

From: [REDACTED]
To: [LocalPlan \(GC\)](#)
Subject: Comments on HELAA Site Assessment: Land North of Barton Road and Land at Grange Farm, Cambridge (Site Ref. 52643)
Date: 13 December 2021 15:47:33
Attachments: [image772122.png](#)
[image376244.png](#)

Dear Sir/Madam,

I was unable to upload comments to the HELAA assessment for the above site. Please find below comments on the site on behalf of [REDACTED]

HELAA Site Assessment: Land North of Barton Road and Land at Grange Farm, Cambridge (Site Ref. 52643)

The following reports were submitted with the [REDACTED] representations at Issues & Option stage to support the promoted development at South West Cambridge:

- Vision Document (David Lock Associates)
- Landscape and Visual Appraisal and Green Belt Review (The Landscape Partnership)
- Initial Noise Assessment (WSP)
- Air Quality Constraints Report (WSP)
- Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (Cambridge Archaeological Unit)
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (The Landscape Partnership)
- Flood Risk and Drainage Appraisal (Peter Brett Associates)
- Initial Heritage Impact Assessment (Bidwells)
- Transport Technical Note (WSP)

The Vision Document and Masterplan for the promoted development was informed by the technical reports and has sought to address identified constraints and avoid significant harm. It is considered that the site assessment in the HELAA has not fully taken into account what is proposed in the promoted development, and in particular those parts of the site that would be retained for open space and green infrastructure for landscape, heritage, ecological and Green Belt reasons. It is requested that the site assessment is updated to take into account the comments in these representations.

The Vision for the South West Cambridge is an exemplar, landscape-led, and highly sustainable new neighbourhood.

It is acknowledged that the site is currently located within the Green Belt. It is considered that exceptional circumstances exist to release land from the Green Belt through the Greater Cambridge Local Plan process, which are related to housing and affordable housing needs and economic growth. South West Cambridge includes more than 55% of greenspace, and it is anticipated that most of this would be retained as Green Belt. For example, the green corridor connection into the City, the wetland habitat corridor along the Bin Brook, the existing wildlife areas, and the open space and recreation areas would all remain in the Green Belt.

A network of publicly accessible green spaces is provided throughout the development. These include: a linear park running along the western edge of the site, a corridor along the Bin Brook and a substantive central green corridor running from east to west connecting the City to the rural countryside.

A guiding principle of the promoted development is the heritage of the site. The most sensitive parts of the site remain undeveloped and key views across the site into the City have been taken into account. The former historical field boundaries and routes that connect into the City from the west are retained within a strategic green corridor. In addition, the alignment of the former Roman Road has been retained as a key pedestrian route. Furthermore, an historic track, entitled Edwin's Ditch which is referenced in the West Fields is re-established within the new masterplan.

The site includes protected wildlife sites, hedgerows, a network of ditches, and the Bin Brook watercourse. All of

these habitats have been incorporated into the promoted development. The development includes biodiversity enhancement including a new wetland habitat and rewilding of Bin Brook. The proposed new wetland habitat within the development would represent a continuation of the environmental work that CPPF undertakes at Coton Countryside Reserve.

The site is a very sustainable location in transport terms. It is highly accessible by walking, cycling and public transport, including existing bus and cycle routes, the proposed Cambourne to Cambridge Public Transport Corridor, the Comberton and Barton Greenways, and a potential Western Orbital Route (if reconsidered in the future).

The development would provide new community facilities including a primary school, community centre, health centre, public square, and a local centre with a food store and other shops. These facilities would meet both the needs of the new community, and provide for other nearby residents and the West Cambridge campus. Surrounding these facilities will be distinctive neighbourhoods which will exhibit their own character and landscape response.

The design and layout of the promoted development has been informed by a detailed assessment of the constraints and opportunities at the site, and which reflects the special character of Cambridge. It seeks to deliver a high-quality built environment, with ambitious design standards for public realm and buildings, including high levels of energy performance that follow best practice in energy and carbon reduction.

The site mostly scored 'amber' for the majority of the suitability criteria, and some 'green' scores for open space/green infrastructure and accessibility to services and facilities. The two 'red' scores for the site relate to landscape and townscape and strategic highway impact matters. A 'high' and 'very high' harm to the Green Belt is identified in the assessment. The commentary in the assessment identified how those identified constraints could potentially be addressed. As set out above, the Vision Document and Masterplan and the technical reports prepared for the promoted development provide a more detailed analysis of how constraints would be addressed.

█ comments on the findings of the site assessment are as follows:

- **Flood Risk:** A Flood Risk and Drainage Appraisal has been undertaken for the proposed development. The flood risk at the site arises from the Bin Brook watercourse which passes through the site. The design and layout of the proposed development responds to the areas of flood risk by locating built development in areas of low risk in Flood Zone 1, and including substantial areas of open space, sustainable drainage features, and a water meadowed alongside the Bin Brook. The promoted development includes the rewilding and potential widening of the Bin Brook, which could improve water capacity and help mitigate future flood risk, and provide an ecological asset.
- **Landscape and Townscape:** A Landscape and Visual Appraisal and Green Belt Review has been undertaken of the site. The Landscape and Visual Appraisal identified key views across the site from the surrounding area. The promoted development includes a substantial central east-west open corridor through the site which takes into account some of the primary viewpoints towards the City from the west, retains existing landscape features, and locates development to avoid potential adverse effects on the setting of landmark/taller heritage assets in the City. The key views across the site would be retained as part of the promoted development. The open corridor through the centre of the promoted development would provide a new connection from the western edge of the City to the countryside. As a result of the proposed landscape strategy for the promoted development it is requested that the assessment score for landscape/townscape is changed to 'amber'.
- **Biodiversity and Geodiversity:** A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been undertaken of the site. The County and City Wildlife Sites, the network of ditches, the Bin Brook watercourse, and the hedgerows at the site would all be incorporated into the promoted development. The proposed development provides a number of opportunities for ecological enhancement, including the re-naturalisation and 'rewilding' of the Bin Brook and the creation of a dedicated arable weed reserve.
- **Open Space/Green Infrastructure:** The promoted development includes a significant amount of accessible green infrastructure, including open spaces and parks, sports pitches, green corridors and meadows. Approximately 55% of the proposed development would be greenspace. It is agreed that the assessment score for open space and green infrastructure should be 'green'.
- **Historic Environment:** An Initial Heritage Impact Assessment has been undertaken of the site, to identify the

significance and setting of heritage assets that might be affected by the promoted development. The most sensitive parts of the site in heritage terms and the key views across the site remain undeveloped, and are part of the central east-west corridor through the site. It is noted that the assessment states that “parts of the site may be developable, with appropriate mitigation measures”, which is agreed and the masterplan for the proposed development avoids development in the areas of high heritage sensitivity.

- **Archaeology:** An Archaeological Desk Based Assessment has been undertaken of the site. The site contains historic field boundaries, hedgerows and uncultivated fields, which would all be retained within the landscape areas of the promoted development. A former Roman Road crosses part of the site, which has been retained as part of a linear pedestrian route through the promoted development.
- **Accessibility to Services and Facilities:** The assessment highlights the excellent accessibility from the site to services and facilities. It is requested that the assessment is updated to refer to the facilities that would be provided within the proposed development, including a primary school, community centre, health centre, and neighbourhood centre with a food store and other shops.
- **Site Access:** The main vehicular access points into the promoted development would be from Barton Road, with additional access points available for non-car modes of transport Charles Babbage Road, Clerk Maxwell Road and Grange Road.
- **Transport and Roads – good access by sustainable modes of transport and future schemes – opportunity to walk and cycle to employment, education etc**
- **Noise:** An Initial Noise Assessment has been undertaken of the site. The site is adjacent to the M11 which is the main source of noise at the site. The promoted development includes a 250m wide landscape buffer along the western edge of the site to address noise impacts. The landscape buffer would include a linear park, woodland planting and an earth bund.
- **Air Quality:** There is no designated AQMA in this location along the M11. An Air Quality Constraints Report has been prepared for the site. The 250m wide landscape buffer along the western edge of the site and adjacent to the M11 would also address air quality impacts on the promoted development. The good accessibility of the site by sustainable modes of transport should assist to reduce air pollution in this location.
- **Constraints to Development:** it is acknowledged that the promoted development would lead to the loss of agricultural land, but some of that land would remain undeveloped and form part of the comprehensive network of landscaping, open space and green infrastructure provided as part of the development. The network of ditches and the Bin Brook watercourse would be incorporated into the promoted development. It is proposed that a new wetland habitat and the rewilding of Bin Brook would be part of the promoted development. The existing public rights of way through the site would be retained, and additional routes through the site would be created to provide access to the open space areas and through to the countryside via the green central corridor.
- **Strategic Highways Impact:** The site is highly accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. There are future sustainable transport projects to the west of Cambridge i.e. Cambourne to Cambridge Public Transport Corridor, Comberton Greenway and Barton Greenway that the site would be well related to and could support. The site is accessible to the wide range of services and facilities and employment opportunities available in neighbouring areas and within the City Centre. There are alternatives to the car for journeys from the promoted development to reduce impacts on the strategic highway network. It is requested that the score in the assessment for strategic highway impacts is changed to ‘amber’ because of the good accessibility by sustainable modes of transport.
- **Green Belt:** A Landscape and Visual Appraisal and Green Belt Review has been undertaken for the site, and includes an assessment of the site against Green Belt purposes. The promoted development includes substantial areas of landscaping, open space and green infrastructure, most of which would continue to meet the purposes for designation as Green Belt. This approach would be consistent with national policy that seeks the beneficial use of Green Belt land for access, outdoor sport and recreation, and biodiversity. It is estimated that just less than half of the site would remain as Green Belt as a result of the proposed development. It is requested that the site is reassessed for harm to the Green Belt, taking into account those parts of the promoted development that would remain within the Green Belt i.e. the central east-west corridor from Grange Road to Coton, a woodland corridor alongside Barton Road, and a Bin Brook Corridor connecting to Coton Countryside Reserve. The promoted development seeks to direct built development to those parts of the site where there would be less harm to Green Belt purposes, and provide landscaping at the boundary and within those areas to reduce any harm. As set out in the representations to Policy S/DS: Development Strategy, exceptional circumstances exist to justify the release of additional land from the Green Belt related to the significant need for housing and affordable housing in Greater Cambridge, and the need for additional housing to support the economic growth of Greater Cambridge. Any harm to Green Belt purposes from the promoted

development at South West Cambridge need to be balanced with those exceptional circumstances and the delivery of sustainable development.

It is requested that the assessment of the site is amended to reflect the above comments.

Can you please acknowledge receipt of these comments. Let me know if there are any questions.

Regards

Brian

Classification L2 - Business Data

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