan, which adopts a sequential approach to locating all residential development outside areas at risk of flooding when climate change is taken into account.

4.11 Environment Agency modelling confirms that the Site lies outside the predicted flood extents associated with the River Granta under present-day conditions and remains unaffected by severe flood events even when future climate-change allowances are applied. Importantly, Mill Lane and the proposed site access are also shown to remain outside the modelled 1% annual probability plus climate-change flood extent, meaning that safe access and egress can be maintained during extreme events.

4.12 In relation to pluvial (surface-water) flooding, the Technical Note identifies only two small, localised areas of shallow ponding associated with existing low points within the agricultural field. It explains that these isolated areas can be addressed effectively through earthworks and the incorporation of a sustainable drainage system, meaning that the development is expected to improve existing conditions rather than worsen them. This has informed the indicative SuDS strategy shown on the Framework Masterplan, which integrates SuDS within the Site and presents an opportunity for these features to serve as multifunctional open spaces within the open-space strategy.

4.13 The Site's chalk geology is considered highly favourable for infiltration drainage, allowing rainwater to soak naturally into the ground rather than relying on discharge to sewer networks or nearby watercourses. The proposed strategy incorporates a comprehensive suite of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), including infiltration basins, permeable paving, swales, rain gardens, tree pits and rainwater harvesting measures. These features would manage runoff close to its source, mimic natural drainage processes and provide additional biodiversity, landscape and amenity benefits.

4.14 Initial hydraulic modelling within the Technical Note demonstrates that two infiltration basins can accommodate runoff from the Site following development. Exceedance flows are also safely managed in accordance with the site's natural topography. The drainage strategy therefore shows that surface water generated by the development can be sustainably controlled without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

4.15 Overall, the Flood Risk Assessment and SuDS Strategy provide robust evidence that the Site is deliverable and suitable for development. They demonstrate that the Site occupies a low-risk flood location, benefits from safe access during extreme flood events, is largely unaffected by flooding from all sources and can accommodate a comprehensive sustainable drainage solution capable of managing future climate-change impacts. The report therefore concludes that there are no significant flood-risk or drainage constraints to development and that the Site is suitable for allocation and future residential development.

Landscape & Grey Belt

4.16 A Landscape and Visual Study prepared by Bidwells **(Appendix D)** has been undertaken to inform the Framework Masterplan. The Study explains that the Site is not an isolated or

prominent parcel within the wider countryside and instead sits within a landscape already strongly influenced by surrounding development, transport infrastructure and settlement-edge features.

4.17 A key finding of the study is that the Site benefits from a strong degree of natural containment. Existing mature tree belts, hedgerows and woodland vegetation define much of the site's boundaries, including a substantial Tree Preservation Order woodland belt running through the centre of the site and extensive vegetation along the A1301 frontage. These features significantly restrict views into the Site from the wider landscape and create a visually enclosed character that reduces the Site's prominence. The Study notes that the wider Cam and Granta Tributaries Lowland Farmlands character area is distinguished by its wooded appearance and suburban settlement influences, meaning that development of the site would be consistent with the prevailing character of the locality.

4.18 The visual assessment demonstrates that opportunities for public views into the site are limited. The only location where a substantial proportion of the site is visible is from Mill Lane immediately adjacent to the southern boundary. Elsewhere, views are either heavily restricted, limited to glimpses through vegetation, or experienced from considerable distances where the Site forms only a small component of the wider landscape. The Study specifically notes that views from the A1301, Sawston Business Park and many nearby public vantage points are largely screened by boundary vegetation and existing trees.

4.19 Importantly, the study demonstrates that any landscape and visual effects can be effectively mitigated through the Framework Masterplan. The retention and enhancement of existing woodland belts, hedgerows and boundary planting would preserve the site's landscape structure, whilst additional structural planting and green infrastructure would reinforce the settlement edge and further reduce visibility. Public open space along parts of the site frontage, strengthening of northern boundary planting and the protection of existing landscape features would help integrate development into its surroundings and maintain the established landscape character. The Study concludes that development would be assimilated within the existing settlement framework rather than appearing as an isolated encroachment into open countryside.

