



EMERGING GREATER CAMBRIDGE LOCAL PLAN STRATEGIC HOUSING AND ECONOMIC LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT CALL FOR SITES AND BROAD LOCATIONS BACKGROUND, CONTEXT AND JUSTIFICATION FOR PROPOSALS TO EXTEND THE DEFINED MAJOR DEVELOPMENT SITE (MDS) AS SHOWN ON THE ADOPTED LOCAL PLAN POLICIES MAP INSET I

1. As stated in the Bourn Airfield Planning and Delivery Statement, August 2018, that was submitted in support of outline planning application ref: S/3440/18/OL for the new village (with particular passages shown emboldened in order to emphasise the respondents' position):

6.8 The OPA has been prepared in collaboration with SCDC and in parallel with the merging Local Plan. Although this Planning and Delivery Statement majors on the importance and relevance of Policy SS/6 (now Policy SS/7), the proposals have been formulated with all relevant policies of the submitted Local Plan being considered in detail. The OPA conforms with these other policies. Policy SS/6 (SS/7) that guides the development of a new village at Bourn Airfield has been modified during the course of the Local Plan examination. The various issues identified by the Inspectors and further proposed modifications have been considered in depth at examination. Apart from a minor variation in the boundary of the MDS in the north eastern gateway to the site, as explained below, there is a substantial degree of agreement between the Council and the Applicants in respect of the current OPA proposals. The overall conclusion of the Council is that "the proposals would contribute positively to the policy objectives for the site set out in the submitted plan and therefore to the soundness of the plan" (Local Plan Update report taken to the Planning Portfolio Holder meeting on 8 November 2016 (RD/CR/660) and to the Council on 17th November 2016 (RD/CR/670). Extracts are attached at Appendix 5.

*6.9 Both SCDC and the Applicants submitted comprehensive responses and supporting evidence to the Inspectors addressing the issues and questions raised. A Statement of Common Ground was agreed (Appendix 7) which confirmed that all matters were agreed between the parties except for the definition and boundaries of the MDS as shown on the proposed changes to the Policies Map Inset I. **The applicants take the view that the MDS should be drawn to make the best use of brownfield site whilst maintaining appropriate separation with nearby communities and with sufficient flexibility to accommodate the capacity of the range and quality of uses specified in Policy SS/6 (SS/7).***

*6.10 Officers generally supported the Applicant's proposed revisions to the MDS and these were accepted by the Council with the exception of a small triangular area in proximity to the main north-eastern gateway into the site. **The Applicants take the view that the MDS should be drawn in the north-east area to allow sufficient flexibility for the changing design requirements of the strategic public transport route, for flexibility in master planning, urban design and place-making purposes, including creating an attractive gateway into the narrowest part of the site.***

6.11 Additional master planning and design work undertaken since the evidence submitted to the examination justifies the Applicant's position relating to the MDS boundary in this north-eastern area. The DAS goes to some length to demonstrate the areas of land required to design an attractive and high quality North Eastern Gateway Character Area – refer to pages 106, 120-124. In particular the Gateway Park proposals demonstrate that with tree planting and vegetation, open space and a wetland park would not only provide sufficient space separating the new development from Caldecote/Highfields, but would also create a major amenity and connectively to be shared between the existing and new communities.

2. This set out the position at the time the application was prepared. Immediately following the completion of the outline package, SCDC received the Inspectors' Report on the Cambridge and South Cambridge Local Plans. As stated in an Addendum to the Planning and Delivery Statement in relation to the submissions made to the Inspectors on the MDS boundaries:

“On the matter relating to the boundaries of the Major Development Site as defined on the Policies Map and in relation to the north east part of the site, the Inspectors made no comment, on the basis that the Policies Map is not defined in statute as a development plan document and therefore they do not have the power to recommend main modifications to it (Inspectors’ Report paragraph 7).

With specific reference to Bourn Airfield, the Inspectors state in paragraph 82 that:-

“On the basis of the information before us, including the latest iteration of the Masterplan, we consider that there is a reasonable prospect that a satisfactory form of development can be achieved through a design led approach which may include residential densities higher than those in some of the existing villages. It is not intended that the Bourn Airfield development will be created as a wholly self-contained settlement. The proximity of the site to Cambourne offers opportunities for interaction recognised that Cambridge will continue to be the major source of employment opportunities for residents between the settlements in relation to the provision of services and facilities. It is also of the new settlement.”


In paragraph 87 the Inspectors conclude:

*“We are mindful of the significant levels of opposition to the Bourn Airfield proposal expressed by the local community and others, including fears of coalescence and traffic implications, including local traffic management issues relating to the Broadway. **There is a degree of scepticism from the local community about whether their concerns can be adequately addressed. But there is nothing to indicate that these concerns cannot be satisfactorily addressed through the development management process and further guidance provided by SPD**” (AM-P emphasis)*

3. The last two emboldened sentences are particularly relevant to this submission. The Inspectors are in effect endorsing the evidence submitted by SCDC in relation to Inspectors’ questions 1.iii, ie. Does the area of land identified on Inset I of the Policies Map provide sufficient capacity to achieve the quantum of development associated with the new village? As part of the Council’s response it was stated that:

“135. The capacity of the Bourn Airfield site will be explored further in the proposed Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), within the policy context provided by the Local Plan. The actual capacity at Bourn Airfield will ultimately be arrived at following a design led approach through the planning application process, which will include masterplanning. The policy, as proposed, together with the suggested modifications will provide a suitable and appropriate framework to guide the process.”

4. Clearly the SPD process is now progressing, but the current planning application goes beyond the defined MDS in the north eastern gateway for reasons set out above. However, it should be stressed that SPD is intended to set out a broad framework to guide a planning application, but in this case - due to the delays in the examination process - preparation of the planning application effectively by-passed the SPD production and includes a substantial evidence base to justify its proposals. The existing masterplan that accompanied the application is purely illustrative in status and indicates one potential scheme for the development of the new village. At the outline stage there should be some flexibility for future detailed design. The purpose of the current Call for Sites consultation is an early step in the plan preparation process to gather information on what land is available and suitable for development in order to be considered as sites that could potentially be allocated in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan. The submitted sites will be the subject of detailed assessment in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) to help the Councils choose the right sites, having assessed their suitability, availability and achievability.
5. Therefore, the exercise goes beyond the current allocated Local Plan provisions and looks further into the future to meet identified needs. The likely scale of growth required to meet these needs has yet to be determined objectively, but on past trends and under the new standard method in national planning guidance it is likely to be substantial. Consequently, it is submitted that it is logical and sound planning practice to give priority to optimizing the



potential of an existing allocated new settlement, without compromising the need to provide strategic landscaping and deliver a high quality landscape setting around the boundary, with sufficient separation of the new settlement to avoid coalescence with Caldecote/Highfields. The site subject of this Call for Sites response proposes a modest extension to the current defined MDS boundary, as shown on Barton Wilmore drawing nos. RG-M-71B and RG-M-71-1B attached, without conflict to these objectives. The area shown is suitable, available and achievable.

ANDREW MARTIN – PLANNING

On behalf of

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