



**SOUTH  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
LOCAL PLAN ISSUES AND  
OPTIONS CONSULTATION  
REPRESENTATIONS  
SUPPORTING LAND AT  
HIGHFIELDS, CALDECOTE  
(PHASE 3)**

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# 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 These representations are written on behalf of Linden Homes to provide The Greater Cambridgeshire Authority with further information in respect of the deliverability and suitability of our additional land interest at Highfields, Caldecote.
- 1.2 Having recently secured Reserved Matters Planning Permission on Phase 1 of the adjoining land with a view to submitting a further reserved matters application on Phase 2 in the spring, this additional parcel of land (identified in **Appendix 1**) forms a logical Phase 3 extension in what has already been determined to be a “sustainable location<sup>1</sup>” for development.
- 1.3 We are therefore promoting the site as a potential housing land allocation within the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan and consider that this Phase 3 site at Highfields, Caldecote can deliver a comprehensive development of market and affordable housing to meet the needs and aspirations of the local area over the plan period. The site is situated in a suitable and highly sustainable location in respect of the existing settlement form and there are no technical or environmental (built and natural) constraints that would preclude the development coming forward.
- 1.4 Allocation of the site would provide a sustainable extension to the settlement delivering a proportionate-scale development, providing an additional uplift in the socio-economic benefits to the area adjoining recently added development.
- 1.5 A summary of our representations is as follows: -
- We strongly **support** the potential inclusion of the site as a proposed housing allocation by the Greater Cambridge Planning Authority;
  - Our proposals have the potential to provide for a high-quality residential development of approximately 150 homes (including 60 affordable homes), alongside the delivery of public open space and associated infrastructure;
  - The site will provide the opportunity to help meet Greater Cambridge’s current and future housing needs;
  - A proportion of the site can be delivered within the first 5 years of the Local Plan;
  - The development proposals are situated in a suitable and highly sustainable location;
  - There are no technical or environmental (built and natural) constraints that would preclude the development of the site
  - The proposals will deliver a development which respects the character of the surrounding area whilst providing a high-quality residential development where people will want to live;
  - The development of the site can deliver a long-term defensible boundary to the east of Highfields Caldecote using green and blue infrastructure;

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<sup>1</sup> Appeal ref: APP/W0530/W/16/3149854

- Areas of identified biodiversity value can be preserved and enhanced within a green infrastructure led development scheme;
- The site represents a deliverable residential development site;
- The site is available now as it is under the control of a national house builder;
- The site can also be considered achievable as new homes can be delivered on the site within the next 5 years and indeed within the first five years of the Local Plan;
- The site can continue on from the Phase I and II schemes to deliver continuity and a constant stream of housing towards the authority's trajectory with certainty.

1.6 We will continue to work with the Council to ensure the delivery of a sound local plan, supporting the potential allocation of the site through the remainder of the local plan preparation.

1.7 The site has already been submitted to the SHLAA process, however, the extent of the land in **Appendix 1**, is slightly larger than previously identified.

## 2.0 Planning and Sustainability Context

- 2.1 The site is located to the east of the existing Highfields, Caldecote development scheme, originally granted outline permission in July 2017.
- 2.2 The site is a private agricultural field with a defined footpath surrounding it, which was secured through the original permission and is being delivered through the Phase 1 Reserved Matters application. From this perspective it is well contained on all sides and has a definitive boundary.
- 2.3 The Phase 3 site extends to approximately 10.5 ha (26 acres) and is currently designated as open countryside as it is outside the settlement boundary. The topography is largely flat, sloping downwards slightly to the east but is largely surrounded by hedgerows and trees which form the field boundaries in addition to the new footpath.

### Building line

- 2.4 To the south of Highfields, Caldecote it is clear that the building line has been extended over time in the area to the east of East Drive. This part of the settlement has accommodated numerous residential properties, additional outbuildings and garden extensions. These features expand the settlement as far east as the eastern extent of the site and parish boundary and it would appear to be a logical eastern extent for the future settlement boundary.
- 2.5 Development of this land parcel will still allow for a clear separation between Highfields, Caldecote and Hardwick, with each settlement clearly maintaining its identity, however, with the eastern extension to Cambourne and the development of Bourn Airfield it is clear that a ribbon development along the A428 is being created outside of the Green Belt along this arterial route, hence coalescence does not appear to be a critical issue that would prevent development.
- 2.6 Incorporation of open space to the east of the site could create a definitive settlement edge, providing a long-term defensible boundary and also the creation of Suds features that could build on the green infrastructure that has been designed for the Phase 1 scheme. This is a clear opportunity for further green and blue infrastructure linking in with the existing network.