Green Belt / Grey Belt

4.20 The Study provides support for the Site's release from the Green Belt. Drawing on the Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment, it notes that the site parcels make either moderate or limited contributions to Green Belt purposes and have been identified as "provisional grey belt". The study highlights the site's relationship with existing residential development, the adjacent school and leisure facilities, and the influence of the A1301 corridor, all of which reduce its contribution to the openness and purposes of the Green Belt. It concludes that the site does not strongly contribute to the key Green Belt purposes set out in national policy and can therefore be considered an appropriate location for sustainable growth.

4.21 This is also documented in the Grey Belt Assessment (**Appendix I**) prepared by Bidwells. In accordance with the Council’s own methodology, the Assessment identifies the Site as the worst-performing parcel of Green Belt in Sawston and as Grey Belt in the Authority’s Green Belt Assessment (2026). It is therefore contended that, within a settlement entirely surrounded by Green Belt, the Site is the sequentially preferable site in Sawston for release from the Green Belt and subsequent allocation and development.

4.22 Overall, it is considered the Site is suitable for residential development in landscape and Green Belt terms. The Site is visually well-contained, has limited visibility from the wider area, sits within a landscape already influenced by settlement and infrastructure, and can be successfully integrated through retention of existing vegetation and new landscape planting. This is reflected in the Framework Masterplan which retains perimeter planting alongside the tree belt which divides the Site.

Ecology & Trees

4.23 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) (**Appendix E**) has been undertaken by ArbTech. The PEA concludes that there are no significant ecological constraints that would prevent the allocation or development of the Site. It identifies that the Site is dominated by active agricultural land, with areas of woodland, grassland and hedgerow that provide ecological value but are not of exceptional importance.

4.24 No direct impacts on statutory ecological designations are anticipated, including nearby SSSIs, and no internationally designated sites are present within 10km. The assessment identifies no overriding constraints relating to bats, great crested newts, dormice, badgers or other protected species that would preclude development.

4.25 Overall, the assessment demonstrates that the site is suitable for residential development in ecological terms, with no ecological "showstoppers" identified that would prevent allocation or future delivery of the Site.

4.26 A Tree Survey and Report (**Appendix F**) has been prepared by ArbTech. Principally, the Survey identifies the tree belt (TPO ref. TPO 0003 [1984]) that intersects the Site. Importantly, it identifies that several trees in the northern section of the belt are either dead, dying or in poor condition. This has influenced the Framework Masterplan, which indicates that internal access would be taken through the area where the poor-quality trees are located, necessitating their removal. Allocation and development of the Site would provide an opportunity for appropriate compensatory planting throughout the Site, thereby improving the overall quality of the tree stock. It is therefore considered that, in arboricultural terms, allocation and development of the Site would deliver a betterment to the Site's tree population.

Heritage & Archaeology

4.27 A Heritage Technical Note (**Appendix G**) and an Archaeology Technical Note (**Appendix H**) have been prepared by Iceni Projects. Collectively, the Notes conclude that there are no heritage-related constraints that would preclude the allocation or development of the Site. Both reports identify that any heritage or archaeological considerations can be addressed appropriately through the normal planning process.

4.28 The Heritage Note confirms that the Site contains no designated heritage assets and sits outside the informative setting of nearby heritage assets, including Sawston Conservation Area, the Grade II listed buildings associated with Sawston Village College, and 82 Mill Lane. Existing development, vegetation and infrastructure substantially limit intervisibility, and the Site does not contribute to the significance or setting of these assets. The assessment therefore concludes that residential development would result in no harm to the significance of nearby designated heritage assets and no heritage impacts that would prevent development.

4.29 The Archaeology Note identifies no known archaeological remains within the Site itself, although it acknowledges the Site's location within a landscape containing evidence of prehistoric, Roman and medieval activity, including the nearby Borough Hill Scheduled Monument. As a precaution, the report recommends further desk-based assessment and geophysical survey work at the planning application stage to better understand any potential buried remains. Should the Site be allocated, it is considered that an appropriate clause relating to archaeology could be included in the policy wording.

