Greater Cambridge Local Plan

Proposed Submission (Regulation 19) Consultation - Response Form

Please submit your comments (known as representations) by **5pm** on **Friday 25 September 2026**.

Data Protection and Freedom of Information

We will treat your data in accordance with our Privacy Notice. All personal information that you provide will be used solely in relation to the Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

Please note that each representation and the name of the person or organisation who made the representation, and the name and organisation of the agent (where used), will be published on our website - representations cannot be treated as confidential.

Additionally, respondent details and representation(s) will be made available to the Planning Inspectorate and to the Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State to conduct the examination.

By submitting this response form you are agreeing to these conditions.

About this Response Form

This response form has two parts:

- Part A – Your details. We cannot formally register your comments without your details.
- Part B – Your representation(s). Please fill in a separate sheet for each representation you wish to make. If you need more space to provide your answers, please expand the boxes or continue on an attached separate sheet.

We strongly encourage the submission of representations via our consultation platform at https://consultations.greatercambridgeplanning.org/proposed-submission-greater-cambridge-local-plan If you are unable to submit your representation using our online system, this response form is available to downloaded to complete electronically from www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/local-plan.

Your completed response form should be:

- emailed to localplan@greatercambridgeplanning.org, or
- posted to: Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Policy Team, South Cambridgeshire District Council, South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, Cambridge, CB23 6EA

If you are having difficulty submitting your comments, please contact localplan@greatercambridgeplanning.org or call 01954 713694.

Part A: Your Details

Information required	Personal details *	Agent's details (if applicable)
Name	c/o Agent	Sean McGrath
Organisation (where relevant)	Cambridge United Football Club	WSP
Job Title (where relevant)	c/o Agent	Director
Address, including Post Code	Cledara Abbey Stadium Newmarket Road Cambridge CB5 8LN	WSP, 70 Chancery Lane, London, WC2A 1AF
Telephone	c/o Agent	[redacted]
Email address	c/o Agent	[redacted]

* If you have appointed an agent to represent you, you only need to complete the Name and Organisation (if applicable) under Personal Details, but you do need to complete the full details of the agent. All correspondence will be sent to the agent.

Part B: Your Representation

Please fill in a separate sheet for each representation.

Section 1: Which document, and section of that document, does your representation relate to?

Document	**Policy / Paragraph / Site / Map** (please identify)
Proposed Submission Greater Cambridge Local Plan	Policy S/CE
Proposed Submission Policies Map	
Sustainability Appraisal	
Habitats Regulations Assessment	

Section 2: Do you consider that the Greater Cambridge Local Plan is sound and legally compliant?

Test	**Yes / No**
Legally compliant	Yes, the draft plan is legally compliant and sound, subject to adequately addressing

	the future of Cambridge United Football Club.
Sound	Yes, the draft plan is legally compliant and sound, subject to adequately addressing the future of Cambridge United Football Club.

Section 3: Your representation

Please set out and explain your comments. Please be as precise as possible, and please do not just refer to an attached supporting document(s). For your representation (comments) to be considered, your representation must be set out here. Wherever possible, set out precisely any changes you think should be made to the plan and its policies.

The Potential to Relocate

1. As noted, since the Regulation 18 consultation, it has become clearer to the Club that there is no realistic prospect of redeveloping the Cledara Abbey Stadium. As such, positive discussions have taken place regarding the inclusion of a new stadium in the future of Cambridge. Given the proximity of Cambridge East to the current stadium in the Abbey Ward, this would appear to be the most logical alternative stadium location.

2. The Club, therefore, want to work in partnership with the key stakeholders, including the Hill Group, to help secure an allocation for a new stadium at alternative site that meets both the Club and the City's needs.

3. The new urban extension at Cambridge East (ref: S/CE) is allocated for a residential-led mixed use development, providing housing alongside a wide range and scale of cultural, leisure, commercial and community uses to meet the needs of the wider City and sub-region.

4. Whilst we appreciate that this emerging Plan is being progressed under the legacy regime, and the Plan will be considered against the previous, 2024 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the aims and objectives of the new 2026 NPPF are relevant.