### Planning constraints

- 2.7 The site is located within Flood Zone 1 (lowest risk) for both fluvial and surface water flood risk (see Appendix 3) with a small area of lower risk surface water touching the eastern side of the site. The adjacent Phase 1 scheme has sought to improve the

existing surface water situation in the locality using onsite management through the planning application process.

- 2.8 Whilst there are no identified issues on the proposed site, the surface water information in **Appendix 3** does seem to illustrate a potential issue further downstream in Toft and onto the settlements at Barton and the Trumpington area of Cambridge, which have flooded in the past<sup>2</sup>. This area appears to be part of the Bourn Brook Upper Catchment, hence may be able to provide the opportunity to help mitigate against flood events providing flood storage onsite.
- 2.9 There are no heritage constraints associated with this site as there is no conservation area or listed buildings in close proximity and no potential impact on the setting of any heritage asset.
- 2.10 Badgers have been identified on the adjacent scheme. Additional habitat has been incorporated into the design of Phase 1 in order to mitigate the potential impact. Being an intensely farmed agricultural field, it is unlikely that there are significant concentrations of habitats or species onsite, however, we will undertake a habitat survey to confirm this in due course.

## Access

- 2.11 Access into the Phase 3 site is achievable through the road network of the Phase 1 and Phase 2 schemes as illustrated in **Appendix 2**.
- 2.12 There is sufficient capacity built into the road infrastructure to accommodate the additional dwellings as the development proposals have been designed according to the Cambridgeshire County Council's "Housing Estate Road Construction Specification (April 2018) design guide. Visibility splays at junctions have been provided in line with Manual for Streets and Manual for Streets 2, based on a vehicle design speed of 25 mph.

## Sustainable location

- 2.13 The site is located in a very sustainable location for development with excellent access to local services and facilities in the area, along with very good public transport links.
- 2.14 Strategically the A428 corridor is a clear focus for development with Cambourne and Bourn Airfield in close proximity but also the Oxford to Cambridge Corridor and the delivery of the Cambridge Expressway.

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<sup>2</sup> 2001, 2012 Flood events

- 2.15 The introduction of a high-speed public transport corridor in this area further enhances the site's sustainability credentials and its connectivity.
- 2.16 The proximity to the A428 provides excellent connectivity east and west but also linking to the A14 / M11 and A1 providing movement north and south. The site is ideal commuting distance using a variety of modes of transport to Cambridge and located outside of the Green Belt, meaning no exceptional circumstances are required.
- 2.17 This site fits with 3 of the strategic objectives identified in the Issues and Options consultation, specifically:
- Edge of Cambridge – outside the Green Belt;
  - Public transport corridors; and
  - Dispersal – villages
- 2.18 It therefore ticks a number of boxes from a sustainability perspective, not only at a site-specific level but at the macro-level too.

### **Bourn Airfield Development**

- 2.19 The site's proximity to the Bourn Airfield development will further add to its sustainability, as there will be significant additional services and facilities in close proximity including a neighbourhood centre and new primary and secondary schools.
- 2.20 The site is close to the north-eastern edge of the airfield development, which is very likely to include key transport infrastructure as well as the neighbourhood centre and schools, meaning it will be ideally placed to benefit.

## **3.0 Vistry Homes (Linden and Bovis Homes)**

- 3.1 Vistry Homes (incorporating Linden and Bovis Homes) is currently successfully building in South Cambridgeshire. We have active development sites at Northstowe and Trumpington and as stated above have recently secured reserved matters planning permission for the Phase 1 scheme on the adjacent site at Highfields, Caldecote.
- 3.2 We have also recently secured planning permission for 753 dwellings at Cambourne and we are also building just outside the authority area at Royston hence, are delivering a significant number of houses in the sub-region and would like to continue to do so in the future.
- 3.3 We have secured the site under an option and so will be promoting the site through the local plan process and would like to continue to work with the local authority in a constructive manner.
- 3.4 For both Northstowe and Caldecote schemes we have engaged with the design panel process and would be happy to do so again to ensure the development scheme fits with the local authority requirements and secures a positive recommendation by the Planning Committee.