4.30 Importantly, the report concludes that any archaeological remains that may be present are unlikely to represent a significant constraint and could be appropriately managed through investigation, recording and mitigation. The assessment explicitly states that there is no identified archaeological constraint that would prevent allocation of the site for residential development and that any impacts can be satisfactorily addressed through the planning process.

4.31 Overall, both assessments demonstrate that the site is suitable for development from a heritage and archaeology perspective, with no identified impacts that would prevent allocation or future delivery of the site.

Summary

4.32 NWBio has carefully considered the potential of the Site to accommodate suitable residential development. The emerging Framework Masterplan has been developed and defined through a collaborative process and informed by a range of technical discipline inputs.

4.33 Proposals for the Site remain at an early stage. NWBio confirms that, should the Site be allocated within the emerging Local Plan, it would endeavour to engage with local residents and stakeholders to ensure that proposals best contribute to the longevity of Sawston.

5.0 Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment

5.1 The Site was most recently assessed within the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) (2026) Update, which forms part of the Regulation 19 Evidence Base.

5.2 This section of the Report considers the Council's assessment of the Site in light of the technical evidence and design development undertaken by NWBio and provides a revised assessment. It concludes that, in accordance with the Council's assessment criteria, there are no technical considerations that should preclude the allocation of the Site for residential development of approximately 200 dwellings.

	HELAA ADDENDUM (2026) RANKING	NWBIO - REGULATION 19 CONSULTATION COMMENTS	REVISED RATING
Suitable			
Adopted Development Plan Policies	Amber	Any policy constraint could be overcome as part of a planning application.	Amber
Flood Risk Assessment	Red	Sequential approach to layout of site as shown in the Framework Masterplan along with appropriate mitigation (drainage strategy) could overcome any flood risk concern. See **Appendix C.**	Green
Landscape Assessment	Red	The accompanying Landscape and Visual Study explains how development can be appropriately accommodated on the Site in landscape terms. See **Appendix D**. The Grey Belt Assessment (**Appendix I**) confirms the Site's Grey Belt status, making it the sequentially preferable site for release within Sawston.	Green
Open Space	Green	~	Green

	HELAA ADDENDUM (2026) RANKING	NWBIO - REGULATION 19 CONSULTATION COMMENTS	REVISED RATING
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	Amber	There is an opportunity to deliver on-site BNG as part of any future development proposals, thereby enhancing the ecological value of the Site. The submitted PEA confirms that there are no biodiversity or ecological constraints that should preclude development.	Amber
Policy	Green	~	Green
Historic Environment Assessment	Amber	The submitted Heritage Technical Note (**Appendix G**) confirms that there are no historic-environment or built-heritage considerations that should preclude development of the Site.	Amber
Archaeology Assessment	Amber	The Archaeology Technical Note (**Appendix H**) addresses the archaeological potential of the Site. Trial trenching to establish the archaeological value of the Site could take place during determination of a future application, be secured through allocation wording or be required by an appropriately worded condition.	Amber
Accessibility Assessment	Green	~	Green
Site Access	Red	Supporting Transport Report prepared by	Green

	HELAA ADDENDUM (2026) RANKING	NWBIO - REGULATION 19 CONSULTATION COMMENTS	REVISED RATING
		EAS demonstrates how two safe and suitable accesses (one emergency) to the Site could be achieved to accommodate approximately 200 dwellings.	
Transport and Road	Amber	Submitted Transport Technical Note outlines indicatively there is capacity to accommodate approximately 200 dwellings at the Site.	Green
Noise, Vibration, Odour and Light Pollution Assessment	Amber	Application proposals would adopt a sequential approach to layout and ensure that necessary mitigation measures are implemented.	Amber
AQMA (Air Quality) Assessment	Green	~	Green
Contaminated Land Assessment	Amber	The potential for contamination arising from historic uses is noted. Contamination reports and a subsequent remediation scheme would accompany a future application, with an appropriate remediation scheme secured by condition.	Amber
Overall Suitability Score	Amber	As demonstrated above, there are no technical considerations that could not be mitigated or that should preclude development of the Site.	Green

