

Our ref: GPEL
DD: 24/02/2020
E:
Date:

Planning Policy, Strategy and Economy Team
South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cambourne Business Park
Cambourne
Cambridge
CB23 6EA

Dear Sir / Madam

LOCAL PLAN ISSUES AND OPTIONS 2020 CONSULTATION: LAND AT GRANTA PARK

Introduction

These representations are made on behalf of Granta Park Estates Limited (GPEL), (hereafter ‘the Applicant’) in response to the Greater Cambridge Local Plan Issues and Options 2020 consultation.

I write on behalf of the applicant following the previously submitted representations regarding the land west of High Street, Great Abington, (hereafter ‘the site’) to the 2019 Call for Sites consultation. A Location Plan is enclosed in **Appendix 1**. For clarity the applicant submitted three separate parcels of land within Granta Park for consideration within the Call For Sites 2019; all three remain relevant although for the Issues and Options Consultation 2020 this representation will focus on the largest parcel of land that can offer the greatest support to Granta Park.

The applicant is promoting a local essential worker housing-led scheme. to support Granta Park and its employees. The proposed scheme is for housing of around 85 dwellings and associated infrastructure and follows further site assessment to support the deliverability of the site. The site is approximately 4.6 hectares in size, located adjacent to Granta Park and to Great Abington village. Vehicular access is achievable via the High Street, as shown on the supporting access plan (**Appendix 2**).

The land is available, achievable and suitable and its development will bring a number of benefits to support Granta Park and the delivery of the Local Plan objectives, including:

- Supporting economic growth at Granta Park, as a significant part of the wider research and development (R&D) sector in the Greater Cambridge area;
- Providing for a growing demand in housing that is affordable for Essential Local Workers;
- Supporting the working community at Granta Park with reduced-cost housing that is within walking distance of where they work to benefit their health and wellbeing;
- Supporting Local Services and the Local Economy and;
- Reducing the number of vehicle trips as a part of creating a more sustainable Granta Park and contributing to help address climate change.

Issues & Options 2020 Consultation Questions

Question 2. Please submit any sites for employment and housing you wish to suggest for allocation in the Local Plan. Provide as much information and supporting evidence as possible.

Granta Park - Context

Granta Park is a well-established Science and Technology campus located in Great Abington, South Cambridgeshire providing for office, Research and Development (R&D) and laboratory space. The R&D sector has driven the Cambridge phenomenon and has been a major component of the ongoing success of the Cambridge Economy. The Park is a major contributor to the local and wider economy and a part of this vital R&D sector. Over 3000 staff are employed at the park, in excess of 500 of those staff work at TWI Ltd, a not-for-profit research organisation owned by its members, which also accommodates 90 PhD students and approximately 150 students studying Masters programmes. Housing supply and affordability is a significant issue across Greater Cambridge and this is also the case for employees at the Park. The core of the Park's competitiveness in the labour market centres around being able to provide a high-quality work force, which in turn is reliant on there being affordable housing available in a location to be able to commute from; ideally by sustainable travel.

Although the R&D sector is a highly valuable part of the economy, not all jobs in the sector are highly skilled and highly paid, so not all employees of the sector are able to readily access the local housing market. For reasons largely around availability and affordability, employees at the park currently commute from a wide range of locations that in turn creates an environmental impact arising from those vehicular journeys, this also impacts on the health and wellbeing of the employees through spending prolonged time travelling to and from work. An initial survey of employee post code locations has been formed and is included in **Appendix 3**, this initial survey finds that the employees are spread over a wide area. This situation makes it more difficult to attract new employees, retain employees and provide a more sustainable Granta Park.

To help address this issue there is a need for the provision of housing that is affordable and close to Granta Park for its essential workers. This approach is supported by the Greater Cambridge Authority through the Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2019-2023 which includes the needs of workers who provide support services necessary for the local economy. Essential local workers must be accommodated within this definition to help support the economy and reduce excessive commuting distances.

Annex 5, Section 7.1 of the Cambridge Housing Strategy, **Providing for different types of homes to meet specific need - Promoting housing for Essential Local Workers**, states:

7.1.1 Both councils are keen to work with local employers and other partners to get a better understanding of the potential need for housing for local workers to support local services, the local economy and further economic growth.

7.1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines 'essential local workers' as certain groups of public sector employees who provide frontline services in areas including health, education and community safety. However, we do not believe there is a 'one size fits all' definition. As well as public sector employees providing frontline services, we also want to take into account the needs of other workers who provide the support services necessary for the economy. It is important that housing provision, in particular a range of affordable housing options, supports the local economy and helps to reduce long commuting distances to work.

Land at Granta Park

7.1.3 Any development for essential local workers will need to be evidenced based in terms of how it supports economic growth and housing need. Analysis of income levels, household type, etc. will inform the type and size of development.