5. Making specific reference to a new stadium for Cambridge Utd within the allocation is entirely consistent with the 2026 NPPF because it outlines that Plans should support the conditions for long-term economic growth, and particularly support the allocation of sites to implement the economic vision and strategy, paying particular regard to facilitating development to meet the needs of a modern economy and the specific locational requirements of different sectors (Policy E1). This Policy goes on to explain that provision should be made expansion or modernisation businesses of local, regional or national importance to support economic growth (particularly in the leisure and tourism sector). In the 2024 NPPF, this therefore remains

consistent with Paragraphs 85 and 87 which seek to locate development to create conditions for investment and economic growth.

6. The Cambridge East allocation (ref: S/CE) notes that the site may include civic uses, a conference centre, concert hall, arts centre or leisure facilities. Although this list could be considered to cover a new stadium, it would be helpful to refer explicitly in the allocation to Cambridge East being a potentially appropriate location for a new stadium for Cambridge United so that design and master planning could make provision for it.

7. The provision of a new community stadium for Cambridge Utd as part of the wider allocated site, located perhaps in a leisure, civic entertainment quarter would be consistent with good place making and urban design objectives set out in 2024 NPPF and the 2026 NPPF. Central to both iterations of the NPPF is ensuring that Plans and allocations ensure that development brings forward opportunities to promote good health and support social interaction through land allocations.

8. Also of relevance, in May 2026, the Government explicitly recognised that sports infrastructure development projects can help to deliver local regeneration and commercial growth, and confirmed that a Stadium Regeneration Accelerator would be set up to support this objective. The Stadium Regeneration Accelerator will:

"In a further growth boost for towns and cities across England, a new cross-government programme will work with sporting bodies on priority sports infrastructure development projects - such as stadiums - that can help deliver local regeneration and commercial growth. Funding will not be used for the regeneration of these stadiums but the government will work with sports clubs and leagues to unlock opportunities for large-scale housing delivery, jobs, apprenticeships, transport improvement and community sports facilities…."

9. In short, the Government seems to be fully committed to assisting in projects delivering sports infrastructure, reinforcing our view that now is a genuine moment of opportunity that cannot be missed.

10. In this context, the Club finds it difficult to support the draft allocation as it does not recognise the future potential relocation of the Club. Whether that is as a reference to the suitability of a new stadium within the Cambridge East allocation, or a non-site-specific reference to the aspiration to work to find an appropriate location should be the subject of further discussions to reach an agreed position before the draft Plan is submitted for examination. There certainly should be a reference to the potential relocation of the Club in the Abbey Stadium allocation (ref: S/AMC/AS). Including a reference in the Cambridge East allocation to the suitability of the site for a new stadium for the Club would ensure that a stadium could be part of the master planning and place making process.

Please provide a 100 word summary of your representation.

Cambridge Utd needs to increase its match-day capacity and improve the match day experience. This requires a larger stadium. The Club is seeking a positive planning policy framework to support and facilitate the growth of the Club. The Plan should acknowledge the future potential relocation of the Club, probably in policy S/AMC/AS: Abbey Stadium. Initial discussions regarding the potential to relocate to Cambridge East site (ref: S/CE) have been positive and it may be appropriate to refer in the allocation to the potential suitability of Cambridge East to accommodate a new stadium for the Club.

Section 4: Supporting Documents

If you are submitting any supporting documents with your representation, such as maps or further evidence documents, please provide a list.

A cover letter has been submitted in support of the representations.

Section 5: Proposed Modifications

Please set out the modification(s) you consider necessary to make the Greater Cambridge Local Plan legally compliant and sound.

You will need to say why each modification will make the Greater Cambridge Local Plan legally compliant or sound. Please put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or paragraph, being as precise as possible.

Policy S/CE: Cambridge East

1. A new city district of approximately 8,000 homes delivered from 2032, subject to the necessary water infrastructure being available, significant employment floorspace in use classes E(g) and approximately 20,000 square metres gross internal area (GIA) of B2/B8 employment floorspace, with a range of supporting services and facilities including a new community stadium, retail, community, cultural, faith, leisure, education and sports and open space uses. The built area of the expansion will be contained within the Site Allocation boundary identified on the Policies Map.

2. A site wide masterplan will be prepared by the landowners and/or promoters in conjunction with the Council and in consultation with the local community and other stakeholders. The masterplan should be broadly aligned with the indicative Spatial Framework shown at Figure 53 and will need to identify the broad distribution of land uses, infrastructure delivery and phasing and will be used as a basis for the consideration of subsequent planning applications. The masterplan should be agreed by the Council prior to the approval of any planning applications (and may be subsequently updated by the landowners and/or promoters and agreed by the Council).

