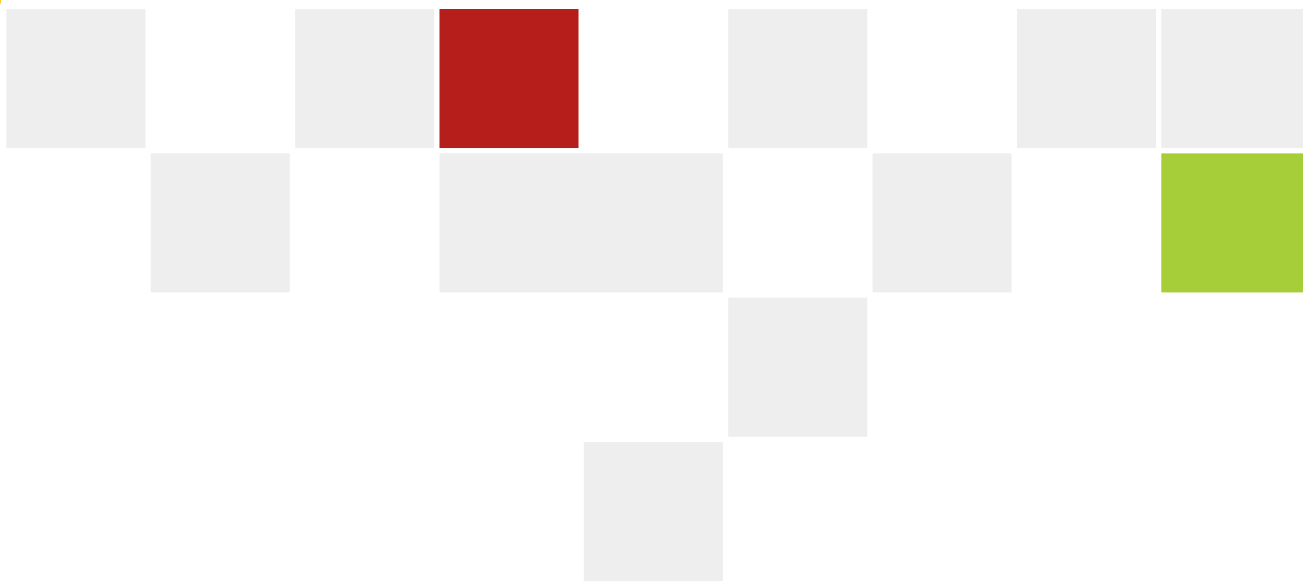


Land East of Cambridge Road, Melbourn

Site Suitability Report



Boyer

Report Control

Project:	Land to the East Side of Cambridge Road, Melbourn	
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APPENDIX

Appendix One - HELAA Site Assessment (Site Reference 47757)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Report has been prepared by Boyer on behalf of Wates Developments Limited in relation to the Greater Cambridge Local Plan First Proposals (Regulation 18) consultation document (hereafter referred to as the “First Proposals”).
- 1.2 In responding to the consultation, this Report makes specific reference to the suitability of land to the East of Cambridge Road, Melbourn (“the Site”) for accommodating residential development and should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Vision Document and representations submitted in response to the First Proposals.

2. LAND TO THE EAST SIDE OF CAMBRIDGE ROAD, MELBOURN

Introduction

- 2.1 Wates Developments Ltd. are actively promoting Land to the East Side of Cambridge Road, Melbourn.
- 2.2 This Site was submitted to the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service (GCSP) as a component of their Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment in February 2020.
- 2.3 Greater Cambridge assessed the Site as having an overall red rating in respect of site access, and landscape and townscape and therefore concluded that the Site was not suitable for accommodating development.
- 2.4 We fundamentally object to this red rating and we have undertaken an independent assessment of the Site adopting the Councils' methodology, however have based the assessment on site specific technical surveys. Site assessments should be given greater weight than desktop assessments as they provide site-specific details whereby desktop analysis is likely to be generalised.
- 2.5 As shown in **Appendix One**, the site-specific analysis demonstrates that the Site has an overall amber rating and both previous red ratings for site access and landscape and townscape have been amended to amber and green respectively.
- 2.6 We strongly recommend that Greater Cambridge revisit this Site assessment to ensure it is based on sound technical evidence and therefore can be relied upon to determine the suitability of sites to be included for allocation within the emerging Local Plan.