## 4.0 Development Proposals

4.1 We believe that the site provides the opportunity to deliver the following key characteristics: -

- A size, layout and configuration capable of supporting a sustainable housing scheme of approximately 150 homes providing the ability to meet a range of housing needs, including 40% affordable homes on-site;
- Sustainable development, with potential for zero carbon development;
- A landscape buffer and planting can be provided on the site's eastern edge to screen views and to enhance the defensible boundaries to the east of the site;
- Areas of public open space will be provided to deliver amenity areas for prospective residents and also to deliver biodiversity preservation and enhancements;
- Enhancements to the existing landscape features located on the site's boundaries;
- Appropriate vehicular access can be taken from the existing phase 1 and phase 2 schemes;
- Improved link into adjacent green space and ROW to the north;
- Improvement and enhancement of SuDs features;
- A high standard of design that protects and enhances the local area's setting and character.

4.2 The site is considered to be a logical extension to the Highfields, Caldecote with the potential to be designed in a manner which will enable it to be largely enclosed on all sides and visually incorporated within the landscape.

### DELIVERABILITY ASSESSMENT

4.3 In accordance with the definition provided within Annex 2 of the NPPF 2019, we believe that the site can be considered as a **Deliverable** residential development site on account of:

#### Suitability

4.4 The site is located in a suitable location for residential development. As identified above, a sustainable development can be delivered at the site with pedestrian and cycle access to existing services, facilities and public transport. A suitable access can be provided from existing highways and there are no technical constraints which would preclude the development of the site for residential use. A sympathetic layout can also be delivered which reflects the character of the area.

#### Availability

- 4.5 The site is available for residential development now as there are no legal or ownership constraints as Linden Homes have an interest in the site and by virtue of this submission are expressing an intention to develop the site for residential use.

### Achievability

- 4.6 It is a viable housing development that can be delivering housing within the next 5 years. As we (Linden Homes) are seeking to develop the site for residential use and prior to the progression of any development sites we undertake a thorough marketing and economic viability assessment for each site, including an assessment of any site specific abnormal costs.
- 4.7 The site is considered to be achievable for residential development now as there is a realistic prospect that the site can deliver new homes within the next 5 years.

### Deliverability Conclusion

- 4.8 The site can be considered a deliverable, residential development site and we can provide 150 new homes, including 60 affordable during the plan period.

## **Delivery Timescales**

- 4.9 Delivery of this Phase 3 site could follow on from the existing Phase 1 and 2 schemes, ensuing a constant stream of housing delivery in this part of the district.
- 4.10 Delay associated with the determination of Phase 1 reserved matters scheme has meant that it is slightly behind where the sales phasing would like to be. However, due to its accessibility and known local demand, we believe sales rates will be particularly positive (our experience at Northstowe has illustrated this) hence the Phase 2 Reserved Matters scheme is likely to be submitted later this year.
- 4.11 If allocated, the Phase 3 scheme could follow on quickly after, ensuring that there is no gap in sales and a continual delivery throughout the plan period.
- 4.12 Provided that the timetable identified in the Local Development Scheme is adhered to and the site is allocated, the Phase 3 site can deliver housing to contribute towards the five year land supply. On this basis it is envisaged that first dwelling completions on the site could take place in the monitoring year 2023/24 as set out in Table 1 below.
- 4.13 Because of the Phase 1 and 2 schemes, other than the delivery of the site's initial infrastructure there are no major infrastructure works that need to take place prior to the

commencement of new homes on site. Accordingly, the development could start well within a year of the determination of a planning application.

- 4.14 Due to the site's size, it can be delivered quickly as it will only require one selling outlet delivering new homes. The table below provides the site's dwelling delivery projection per annum that the Council could use within their housing trajectory / 5YLS.

**Table 1: Housing Delivery**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Phase 1 and 2 schemes</b>	<b>New site (Phase 3)</b>
2019/2020		
2020/2021	40	
2021/2022	48	
2022/2023	48	
2023/2024	4	20
2024/2025		48
2025/2026		48
2026/2027		24
2027/2028		
2028/2029		
2029/2030		

## 5.0 Development Process / Consultation

5.1 As mentioned above, we are happy to work with the community to deliver an appropriate development scheme onsite. Linden Homes has a strong track record of pre-application consultation and engagement with the local community and stakeholders on all kinds of planning proposals.