7.1.4 Whether such housing should be provided on a particular development is also likely to be dependent on issues such as location of the development, the particular needs of the employer(s) concerned, and the need to create mixed communities that support the needs of the wider population.

7.1.5 South Cambridgeshire in particular is interested in working with businesses to help themselves to deliver a range of homes that are provided for and are affordable to their workforce. The aim would be to provide additional homes specifically to address the housing needs of their workforce without impacting on the delivery of housing, including affordable housing, more generally.

This directly relates to Granta Park and its essential workers who contribute to the ongoing success of the Park and its contribution to the economy. The Research and Development sector is vital to the Cambridge Economy and the Granta Park employees are vital to the contribution Granta Park makes.

There is an affordability issue within Greater Cambridge, with a large proportion of the population struggling to afford suitable accommodation. To help address this, Granta Park wishes to ensure there is housing available for its employees, as essential local workers, and to make land available within the Parks ownership to provide for some of this much needed housing. As the emerging Local Plan is brought forward, this 'Granta Park housing need' will be evidenced to show the extent and type of need, but it is clear that a modest number of homes will start to make a notable and positive contribution to a number of workers at Granta Park.

As a related example, permission is to be granted at the Wellcome Genome Campus Hinxton, (ref: S/4329/18/OL) within South Cambridgeshire at a Research and Development Park to provide for 1,500 new homes specifically for its Campus Workers. While Granta Park propose only a modest allocation to support its workers, there is a direct comparison for the overarching reasons and benefits to accrue from providing linked worker housing.

Question 24. How important do you think continuing economic growth is for the next Local Plan?

It is essential to Greater Cambridge and the surrounding area as identified by CPIER (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review). As part of the devolution contract to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is a commitment to doubling the economic output of the area (Gross Value Added) over 25 years. This is a challenging target and needs to be a factor at the heart of the Plan.

A vital part of this is enabling the continued growth of significant economic contributors such as Granta Park and providing for the housing needs of their highly skilled workforce.

Question 31. How should the Local Plan help to meet our needs for the amount and types of new homes?

There should be flexibility within the Local Plan to respond to changing housing needs over the Local Plan period. It is important to identify a baseline housing need but there should be scope for further development to come forward if it meets a particular housing need. This would support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes to ensure that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed and that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed (NPPF Para. 59).

Land at Granta Park

The inclusion of key and essential local worker housing in the local plan is to be welcomed and encouraged. It will be a fundamental part of addressing the real affordability issue in Greater Cambridge and addressing climate change, because 'local essential worker' housing will be within a short distance to its employment centre to ensure that sustainable travel is the only real choice for those workers.

The benefits of essential local worker housing is well-evidenced by reference to Granta Park. A significant employer and a key part of the research and development sector of the Cambridge area. A number of its employees struggle to find affordable accommodation within a reasonable commuting distance in a location which they can rely on sustainable modes of transport. Essential worker housing will become an increasingly vital aspect of meeting the needs of essential workers at Granta Park, to address affordability, climate change and the health and wellbeing of its employees.

Summary

The above representation sets out why there is a compelling case to provide essential worker housing at Granta Park and why the concept of such housing is supported by both local and national policy; not least the current Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy that quite rightly recognises the benefits that can be delivered by essential local worker housing.

An allocation for essential worker housing will be of significant help to address the affordability issue for a number of employees at Granta Park to be able to afford a suitable home close to where they work; and in turn support the ongoing success and increasing contribution to the economy made by Granta Park.

I trust that the above and the enclosed documentation is self-explanatory, but should you require any further information, then please contact me at your earliest opportunity.

I look forward to receiving your response to the above information in relation to the Issues and Options Consultation 2020.