Site Description

- 2.7 The greenfield Site lies on the edge of Melbourn, to the east of Cambridge Road and is boarded to the north by the Cambridge Road, to the west and south by agricultural land and to the east by Kingsway Golf Centre and RSPB Fowlmere.

Sustainable Location

- 2.8 Land East side of Cambridge Road, Melbourn lies along this A10 cycle route and is within walking distance of local amenities including jobs, services and facilities within Melbourn's village centre.
- 2.9 Melbourn also lies in proximity to Meldreth train station, which provides frequent services between the settlement and Cambridge City.

- 2.10 Land East side of Cambridge Road also lies within close proximity to Melbourn Science Park, which includes 9 business units providing employment for a number of companies engaged in pharmaceuticals, biochemistry and mechanical engineering. It is also noted that the Science Park was granted consent for an extension in 2018 for a new office and technology research facilities (S/2941/18/FL) and the relevant conditions are currently being discharged. This highlights the Site's accessibility to employment opportunities in key knowledge-intensive industries, and its ability to contribute to South Cambridgeshire's important role in retaining itself as a world leader in research and knowledge based industry.
- 2.11 The Councils' recognise that Melbourn is a sustainable location for growth given that it is one of the few rural settlements proposed to have rural growth attributed to it. The proposed allocation for 120 dwellings to the west of Cambridge Road (Policy S/RRA/CR) is in close proximity to the Site. Opposite this proposed allocation and immediately to the south of the Site extending to the existing settlement edge is land that is being promoted by Miller Homes 'Land South of Cambridge Road, Melbourn' (HELAA Site reference 47903). The Site therefore also needs to be considered in the context of future development in the village and the opportunity for an integrated and comprehensive sustainable extension to the north of Melbourn should be recognised.

Flooding/Drainage

- 2.12 The Site lies entirely within Flood Zone 1 and a future scheme is proposed to include Sustainable Drainage Systems.
- 2.13 These sustainable drainage systems will be multifunctional, providing both biodiversity and amenity benefits as supported by the Draft Local Plan and supporting evidence base.

Highways/Access

- 2.14 The Site benefits from a circa. 250m frontage onto Cambridge Road, which benefits from a flat alignment with wide verges between the site and carriageway offering good visibility splays, and can provide appropriate access points adjoining the Cambridge Road. This could include a main point of access with multiple options for the location of an additional emergency access, or alternatively two simple priority junctions.
- 2.15 The Site also benefits from pedestrian linkages to facilities and services within Melbourn. In addition, the Site lies in proximity to Meldreth train station, which provides connectivity to Cambridge City to the north.
- 2.16 The traffic impact of the proposed development will be subject to a detailed Transport Assessment, which will determine whether or not improvements to the signals in Melbourn are needed.

- 2.17 The Site's position on the edge of Melbourn provides a sustainable location for new development with local public transport connections and pedestrian and cycle links, as well as proximity to nearby local amenities including jobs, services and facilities within the village centre. The Site also lies along the Melbourn Greenway, which will enhance linkages between Melbourn and Cambridge, providing a green active travel into and out of the city for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

Ecology and Biodiversity

- 2.18 The Site does not contain any Priority Grassland, Wetland or Woodland Habitats although the existence of these habitats is acknowledged in close/medium proximity to the Site.
- 2.19 It is acknowledged that the rear of the Site is neighboured to the east by the Fowlmere Watercress Beds SSSI.
- 2.20 The proposed development will provide extensive areas of open space, which will be multifunctional, delivering amenity benefits together with biodiversity net gains. As shown on the Melbourn Framework Plan, a proportion of the Site will be retained as green infrastructure.
- 2.21 The proposed development will include large areas of retained open space and landscaping, creating a landscaped buffer between Melbourn and the wider countryside. A variety of green infrastructure will be provided such as new hedgerow and tree planting, green corridors, a central neighbourhood green, naturalistic ecological parkland and natural play space. There is also an opportunity for the adjoining parcel of land to the south-east to be utilised to provide a further allocation of open space. This could create additional amenity for new and existing Melbourn residents such as a village park. It is anticipated that the quantum of additional land for open space could be established and secured through the evolution of the masterplan.
- 2.22 It is considered that any impacts on surrounding regional or locally designated sites would be suitably mitigated through adopting a sensitive design and layout.