3. Given the scale and long term construction of the development, a site wide Place Book shall be prepared to establish the vision, place-making objectives and quality expectations for the new community and provide the foundation for the site wide masterplan and design codes. The design code will ensure that each phase of development positively contributes towards the high-quality placemaking outcomes expected.

Please note your representation should cover succinctly all the information, evidence and supporting information necessary to justify your representation and any proposed modification(s), as there will not be a subsequent opportunity to make further representations other than at the invitation of the Inspector during the Examination process.

Section 6: Participation at the Examination

If you are proposing a modification to the Greater Cambridge Local Plan, do you consider it necessary to participate at the examination hearings?

Examination	**Yes / No**
Participate at the hearing sessions	Yes, we reserve the right to participate in the hearing sessions.

If you wish to participate at the hearing sessions, please outline why you consider this to be necessary.

Cambridge United Football Club would like to reserve the right to participate in the hearing sessions as necessary as the Club is a vital civic institution and an integral part of the local community in Cambridge, and the long-term future of the Club needs to be secured. Please see our accompanying cover letter for full details.

Please note: the Inspector will determine the most appropriate procedure to adopt to hear those who have indicated that they wish to participate in Examination hearing sessions. You may be asked to confirm your wish to participate when the Inspector has identified the matters and issues for examination.

Section 7: Being Kept Informed

Would you like to be kept informed of the progress of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan through to adoption?

Notifications	**Yes / No**
Informed of submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State for independent Examination	Yes
Informed of the publication of the Inspector's recommendations following the Examination of the Local Plan	Yes
Informed of adoption of the Local Plan	Yes

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Cledara Abbey Stadium

11. As well as inclusion of a reference in the allocation, it would be helpful to include a broad statement of support for the Club's relocation (in appropriate circumstances) either within draft Policy S/AMC/AS, or within a bespoke policy that explicitly deals with the Club's relocation within the Plan. We have previously proposed appropriate text to Draft Policy S/AMC/AS in **Appendix A** and believe it remains appropriate to account for this in order to meet the need to secure the Club's long term future.

12. We note that Appendix 7 of the Council's Consultation Statement explicitly considers whether the proposed Open Space designation of the pitch at the Cledara Abbey Stadium is appropriate. The Council believes retaining this designation is appropriate on the basis that the Club hasn't confirmed an alternative location.

13. Given things are progressing, we believe it would be appropriate to either remove the Open Space designation, and/or suitable flexibility to the draft policy to enable the site to be redeveloped, without the Open Space designation prohibiting this.

14. As we understand it, the Open Space designation was imposed to help the Club, but it could now be a significant block. The value accrued through the redevelopment of the Cledara Abbey Stadium site will contribute towards the very significant costs of building a new stadium and relocating the Club.

15. In short, now is a moment of opportunity to help the Club with a supportive allocation which will facilitate the redevelopment of Cledara Abbey Stadium should the Club relocate. As such, the flexibility that we have previously proposed in this allocation needs to be introduced, to ensure that the Club can react to an evolving situation.

16. We suggest that the wording at Appendix A be included in respect of the 'Abbey Stadium' allocation (ref: S/AMC/AS). Until these amendments are made and the restrictive nature of the draft allocation is reversed, the wording of this draft allocation would be problematic to the future development of the Club for the wider City.

Please provide a 100 word summary of your representation.

Cambridge Utd needs to increase its match-day capacity and improve the match day experience. This requires a larger stadium. The Club is seeking a positive planning policy framework to support and facilitate the growth of the Club. The Plan should acknowledge the future potential relocation of the Club, probably in policy S/AMC/AS: Abbey Stadium. Initial discussions regarding the potential to relocate to Cambridge East site (ref: S/CE) have been positive and it may be appropriate to refer in the allocation to the potential suitability of Cambridge East to accommodate a new stadium for the Club.