	HELAA ADDENDUM (2026) RANKING	NWBIO - REGULATION 19 CONSULTATION COMMENTS	REVISED RATING
Available			
	Green	Site remains under agreement with the landowner. Single ownership with intention to develop.	Green
Achievable			
	Green	Viable for residential development	Green

5.3 As detailed above, NWBio wishes to establish the Site's continued suitability, availability and achievability for development.

5.4 As set out above, the technical work undertaken by NWBio and the supplementary response demonstrate that there are no technical or environmental considerations that should preclude residential development of approximately 200 dwellings on the Site.

5.5 We therefore advocate that the Site represents an opportunity to locate development on land free from overriding technical and environmental constraints and should be considered for allocation in the emerging Local Plan.

6.0 Benefits of Allocation and Development

6.1 The previous section of this Report demonstrated that the Site is suitable, available and achievable for development. This section builds on that conclusion by setting out the benefits of, and case for, allocation, together with suggested wording for a future policy allocating the Site for development.

National Growth Agenda and the Case for Cambridge

6.2 The Labour 2024 Manifesto was underpinned by a commitment to deliver 1.5 million new homes during the administration period (2024–2029). Commitment to this target has been reaffirmed by the introduction of a new Standard Method in 2024 and revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2024 and 2026, with the ambition to create a more pro-growth policy context.

6.3 Central government commitment to housebuilding was further demonstrated through the announcement of £234 million of devolved land and infrastructure grant funding for Mayoral Strategic Authorities, including Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA).1

6.4 Ongoing commitment to 'supercharge' growth within Cambridge has continued to be a focus of the government. In June 2026, it was announced that £400 million of funding would be made available to fund the creation of the Greater Cambridge Development Corporation (GCDC), established on 23 July 2026. The GCDC is set to deliver an ambitious plan for long-term sustainable growth for Greater Cambridge, coordinating the delivery of infrastructure, investment and strategic developments. Subject to the parliamentary process in Autumn 2026, it is understood GCDC will assume development management powers in 2027 and plan-making powers at a later date, at present undetermined.

6.5 In due course, it is understood that the GCDC will prepare its own evidence base, identifying a growth target for the region to underpin a future Local Plan. Although this target is currently unknown, it is anticipated to be ambitious, reflecting both the national growth agenda for accelerated housing delivery and the ambition to deliver high levels of growth in Cambridge.

6.6 It is also understood that the Cambridge Growth Company has appointed WSP to undertake a Mass Rapid Transport Study for Cambridge to support the region's growth.

6.7 In October 2025, the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor Investment Prospectus was published, which again reaffirmed Greater Cambridge's position as an area of high growth. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Growth Plan (2025) further establishes the commitment to realising national growth targets for Cambridge in identifying the opportunity and need for accelerated growth in Greater Cambridge.

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[1] *Further Measures to Support Housebuilding and Infrastructure Delivery*, Baroness Taylor of Stevenage, 23 March 2026. Written statements - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament

6.8 The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) has also announced its commitment to growth with the Local Growth Plan (2025) seeking to triple the size of the Combined Authority's economy.

6.9 In combination, it is apparent that there is a national and regional commitment to the ongoing delivery of housing in Greater Cambridge and a level of growth envisioned that is likely to transcend that currently envisioned by GCSP. We advocate that there is a clear need for enhanced growth and housing delivery within Greater Cambridge across the plan period. This is discussed in further detail within the Representations prepared and submitted by Bidwells on behalf of NWBio pursuant to the Regulation 19 Consultation of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

Sawston and the Growth Strategy

6.10 In the context of Greater Cambridge's need to plan positively for higher levels of housing, the release of carefully selected Green Belt land at Sawston represents a logical and sustainable strategy. Sawston is one of the largest and most sustainable villages in South Cambridgeshire, functioning as a key rural service centre with a wide range of existing facilities, including schools, healthcare provision, employment opportunities, retail services and community infrastructure. Directing growth to locations such as Sawston would enable new development to build on established infrastructure and services, reducing the need for longer-distance travel and supporting the vitality of existing communities.