Landscape

- 2.23 The site falls within Landscape Character Area 3C Rhee Tributaries Lowland Farmlands. This landscape is classed as having only moderate strength with few distinguishing features, therefore it is unlikely that development would have a significant adverse impact to the wide and local landscape character.
- 2.24 As set out in **Appendix One**, it is noted that the Councils have incorrectly identified the Site's Landscape Character Area.
- 2.25 Any impacts to the Landscape Character Area would be appropriately mitigated through sensitive design and layout.

Summary

- 2.26 The Site offers an opportunity to accommodate comprehensive development to meet the affordable and market housing demand within Melbourn and is capable of delivering a sensitively designed but comprehensive and well-connected sustainable development that could contribute to the local development needs of Greater Cambridge.
- 2.27 The Site is able to accommodate suitable points of access and any perceived landscape impact could be satisfactorily mitigated through sensitive design. The proposed development will encourage future occupiers to adopt sustainable modes of transport, and the residential elements of the scheme will deliver low carbon housing and benefit from electric charging points, promoting the use of electric vehicles. Low water consumption will also be promoted to reduce water usage and positively contribute to water recycling where possible, in accordance with Greater Cambridge's aspirations.
- 2.28 The revised HELAA site assessment included at **Appendix One** demonstrates that the Site overall scores an amber rating and is considered suitable for accommodating residential development.
- 2.29 The Councils' were incorrect in their assessment that the Site is not suitable for accommodating development and the inclusion of the Site as a residential allocation within the Greater Cambridge Local Plan should be reconsidered.

APPENDIX ONE - HELAA SITE ASSESSMENT (SITE REFERENCE 47757)

Site 47757 (Land east side of Cambridge Road) Assessment Comparison

Criteria	GCSP Assessment	GCSP Traffic Light	Our Traffic Light	Our Assessment
Adopted Development Plan Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outside Development Framework 	Amber	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are in agreement with the GCSP assessment as the site sits outside the current adopted development boundary/framework.
Flood Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wholly in Flood Zone 1 Minimal surface water flooding risk. 	Amber	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The full site sits within Flood Zone 1. Flood risk on the site is predominantly low, although there is flood risk on limited portions of the site from surface water. In accordance with the GCSP methodology a green rating has been given with regards to flood risk.
Landscape and Townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development throughout the site would have a significant adverse impact to the wide and local landscape character. It would be permanent, encroachment into the countryside, isolated and removal of the strong open rural landscape. Even with a reduction in residential units with landscape mitigation works the harm would still be adverse and unacceptable. 	Red	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The GCSP have failed to correctly identify the site's Landscape Character Area, as outlined in the 2021 Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment. The site falls within Landscape Character Area 3C Rhee Tributaries Lowland Farmlands. This landscape is classed as having only moderate strength with few distinguishing features, therefore it is unlikely that development would have a <i>significant adverse impact to the wide and local landscape character</i>. Any detrimental impact could be satisfactorily mitigated through sensitive design, resulting in an overall Amber rating.