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Policy S/AMC/AS: Abbey Stadium

1. ~~Development proposals within the Abbey Stadium area will be supported if they:~~ The Council will support proposals to increase the match day capacity and non-match day use of the Abbey Stadium. The proposals should:
    a. ~~Are part of a~~ Include a comprehensive masterplan and phasing plan that will deliver a wider vision for Abbey Stadium. The vision should support an enhanced visitor experience, including how people travel to and from the stadium, the facilities within and around it and enhancing the sense of arrival to the stadium from Newmarket Road. Subsequent planning applications should support the delivery of the masterplan's vision. This should be supported by a detailed Transport Assessment to mitigate any impacts on congestion;
    ~~b. Improve bus infrastructure on Newmarket Road where possible;~~ **[This matter is dealt with by criterion c below]**
    c. ~~Resolve road network capacity,~~ Address movement and safety concerns on match days~~. Site~~ and improve the access arrangements from Newmarket Road ~~require improvement~~;
    d. ~~Ensure new development is well connected~~ Seek to connect the stadium to the existing footpaths and cycleways in the vicinity of the site, including the Chisholm

Trail and that adequate, safe and secure cycle parking provision is set out across the site;

e. Encourage the use of sustainable means of transport to access the stadium, and promote ~~Provide improved~~ active and public travel links to Cambridge City Centre, railway stations and Newmarket Road Park and Ride;

f. Seek to retain existing trees to the western edge of the site and seek to provide additional ~~planting to soften the impact on the Protected Open Space to the west of the site boundary and from views into the site~~;

g. ~~Protect the sensitive ecological assets, Coldham's Common and Coldham's Brook, to the west and south of the site; Provide a sustainable drainage strategy which includes consideration of the Flood Zones 2 and 3 are to the west of the site boundary;~~ **[This matter is dealt with by other plan policies]**

h. ~~Provide a sustainable drainage strategy which includes consideration of the Flood Zones 2 and 3 are to the west of the site boundary;~~ **[This matter is dealt with by other plan policies]**

i. Identify opportunities to use the stadium and associated facilities on non-match days; and

j. ~~Preserve or enhance~~ Address the impact on the setting of the Grade II Listed Buildings, 529 and Papermills, Newmarket Road, Grade I Listed Leper Chapel and the Riverside Conservation Area which are opposite the development site, and an Historic Impact Assessment should be submitted with any relevant applications.

2. An urban design led approach should be taken to make best use of the site and inform the appropriate scale and massing of development proposals, ~~minimising adverse~~ addressing the impacts on adjacent residential properties ~~and open spaces~~. **[Unless the stadium extends physically onto existing protected open space, there will be no physical impact upon open spaces]**

3. If the Abbey Stadium cannot be viably extended to secure Cambridge Utd FC's sustainable, long-term future, the Council recognises that the Club will need to relocate elsewhere. In this scenario, the Council will work with the Club to identify and deliver a new stadium elsewhere. The Council recognises the importance of the Club's cultural and socio-economic role in Cambridge. The Council recognise that keeping the Club in the City is a very special circumstance that will be given significant weight in any planning decision.

4. If the Club does relocate, the Abbey Stadium site is an important brownfield site that can come forward to meet the need for residential and/or commercial space. The Council will work with the Club to optimise the potential of this important brownfield site.

Please note your representation should cover succinctly all the information, evidence and supporting information necessary to justify your representation and any proposed modification(s), as there will not be a subsequent opportunity to make further

representations other than at the invitation of the Inspector during the Examination process.

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Informed of adoption of the Local Plan	Yes

CAMBRIDGE UNITED FC

Greater Cambridgeshire Shared Planning,
The Guildhall,
Market Square,
Cambridge,
CB2 3Q

25 September 2026

Dear Sir or Madam,

Response to Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan on behalf of Cambridge United Football Club

1. Cambridge United Football Club (the Club) is pleased to continue to engage in the Greater Cambridge Local Plan (GCLP) process. We set out below our representations in respect of the Regulation 19 consultation draft plan.

2. The Club is one of the City's largest and most important civic institutions and an integral part of the local community in Cambridge, the City that gave birth to modern football by codifying the rules of the modern game in 1848. The Club was formed in 1912 and have played at the Cledara Abbey Stadium since 1932. The stadium currently has a capacity restricted to just under 8,000 because of health and safety requirements. The Club is proud of the role it plays in the City on and off the pitch as its professional football club.

