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**RE: Greater Cambridge Call for Sites – March 2025
Land at the Causeway, Bassingbourn – HELAA Reference 40228**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This supporting statement has been prepared by Strutt & Parker on behalf of Endurance Estates to support the promotion of Land at the Causeway, Bassingbourn (herein after referred to as “the site”) to the Greater Cambridge Call for Sites update process which is running until the 7th of March 2025.
- 1.2 The site extends to approximately 4.46ha and has been promoted for a residential development of up to 75 dwellings.
- 1.3 The site has been consistently promoted to previous rounds of consultation and has been assessed under HELAA reference **40228**.
- 1.4 In line with the guidance published by Greater Cambridge Planning, this note is submitted in order to provide updated information on the opportunities and constraints of the site in light of the evolving context.
- 1.5 To support future planning applications, technical investigations are ongoing however at the time of this submission these are unavailable.

Greater Cambridge Housing Need

- 1.6 As a result of the changes to the NPPF in December 2024 and associated updates to the Standard Method for calculating Local Housing Need, it is common ground that Greater Cambridge Shared Planning cannot, as of February 2025, demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply. Whilst it is accepted that the Call for Sites submission does not directly relate to the 5-year housing land supply issues, it should nevertheless feed into the emerging Local Plan in terms of strategy, and represents a material change in the circumstances for housing development in Greater Cambridge.
- 1.7 The new Local Housing Need calculated in accordance with the updated Standard Method results in a combined increase of 634 dwellings per annum for Greater Cambridge when compared to the housing requirements as outlined in the Adopted 2018 Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire Plans. This is detailed in the table below.

	Adopted Local Plan Housing Requirements (and difference versus 2024 Standard Method)	Previous Standard Method LHN (and difference versus 2024 Standard Method)	December 2024 Standard Method LHN	Proposed Housing Requirement in Emerging Plan (and difference versus 2024 Standard Method)
Combined Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire	1,675 dpa (-634)	1,726 dpa (-583)	2,309 dpa	2,111 dpa (-198)

- 1.8 Whilst it is true the majority of the 5-year housing land supply shortfall is as a result of the increased Standard Method Housing Need figure, the shortfall has undoubtedly been exacerbated by difficulties in delivering the large-scale strategic sites which Greater Cambridge are reliant upon to deliver the majority of the housing need across both districts. Since the adoption of the 2018 Plans, both Councils have become increasingly reliant upon significant housing delivery at Northstowe, Bourn Airfield and Waterbeach, alongside strategic sites on the Cambridge Fringe. Many of these sites have regrettably suffered from widely publicised difficulties in the delivery of the supporting infrastructure necessary to mitigate their impacts. As a result, many large sites now running significantly behind their expected delivery rates as outlined in the Housing Trajectory.
- 1.9 Accordingly, it is necessary for Greater Cambridge to re-assess the strategy for delivering the quantum of housing required by the new Standard Method. Logically, to minimise the amount of time in which Greater Cambridge cannot demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply, it would be prudent to focus on smaller and medium-scale sites that are located in sustainable locations and can come forward quickly. Crucially, smaller and medium sized sites can often come forward without the need to provide significant additional infrastructure prior to delivery commencing.
- 1.10 The fastest, and most cost-effective method of boosting supply in the short and medium term, would be to focus on locations which benefit from existing and committed infrastructure, or do not require additional infrastructure to be provided. This includes sites such as Land at the Causeway, Bassingbourn, which not require significant additional infrastructure and could come forward quickly.
- 1.11 It is the view of Endurance Estates that a balanced portfolio of small, medium and large-scale sites should be allocated to both deliver the quantum of housing required in the next plan period, whilst also ensuring choice and competition for housing land and robustness in the trajectory enabling a rolling 5-year housing land supply to be maintained throughout the Plan period.
- 1.12 Capitalising on this existing and committed infrastructure investments is clearly the most effective method of boosting housing supply in the short term; however, this must be balanced with a need to support smaller villages which risk stagnation and decline without controlled growth.

2. SITE ASSESSMENT

- 2.1 The site has been previously submitted and assessed in the 2021 HELAA document under Site Reference **40228**. The assessment concluded the following:

Criteria	Outcome of HELAA
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Suitable	Red
Available	Green
Achievable	Green

- 2.1 Since this assessment was made, there have been material changes in the circumstances which improve the suitability, availability and achievability of the site for residential development. These representations aim to outline these material changes in circumstance and demonstrate that the site represents a sustainable location for new housing development.