6.11 Sawston also benefits from an exceptionally accessible location within the Greater Cambridge area. The village lies adjacent to the A505 corridor, provides convenient access to the Cambridge Biomedical Campus and the wider Cambridge employment market, and is well connected by frequent bus services and nearby rail services at Whittlesford Parkway. This level of connectivity distinguishes Sawston from many smaller settlements and means that it is well placed to accommodate additional growth sustainably.

6.12 Importantly, a review of Green Belt land around Greater Cambridge should not focus solely on maintaining existing boundaries but should assess whether land continues to fulfil Green Belt purposes effectively. Well-contained parcels of land on the edge of Sawston can be released without causing significant harm to the overall function of the Cambridge Green Belt, particularly where development would be read as a natural extension of the existing settlement and where strong permanent boundaries can be established.

6.13 Furthermore, as noted above, although Sawston is one of the most sustainable settlements by virtue of its size and relationship with Cambridge, it is entirely surrounded by Green Belt. The Site has been identified as not performing strongly in relation to purposes (a), (b) or (d) of the Green Belt, as defined in the NPPF (2024 and 2026). By definition and according to the Council's evidence base, the Site is therefore Grey Belt and is the worst-performing parcel of Grey Belt in Sawston. If development is directed to Sawston, given the lack of available brownfield land within the settlement, it is essential that development is directed to the Site first.

6.14 Directing additional growth towards sustainable settlements such as Sawston would help Greater Cambridge meet identified housing needs, support economic growth, improve housing affordability and reduce pressure to disperse development to less sustainable locations. The release of suitable Green Belt land at Sawston therefore represents an opportunity to deliver substantial new homes in a location capable of accommodating growth whilst maintaining the essential purposes and integrity of the wider Green Belt.

Suggested Policy Wording

6.15 In considering the above commentary and accompanying Representations prepared by Bidwells and submitted pursuant to the Regulation 19 consultation of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan, we advocate that the Site should be allocated for residential development to support the sustainable growth of Sawston and Greater Cambridge across the forthcoming plan period.

6.16 We therefore propose that the Site is allocated for residential development of approximately 200 dwellings. The following wording is suggested:

Policy S/RRA/ML: Land north of Mill Lane, Sawston

- Site area of 6.8ha
- Capacity for approximately 200 homes

1. Development proposals must demonstrate how they will meet the following requirements:

a) The site should integrate with Sawston's existing built form and infrastructure through high-quality design;
b) Development must demonstrate it can be safely accommodated in terms of flood risk from all sources;
c) Development proposals shall seek to maintain the TPO tree belt that runs through the Site. Any alterations or removals must be justified through an application and compensatory planting secured.
d) Primary vehicular access to and from the Site shall be taken from Mill Lane.

7.0 Summary

7.1 This Site Suitability Report has been prepared by Bidwells on behalf of NWBio to demonstrate that the Site is suitable, deliverable and achievable for residential development of approximately 200 dwellings.

7.2 Although design development is at an early stage, the technical evidence prepared to date demonstrates that there are no technical or environmental considerations that should preclude development of the Site.

7.3 Bidwells continues to advocate that the Growth Strategy and Development Strategy remain too conservative and rely too heavily on strategic sites with unrealistic delivery rates. Consequently, as documented in the supporting representations, the Authority needs to consider additional sites in rural areas within and adjacent to sustainable settlements, including those in the Green Belt, such as Sawston.

7.4 The Site constitutes the worst performing piece of Green Belt land within Sawston's immediate surroundings as defined within the Green Belt Assessment (2026) and should hence be prioritised for release from the Green Belt and subsequent allocation for residential development.

7.5 We therefore request that the Site be allocated for residential development of approximately 200 dwellings.

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