3. After several challenging decades during which the Club both went into administration and non-league at the same time as selling its stadium, Cambridge United is now stable, well run and ambitious to play an even bigger role for the City on and off the pitch at a pivotal moment for Cambridge. We now own the Cledara Abbey after repurchasing it from Grosvenor in September 2022.

4. The Club responded to the Council's Regulation 18 consultation in January 2026. These representations explained that the Owners and Board considered either redevelopment of the current site or potential relocation as critical to the Club's long-term viability and sustainability. This is at a time when its current capacity is constrained, the City will grow exponentially and the financial pressures for all football clubs at every level are growing given the flow of investment into all the English leagues as well as increased financial regulations within football

5. Since the Regulation 18 consultation took place, the Club's views have crystalised. The Club has paused its plans to redevelop the Cledara Abbey

Stadium as they would not be viable. As a result relocation is the most realistic route to achieve long term stability and financial viability. There have been positive signals regarding the development of a new stadium at the proposed allocation at Cambridge East (ref: S/CE). Given this positive progress, we hope the GCLP will support the Club's aspirations to relocate, recognising its unique role in Cambridge, and the value that football clubs and the stadia can have in facilitating and consolidating regeneration and community cohesion.

Greater Cambridge's Growth

6. The Government's commitment to supercharge sustainable growth in Greater Cambridge is well understood and reflected in the emerging GCLP. Cambridge United fully supports this and has played a constructive and active role in helping stakeholders to make its case to Government over the last year.

7. The GCLP aims is to deliver almost 50,000 new homes, nearly doubling the City's population, and providing 73,000 new jobs by 2041. In order to facilitate this ambitious growth, the Greater Cambridge Development Corporation was established in July this year and the Club is looking forward to continuing to work with the Development Corporation.

8. It is the stated ambition of Peter Freeman, Chair of the Cambridge Growth Company, for Cambridge to be 'the most liveable city in Europe by 2050' and it is widely recognised by everyone that to grow successfully Cambridge needs to do so in a way that widens opportunity for the poorest parts of the City, and its young people in particular, as well as deepening Cambridge's artistic, cultural and sporting capital. To support this, there will need to be an expansion of social, recreational and cultural facilities, together with other services the community needs. As the City grows rapidly, we see an expanded active role for the Club in strengthening community cohesion, engaging with different communities across the City and deepening Cambridge's civic cultural identity. In short, the Club and its role needs to grow in step with the City to realise Peter Freeman's ambitions.

9. As one of civic organisations with the greatest reach in the City with fans drawn from every part of it, Cambridge United wants to continue to be an active partner in the GCLP and the wider conversation about the future. We want to play an active part in planning the City and Region's future, to ensure that sport - alongside culture, and entertainment - are at the heart of the new plan, and that the Club's social and cultural role is both fully recognised and used positively for Cambridge.

Background And Context

10. The Club's current home at the Cledara Abbey Stadium is capacity constrained. At the moment, we are just about able to meet fan demand, but on current trends that will likely soon become an even bigger challenge, particularly given promotion last year. Over the last 10 years there has been a 53% increase in attendance, and the home supporter match day occupancy has been over 92% in the last two seasons. We want to continue to grow the fan base so as many people as possible can experience live professional football regularly.

11. Three years ago, the Club bought back the Cledara Abbey Stadium, and over the last 18 months the Club and their consultants have been investigating ways to increase the capacity of the Cledara Abbey Stadium. As majority owner Paul Barry, has stated publicly the build costs and the compact nature of the site, the proximity of housing and protected open space all combine to make redevelopment highly challenging with no return on what would be very significant investment for well over 20 years. Plans to expand the Stadium have, therefore, been put on hold.

12. At the same time as consolidating the success on the pitch, the Club is seeking to deepen its role within the community. Cambridge United's role goes well beyond the football pitch on a matchday. Through our Foundation it runs around 15-programmes mostly in the poorest parts of the City and contributes over £27m of social value per annum in the local community. The Club's leadership role and work in tackling misogyny and violence against women and girls through football was praised by the Government last year for example. We are also ambitious for our women's team and are pleased that our partnership with Cambridge University has led to them playing in Cambridge for the first time at Grange Road.

13. As noted, the Club responded to the Council's Regulation 18 consultation, and suggested that the Draft GCLP provide planning policy support for the Club to improve the Cledara Abbey Stadium, to increase the capacity and facilities on matchdays, but also to ensure that the stadium is used on non-matchdays as an important facility for the local community.