5.2 During the Phase 1 scheme we have engaged with the local authority's Design Panel process, which has helped create a locally-specific, suitable design and ensured a positive planning outcome at Planning Committee. A similar process was taken at Northstowe also.

5.3 The Greater Cambridge adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) (2019) notes that:

*“Early discussion of a proposal in the form of a pre-application with the council can:*

- Verify the information required to be submitted with the application;*
- Reduce the likelihood of submitting invalid applications;*
- Help the applicant to understand how planning policies and other requirements may affect their proposal; and*
- Raise the quality of the development.”*

5.4 Pre-application consultation by the developer has the potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community by enabling as many issues as possible to be addressed before an application is submitted to the Council.

5.5 The Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that: *“Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties.”* The NPPF also highlights that: *“Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.”*

5.6 In developing its proposals for the site, Linden Homes will undertake a programme of pre-applications consultation which is informed by this national and local guidance, together with the following key objectives:

- To inform the local community, including residents, interest groups, councillors and businesses about the proposals;
- To allow interested parties to become actively involved in the planning process;
- To provide the community and stakeholders with a genuine opportunity to provide feedback on the proposals;
- To identify and address any issues and/or concerns raised by the local community and stakeholders.

5.7 The submission of any Planning application for the site will be supported by a Statement of Community Involvement (or similar document) outlining the pre-application consultation undertaken and the input of local residents and stakeholders during the preparation of the final plans.

## 6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 As evidenced by information in this submission, we believe that the Phase 3 site at Highfields, Caldecote can deliver circa 150 dwellings including 60 affordable.
- 6.2 The site can be delivered quickly and can contribute to the 5-year land supply as well as creating a long-term defensible boundary in this location.
- 6.3 The site fits with a number of the wider strategic objectives identified in the Issues and Options Local Plan, in addition to the acknowledged sustainability of the location at a site-specific level.
- 6.4 There are no natural or built constraints which would prevent the site's development and it provides a key opportunity to deliver additional houses in a sustainable location adjoining an existing development scheme.
- 6.5 The allocation of this site will only directly affect those people accommodated on the Phase 1 and Phase 2 developments, and it provides the opportunity to enhance existing green and blue infrastructure for the benefit of the wider community.
- 6.6 The site can help contribute towards the authority's five year land supply and so should be allocated in the next iteration of the plan.



**APPENDIX 1**  
**SITE LOCATION PLAN**

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**APPENDIX 2**  
**PHASE 1 AND 2 LAYOUT / CONNECTIVITY**