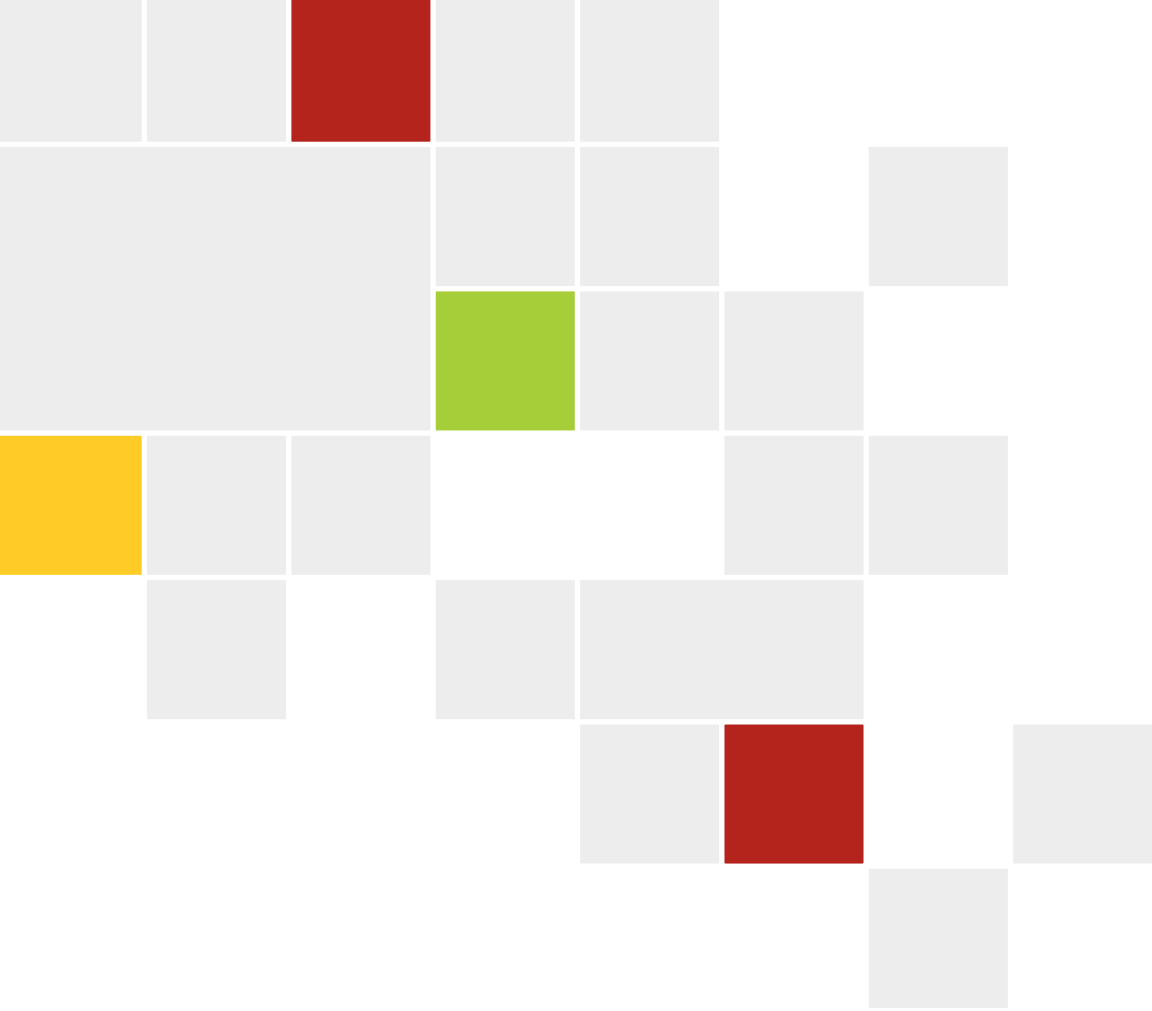
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscape Character Assessment (2021) Landscape Character Area - 4C: Hatley Wooded Claylands. 			
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within 200m of a Wildlife Site. All residential developments will require consideration of recreational impact on nearby SSSIs. Boundary habitats including woodland, watercourse, trees and hedges may qualify as Habitats of Principal Importance/be of high ecological value and support protected or notable species. Grassland quality will need to be assessed. Applications may find provision of a 10% net gain in biodiversity difficult within their red line boundaries and may need to find off-site compensation to comply with up-coming National legislation and developing local policies. Development of the site may have a detrimental impact on a designated site, or those with a regional or local protection but the impact could be reasonably mitigated or compensated. 	Amber	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The rear of the site is neighboured to the east by the Fowlmere Watercress Beds SSSI. Portions of the site sit within the SSSI Impact Risk Zone for both the Fowlmere Watercress Beds and L-Moor Shepreth SSSIs. The site does not contain any Priority Grassland, Wetland or Woodland Habitats although the existence of these habitats is acknowledged in close/medium proximity to the site. A range of Farmland Bird species are shown to reside in the wider area. As outlined by GCSP, extensive efforts would be made to mitigate any impacts from residential development on on any designated site or those with a regional or local protection.
Open Space / Green Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site is not on protected open space designation. Any impact of the proposed development could 	Green	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We agree with GCSP assessment.