14. In addition, the Club was clear that if Cledara Abbey Stadium cannot be improved in a way that is financially viable, which appears now to be very much the case, to safeguard the Club's long-term future, the Club will work with the Council and others to identify potential alternative sites to ensure that its current capacity does not constrain both the Club's and the City's wider ambitions.

15. The financial landscape of football is changing significantly, with the Independent Football Regulator (IFR) established within the past 12 months as the industry seeks to improve financial sustainability and protect the long-term future of football clubs, which are important assets within their communities. Recent

changes to the EFL's Salary Cost Management Protocols (SCMP) have further reinforced this direction, with clubs facing greater restrictions on the extent to which ownership equity investment can be used to fund playing squad costs and an increased emphasis on generating sustainable revenue to support expenditure on player wages. Consequently, the ability to grow and diversify revenue streams will become increasingly important to the successful operation of football clubs, both on and off the pitch. Maximising matchday, non-matchday and commercial revenues will be central to building sustainable financial models, reducing reliance on shareholder funding and creating greater capacity for clubs to invest in their playing squads, infrastructure and wider community activities.

16. Further work has been undertaken by the Club, and discussions have been had with key stakeholders. As noted, the outcome is that relocation to an alternative site is now a strong possibility, with Cambridge East (site ref: S/CE) being the most favourable opportunity. As outlined in the Regulation 18 consultation response, if the Club is to move, it will need to redevelop the Cledara Abbey Stadium for alternative uses and Draft GCLP should provide the planning policy support to do so. The scenario of the Club relocating is, therefore, addressed in these representations.

Response to the Local Plan Consultation

17. When the Club has previously engaged with the Local Plan consultation process, several key suggestions dealing with the redevelopment of the existing stadium and the relocation of the Club have not been picked up in the Regulation 19 iteration of the draft Plan, so we continue to make further representations on these matters.

<u>The Potential to Relocate</u>

18. As noted, since the Regulation 18 consultation, it has become clearer to the Club that there is no realistic prospect of redeveloping the Cledara Abbey Stadium. As such, positive discussions have taken place regarding the inclusion of a new stadium in the future of Cambridge. Given the proximity of Cambridge East to the current stadium in the Abbey Ward, this would appear to be the most logical alternative stadium location.

19. The Club, therefore, want to work in partnership with the key stakeholders, including the Hill Group, to help secure an allocation for a new stadium at alternative site that meets both the Club and the City's needs.

20. The new urban extension at Cambridge East (ref: S/CE) is allocated for a residential-led mixed use development, providing housing alongside a wide range and scale of cultural, leisure, commercial and community uses to meet the needs of the wider City and sub-region.

21. Whilst we appreciate that this emerging Plan is being progressed under the legacy regime, and the Plan will be considered against the previous, 2024 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the aims and objectives of the new 2026 NPPF are relevant.

22. Making specific reference to a new stadium for Cambridge Utd within the allocation is entirely consistent with the 2026 NPPF because it outlines that Plans should support the conditions for long-term economic growth, and particularly support the allocation of sites to implement the economic vision and strategy, paying particular regard to facilitating development to meet the needs of a modern economy and the specific locational requirements of different sectors (Policy E1). This Policy goes on to explain that provision should be made expansion or modernisation businesses of local, regional or national importance to support economic growth (particularly in the leisure and tourism sector). In the 2024 NPPF, this therefore remains consistent with Paragraphs 85 and 87 which seek to locate development to create conditions for investment and economic growth.

23. The Cambridge East allocation (ref: S/CE) notes that the site may include civic uses, a conference centre, concert hall, arts centre or leisure facilities. Although this list could be considered to cover a new stadium, it would be helpful to refer explicitly in the allocation to Cambridge East being a potentially appropriate location for a new stadium for Cambridge United so that design and master planning could make provision for it.

24. The provision of a new community stadium for Cambridge Utd as part of the wider allocated site, located perhaps in a leisure, civic entertainment quarter would be consistent with good place making and urban design objectives set out in 2024 NPPF and the 2026 NPPF. Central to both iterations of the NPPF is ensuring that Plans and allocations ensure that development brings forward opportunities to promote good health and support social interaction through land allocations.