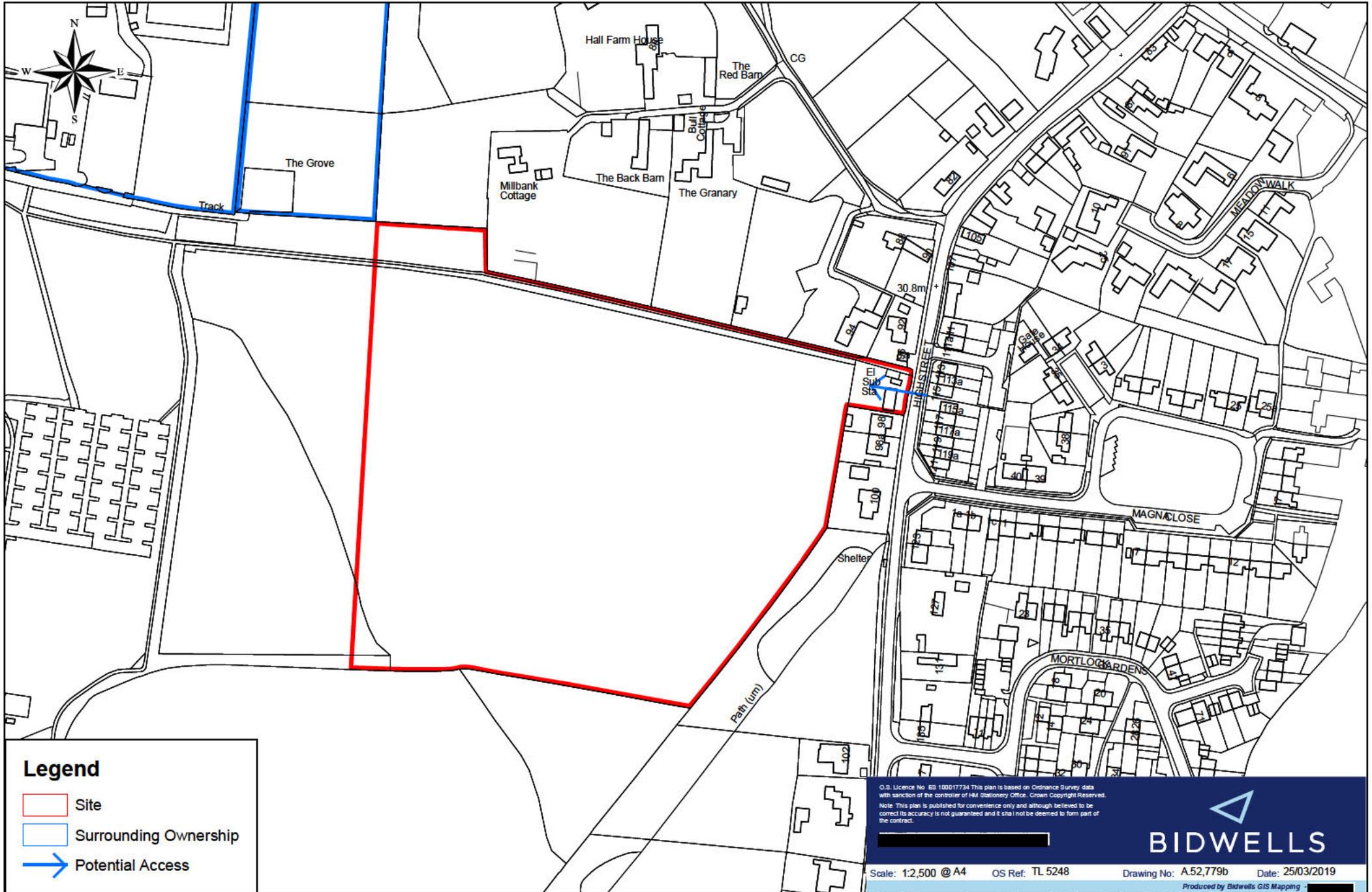
Yours faithfully

John Dudding MPlan (Hons)

Enclosed: Sustainability Appraisal Commentary

APPENDIX 1
LOCATION PLAN

Land off West High Street, Granta Park



Legend

-  Site
-  Surrounding Ownership
-  Potential Access

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Scale: 1:2,500 @ A4 OS Ref: TL 5248 Drawing No: A.52,779b Date: 25/03/2019

Produced by Bidwells GIS Mapping

APPENDIX 2
ACCESS PLAN



KEY

EXISTING LAND

PROPOSED ACCESS ROAD

P1	FIRST ISSUE	22/09/17	HG
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Rev.	Description	Date	Chkd



Client :
GRANTA PARK ESTATES LTD.

Project :
PHASE 2 LAND, GRANTA PARK

Title :
PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL LAND AND ACCESS

Project Engineer : HBG Scale : AS SHOWN @ A1
Project Director : NP Date : SEP' 2017
Status : PRELIMINARY

Drawing No. 4140293-SK70 Rev P1

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT LAND
SCALE 1:1000

APPENDIX 3

POST CODE DATA

The below list is a summary of the locations these post codes relate to and indicates the range of locations from which employees of the park commute.

- Aberdare
- Aberdeen
- Barry
- Bishop Auckland
- Bishops Stortford
- Bradford
- Cardiff
- Central Cambridge
- Colchester
- Darlington
- Derby
- Dunmow
- Fakenham
- Great Yarmouth
- Halstead
- Hartlepool
- Hampton
- Hatfield
- Haverhill
- Huddersfield
- Huntingdon
- Ipswich
- Kettering
- Leeds
- Leighton Buzzard
- Letchworth Garden City
- Lichfield

Land at Granta Park

- Loughton
- Manchester
- March
- Market Harborough
- Middlesbrough
- Nuneaton
- Newark
- Newcastle
- Newmarket
- Newport
- Northallerton
- Northampton
- Nottingham
- Peterborough
- Paisley
- Reading
- Richmond
- Royston
- Saffron Walden
- Sawbridgeworth
- Sheffield
- Sunderland
- Stevenage
- Stockport
- Stockton - on - Tees
- Sudbury
- Southam
- South Shields
- Stanstead
- Solihull
- Uxbridge
- Wembley