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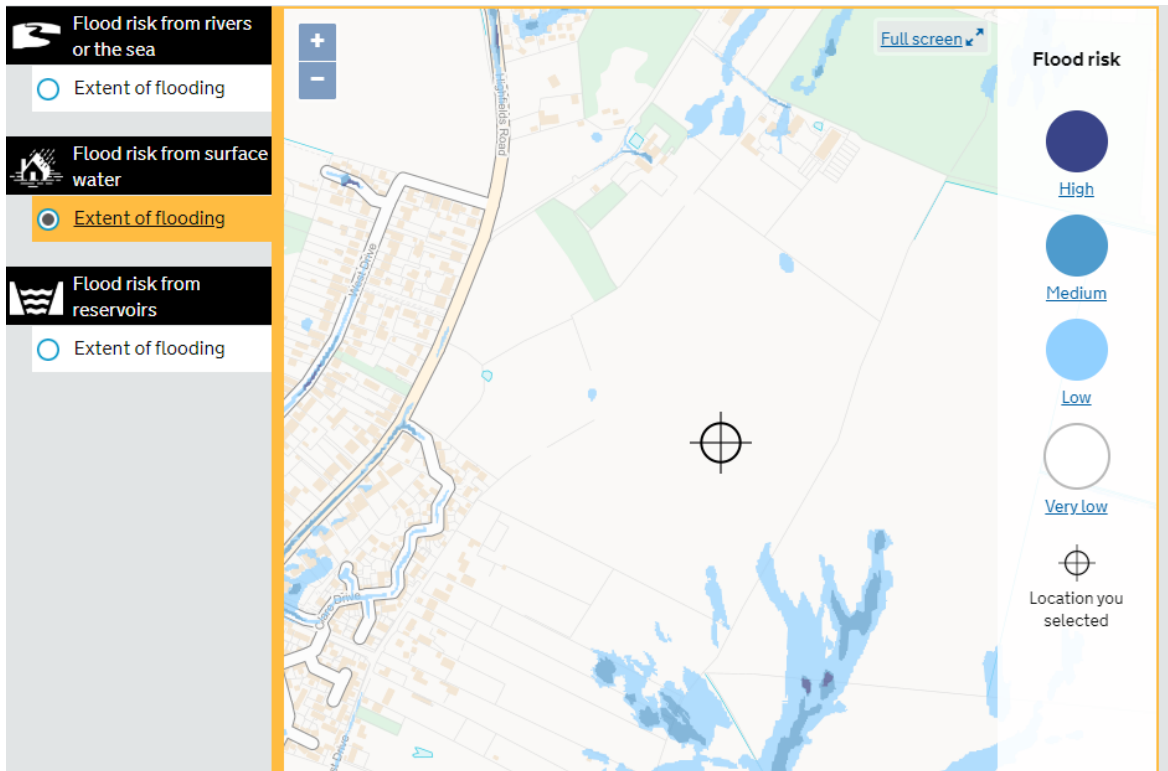
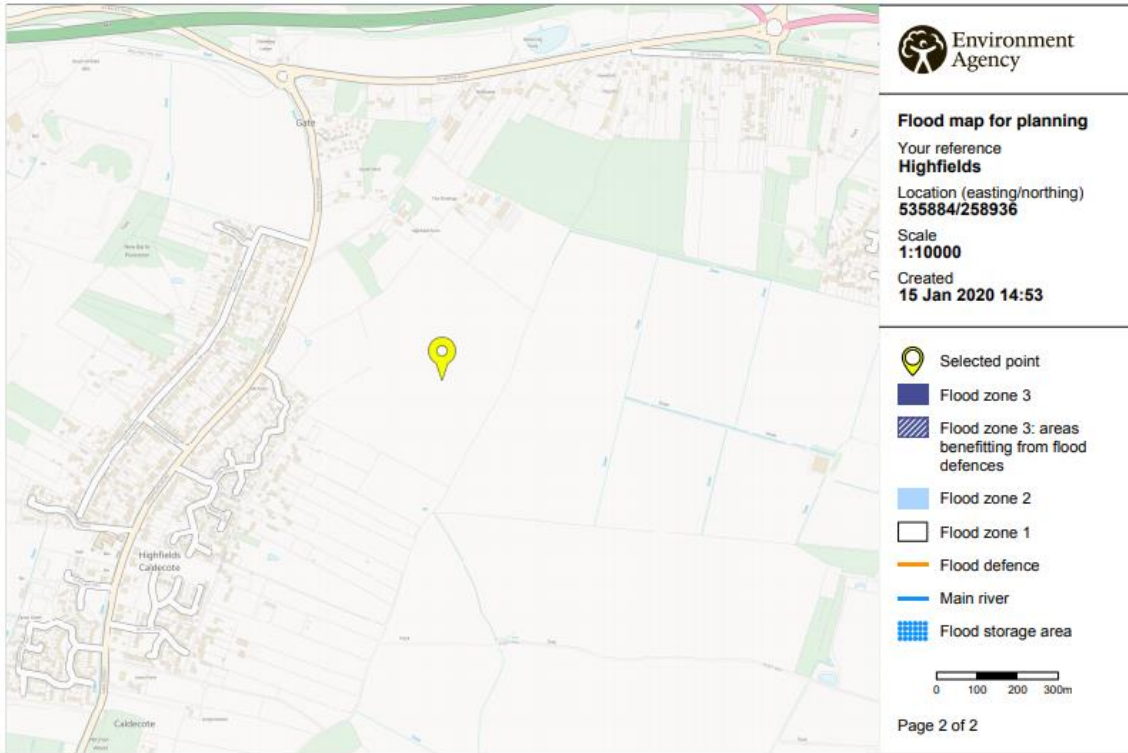


## **APPENDIX 3**

# **FLOOD RISK INFORMATION**

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STRATEGIC  
LAND