25. Also of relevance, in May 2026, the Government explicitly recognised that sports infrastructure development projects can help to deliver local regeneration and commercial growth, and confirmed that a Stadium Regeneration Accelerator would be set up to support this objective. The Stadium Regeneration Accelerator will:

> *"In a further growth boost for towns and cities across England, a new cross-government programme will work with sporting bodies on priority sports infrastructure development projects - such as stadiums - that can help deliver local regeneration and commercial growth. Funding will not be used for the regeneration of these stadiums but the government will work with sports clubs and leagues to unlock opportunities for large-scale housing delivery, jobs, apprenticeships, transport improvement and community sports facilities...."*

26. In short, the Government seems to be fully committed to assisting in projects delivering sports infrastructure, reinforcing our view that now is a genuine moment of opportunity that cannot be missed.

27. In this context, the Club finds it difficult to support the draft allocation as it does not recognise the future potential relocation of the Club. Whether that is as a reference to the suitability of a new stadium within the Cambridge East allocation, or a non-site-specific reference to the aspiration to work to find an appropriate location should be the subject of further discussions to reach an agreed position before the draft Plan is submitted for examination. There certainly should be a reference to the potential relocation of the Club in the Abbey Stadium allocation (ref: S/AMC/AS). Including a reference in the Cambridge East allocation to the suitability of the site for a new stadium for the Club would ensure that a stadium could be part of the master planning and place making process.

Cledara Abbey Stadium

28. As well as inclusion of a reference in the allocation, it would be helpful to include a broad statement of support for the Club's relocation (in appropriate circumstances) either within draft Policy S/AMC/AS, or within a bespoke policy that explicitly deals with the Club's relocation within the Plan. We have previously proposed appropriate text to Draft Policy S/AMC/AS in **Appendix A** and believe it remains appropriate to account for this in order to meet the need to secure the Club's long term future.

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33. We suggest that the wording at Appendix A be included in respect of the 'Abbey Stadium' allocation (ref: S/AMC/AS). Until these amendments are made and the restrictive nature of the draft allocation is reversed, the wording of this draft allocation would be problematic to the future development of the Club for the wider City.

Overall Summary

34. Cambridge United Football Club welcomes the opportunity to submit representations to the consultation for the draft GCLP Regulation 19 consultation. The Club will continue to play an active role in the wider discussion about the growth of the City, recognising that the growth potential of Greater Cambridge requires an expansion of social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs.

35. We are proud to represent Cambridge as its professional football club, and we are ambitious to play a bigger role in the future of the City on and off the pitch and keen to remain at the heart of wider conversation.

36. As outlined in this letter, the Club needs to expand, to match the City's growth to ensure that the socio-economic, cultural and sporting benefits associated with the Club are shared with supporters and the local community. To do this, the Club need to increase their match-day capacity and improve the match day experience. This requires a larger stadium.

37. The Club, therefore, is seeking a positive planning policy framework to support and facilitate the growth of the Club. The Plan should acknowledge the future potential relocation of the Club, probably in policy S/AMC/AS: Abbey Stadium.

38. Initial discussions regarding the potential to relocate to Cambridge East site (ref: S/CE) have been positive and it may be appropriate to make reference in the allocation to the potential suitability of Cambridge East to accommodate a new stadium for the Club. We provide a suggested wording at **Appendix A** to this letter.

39. In recognition that the Club's future is very probably away from Cledara Abbey Stadium, we suggest that draft policy S/AMC/AS: Abbey Stadium is amended as set out in **Appendix A** to this letter, to ensure that the Club's existing stadium can be redeveloped to help fund the relocation.

40. We look forward to working with the GCSP to ensure that a positive outcome can be secured for the future of the Club, and the future use of the Cledara Abbey Stadium.

41. Should you wish to discuss these representations further, please do not hesitate to contact Alex Tunbridge [redacted] or Sean McGrath [redacted].