Suitable

- 2.2 The 2011 HELAA gave the site a 'Red' rating for suitability. The biggest contributing factor to this rating was the impact upon townscape and landscape.
- 2.3 The unfavourable assessment of impact upon landscape and townscape was primarily a result of perception that the site would have "significant impact on available views to the south from the Causeway, which is already affected by existing and new encroaching development" furthermore, "the development will also further weaken any remaining separation between Bassingbourn and Kneesworth". It is considered that these observations would be better made at the detailed proposals stage, as both are affected by the scale and nature of development proposed and could be mitigated for in the layout and design of any development. In particular, the gap between Bassingbourn and Kneesworth can be maintained through the incorporation of a significant landscape buffer and/or open space, which would effectively secure the future of the gap in perpetuity.
- 2.4 In terms of location, Bassingbourn is classified as a Minor Rural Centre under policy S/9 meaning that development of up to 30 dwellings is permitted under the policy.
- 2.5 Bassingbourn has a population of 2,351 – a marked decrease on the 3,090 residents that lived in the village at the time of the 2001 Census. This is in stark contrast with South Cambridgeshire which grew by just under 25% in the same time period. There is therefore an urgent need to protect the vitality of the village to secure the ongoing provision of shops, services and community facilities. Without additional growth in villages such as Bassingbourn, the range of essential services is likely to continue to deteriorate, ultimately harming the sustainability of the settlements as a whole.
- 2.6 Notwithstanding the pressing need to ensure the continued viability of services within the village, Bassingbourn currently has a good range of shops and services including Bassingbourn Primary School, Bassingbourn Village College (Secondary), a Spar convenience store, a GP surgery and a Public House.
- 2.7 Therefore, whilst Bassingbourn is a demonstrably sustainable location for development, further residential growth is likely to be essential to secure the future viability of shops, services and community facilities within the village as well as provide affordable housing.
- 2.8 Beyond the accessibility of shops and services, the HELAA also noted other areas of concern which are briefly addressed below:
- In terms of Historic Environment impact, it is acknowledged that the site is in proximity to a listed asset and the Bassingbourn Conservation Area. Accordingly, any future application will be accompanied by a detailed Heritage Impact Assessment and this will be fully considered throughout the design stage to mitigate any potential harm. The site is considered to be sufficiently large so that the layout of the scheme can facilitate sufficient buffer zones to the development to reduce any perceived harm.
 - Any future application will be accompanied by an Archaeological assessment, and follow up

trenching can be secured by condition if necessary.

- The HELAA also notes that “the proposed site access is acceptable in principle subject to detailed design” and that “potential access constraints... could be overcome through development”. Further technical work and access design details will accompany any future application.
- In terms of noise/vibration/light pollution, the HELAA notes “the site is capable of being developed to provide a healthy internal and external environment”. Further technical work on noise will be undertaken to support any application.
- The HELAA also notes that conditions will be required relating to ground contamination as a result of the agricultural use.

2.9 Accordingly, none of the potential issues raised are significant enough to preclude development of the site and can be adequately addressed through further, detailed information at application stage or through design and mitigation. We would emphasise that, growth in Bassingbourn is considered to be essential for the continued vitality of the village itself and to safeguard the existing shops and services therein.

2.10 The site is therefore considered to be **Suitable**.

Available

2.11 As confirmed in previous representations, the site is in agricultural use, and Endurance Estates (a site promoter) control the site for the purposes of the proposed development. There are no known legal or ownership impediments to the development of the site.

2.12 There are no planning permissions relevant to the site which would preclude the development, or which would cast doubt upon the intentions of the landowner or promoter.

2.13 The site is available to commence development immediately upon the grant of detailed permission, i.e., within years 0-5 of the plan period.

2.14 Endurance Estates may pursue a speculative application ahead of, or in tandem with the later stages of, the Local Plan process. As such, the site could begin delivery of dwellings within the first years of the plan period, helping to ensure the Councils are able to maintain a 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites.

2.15 The site is therefore **Available** for development.

Achievable

2.16 The details previously submitted still stand. The site is in agricultural use and accordingly has a low existing use value. At present, there are no known viability constraints which would preclude development in line with both adopted and emerging planning policies.

2.17 The site is therefore **Achievable**.

3. CONCLUSION

3.2 Land off the Causeway, Bassingbourn, is promoted for a residential development of up to 75 dwellings with associated infrastructure, including landscaping and open space.

3.3 The site remains **Available and Achievable** as outlined in previous representations and confirmed in the HELAA 2021 document. In addition, the responses to the HELAA items outlined in this letter, in addition to an

evolving context demonstrates that the site can be considered **Suitable**.

- 3.4 It is anticipated that the site will be available for development in the first five years of the new local plan period, delivering against the pressing need for new market and affordable housing in the earliest part of the new plan period. There are no known constraints which could conceivably preclude the development of the site.
- 3.5 Endurance Estates therefore hope that the site will be given further consideration as part of the updated HELAA. The Site could help meet unmet Local Housing Needs over the Plan period and we hope it will be considered for a housing allocation in the new Local plan.

Yours sincerely



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