	be reasonably mitigated or compensated.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development on the site would not result in the loss of any public open space or green infrastructure, and in-return would aim to provide an allocation of such an amenity.
Historic Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no heritage assets within the site. Bran Ditch Environment Scheduled Monument is close by to the south east, separated by woodland; however, any detrimental impact could be reasonably mitigated with the inclusion of suitable buffers. 	Amber	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree with GCSP assessment. As GCSP recommend, any proposal would take consideration of local heritage assets and provide detailed strategies to mitigate impacts.
Archaeology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extensive archaeology of prehistoric/Roman date is located in the area. 	Amber	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree with GCSP assessment. Appropriate and reasonable archaeological investigations would be undertaken to ensure the future development would not have an unacceptable impact on archaeology.
Accessibility to Services and Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distance to Primary School: Greater than 1,000m Distance to Secondary School: Greater than 900m and Less than or Equal to 2,000m Distance to Healthcare Service: Greater than 720m and Less than or Equal to 2,000m Distance to City, District or Rural Centre: Greater than 2,000m Distance to Local, Neighbourhood or Minor Rural Centre: Greater than 720m and Less than or Equal to 2,000m 	Amber	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distance to Primary School: 1.0 Miles Distance to Secondary School: 0.8 Miles Distance to Healthcare Service: 1.1 Miles Distance to City, District or Rural Centre: 3.9 Miles Distance to Local, Neighbourhood or Minor Rural Centre: 0.4 Miles Distance to Public Transport: 0.2 Miles Distance to Train Station: 1.6 Miles Distance to National Cycle Network: 8.6 Miles We agree with GCSP's amber assessment, based on their criteria, although we feel that the site offers very good accessibility to services and facilities, owing to its position in the settlement hierarchy and identification as the largest Minor Rural Centre in this part of South Cambridgeshire.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distance to Employment Opportunities: Less than or Equal to 1,800m Distance to Public Transport: Greater than 450m and Less than or Equal to 1,000m Distance to Rapid Public Transport: Greater than 1,800m Distance to proposed Rapid Public Transport: Greater than 1,800m Distance to Cycle Network: Less than or Equal to 800m Adequate accessibility to key local services, transport, and employment opportunities Proposed development would not require delivery of accompanying key services 			
Site Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If over 100 dwellings two points of access are required to accord with the advice of the Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue. No possibility of creating a safe access. 	Red	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We strongly disagree with the GCSP red rating and query what assessments have been undertaken to arrive at this. As demonstrated through supporting technical work, the Site can accommodate suitable access points from Cambridge Road, including a main access point with various options available for accommodating an emergency access. There is also flexibility for the Site to accommodate two simple priority junctions.
Transport and Roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development will have to consider cumulative impact at local junctions. Improvements would be required to the signalised junction in Melbourn and possible improvements 	Amber	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Cambridge Road runs parallel to the A10 as a secondary route, therefore existing pressures on the road are likely to be limited to local traffic. Development of this Site would promote sustainable modes of transport, particularly noting its accessibility to public transport and location along a greenway.

	<p>required at junctions on the A10 and A505. Contributions towards the Melbourn to Cambridge Greenway would be required to support sustainable travel to Cambridge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any potential impact on the functioning of trunk roads and/or local roads could be reasonably mitigated. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed development will be subject to a detailed Transport Assessment, which will assess whether or not improvements would be required to the signalised junction at Melbourn. It is not considered appropriate that such improvements would be required without undertaking such an assessment. We therefore disagree with the Councils' conclusion that improvements would be required and question what evidence this has been based on.
Noise, Vibration, Odour and Light Pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site is capable of being developed to provide healthy internal and external environments in regard to noise/vibration/odour/Light Pollution after careful site layout, design and mitigation. 	Green	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Site's location on the edge of the Melbourn settlement would ensure minimal noise, vibration, odour and light pollution impacts due to a lack of sensitive receptors. We conclude that the Site is at low risk in regard to noise / vibration / odour.
Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reasonably large site and lots of residential units - potential for AQMA traffic impact without mitigation. 	Amber	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Site does not lie within an AQMA. The UK's Air Pollution Index shows consistently low scores in the area throughout 2021, signalling low pollution levels. Necessary mitigation measures would be enacted if required.
Contamination and Ground Stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Previous agricultural land use. Potential for historic contamination, conditions required. 	Amber	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The GCSP rating is noted. Any potential issues regarding contamination and ground stability will be appropriately assessed and addressed.
Strategic Highways Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within Highways England Zone 10 - South West. <2,000 dwellings / 5,000m2 employment - Capacity for growth. 	Green	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within Highways England East Region. Site is not in close proximity to Strategic Road Network, therefore development on the site will have a neutral impact on the SRN.

Green Belt	<ul style="list-style-type: none">No Comment.		Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The site does not form part of Cambridge Green Belt and is comfortably located outside of its boundaries, therefore development on the site will not compromise the Cambridge Greenbelt.
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