Yours faithfully,

Cambridge United Football Club

Appendix A – Amended Wording

Policy S/AMC/AS: Abbey Stadium

1. ~~Development proposals within the Abbey Stadium area will be supported if they:~~ The Council will support proposals to increase the match day capacity and non-match day use of the Abbey Stadium. The proposals should:

    . ~~Are part of a~~ Include a comprehensive masterplan and phasing plan that will deliver a wider vision for Abbey Stadium. The vision should support an enhanced visitor experience, including how people travel to and from the stadium, the facilities within and around it and enhancing the sense of arrival to the stadium from Newmarket Road. Subsequent planning applications should support the delivery of the masterplan's vision. This should be supported by a detailed Transport Assessment to mitigate any impacts on congestion;

    . ~~Improve bus infrastructure on Newmarket Road where possible;~~ **[This matter is dealt with by criterion c below]**

    . ~~Resolve road network capacity,~~ Address movement and safety concerns on match days~~.~~ ~~Site~~ and improve the access arrangements from Newmarket Road ~~require improvement~~;

    . ~~Ensure new development is well connected~~ Seek to connect the stadium to the existing footpaths and cycleways in the vicinity of the site, including the Chisholm Trail and that adequate, safe and secure cycle parking provision is set out across the site;

    . Encourage the use of sustainable means of transport to access the stadium, and promote ~~Provide improved~~ active and public travel links to Cambridge City Centre, railway stations and Newmarket Road Park and Ride;

    . Seek to retain existing trees to the western edge of the site and seek to provide additional ~~planting to soften the impact on the Protected Open Space to the west of the site boundary and from views into the site~~;

    . ~~Protect the sensitive ecological assets, Coldham's Common and Coldham's Brook, to the west and south of the site; Provide a sustainable drainage strategy which includes consideration of the Flood Zones 2 and 3 are to the west of the site boundary;~~ **[This matter is dealt with by other plan policies]**

    . ~~Provide a sustainable drainage strategy which includes consideration of the Flood Zones 2 and 3 are to the west of the site boundary;~~ **[This matter is dealt with by other plan policies]**

    . Identify opportunities to use the stadium and associated facilities on non-match days; and

    . ~~Preserve or enhance~~ Address the impact on the setting of the Grade II Listed Buildings, 529 and Papermills, Newmarket Road, Grade I Listed Leper Chapel and the Riverside

Conservation Area which are opposite the development site, and an Historic Impact Assessment should be submitted with any relevant applications.

2. An urban design led approach should be taken to make best use of the site and inform the appropriate scale and massing of development proposals, ~~minimising adverse~~ addressing the impacts on adjacent residential properties ~~and open spaces~~. **[Unless the stadium extends physically onto existing protected open space, there will be no physical impact upon open spaces]**

3. If the Abbey Stadium cannot be viably extended to secure Cambridge Utd FC's sustainable, long-term future, the Council recognises that the Club will need to relocate elsewhere. In this scenario, the Council will work with the Club to identify and deliver a new stadium elsewhere. The Council recognises the importance of the Club's cultural and socio-economic role in Cambridge. The Council recognise that keeping the Club in the City is a very special circumstance that will be given significant weight in any planning decision.

4. If the Club does relocate, the Abbey Stadium site is an important brownfield site that can come forward to meet the need for community, residential and/or commercial space. The Council will work with the Club to optimise the potential of this important brownfield site.

Policy S/CE: Cambridge East

1. A new city district of approximately 8,000 homes delivered from 2032, subject to the necessary water infrastructure being available, significant employment floorspace in use classes E(g) and approximately 20,000 square metres gross internal area (GIA) of B2/B8 employment floorspace, with a range of supporting services and facilities including a new community stadium, retail, community, cultural, faith, leisure, education and sports and open space uses. The built area of the expansion will be contained within the Site Allocation boundary identified on the Policies Map.

2. A site wide masterplan will be prepared by the landowners and/or promoters in conjunction with the Council and in consultation with the local community and other stakeholders. The masterplan should be broadly aligned with the indicative Spatial Framework shown at Figure 53 and will need to identify the broad distribution of land uses, infrastructure delivery and phasing and will be used as a basis for the consideration of subsequent planning applications. The masterplan should be agreed by the Council prior to the approval of any planning applications (and may be subsequently updated by the landowners and/or promoters and agreed by the Council).

3. Given the scale and long term construction of the development, a site wide Place Book shall be prepared to establish the vision, place-making objectives and quality expectations for the new community and provide the foundation for the site wide masterplan and design codes. The design code will ensure that each phase of development positively contributes towards the high-quality placemaking outcomes expected.