

Your ref: GC - Call for Sites 2025
Our ref: Land at Girton Road
[Redacted]
Date: 06/03/2025

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service
South Cambridgeshire Hall
Cambourne Business Park
Cambourne
CB23 6EA

Dear Sir/Madam

CALL FOR SITES SUBMISSION – LAND AT GIRTON ROAD, GIRTON

On behalf of our client, Wain Estates (Land) Limited ('Wain Estates'), we have submitted the site at Land at Girton Road, Girton to the Greater Cambridge Call for Sites.

This site has not previously been submitted to the Call for Sites and constitutes a new submission.

The Site and Surrounding Context

This site is located immediately to the east of the built-up part of Girton and lies within South Cambridgeshire District. The site is accessed off Girton Road via an existing driveway. The site measures approximately 3.56 hectares (ha) and is currently used as a paddock with stables and a single dwelling. The site therefore constitutes in part Previously Developed Land (PDL).

The site is surrounded on all boundaries by existing trees and hedges, with agricultural land to the north, east and south of the site. The A14 is located further to the south.



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To the south of A14, lies the development of Darwin Green, an emerging new neighbourhood of circa 2,500 homes (allocated in the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan and Cambridge City Local Plan).

The site falls within Flood Zone 1, as indicated by the Environment Agency's Flood Maps and therefore has the least possibility of flooding at 0.1% chance (low probability).

The site is not located in a conservation area and there are no listed buildings on site.

The village of Girton benefits from the following services and facilities:

- Primary School
- Specialist school for Children with Autism
- Church
- Public House
- Retirement Village
- Allotments
- Doctors
- Convenience Store
- Sports Pitches
- Community Centre
- Nurseries
- A variety of independent shops

The Village Classification Report (2021) prepared by SCDC explains that despite its classification as a Group Village, it compares favourably in terms of services and facilities with the three Minor Rural centres. It is therefore considered given the date of the report, and the additional services that have been made available through recent development, that Girton should be considered more in line with the Minor Rural Centres.

To the north and south of the site access are two bus stops, from which the number 6 service runs. This is a regular service, with a bus which provides hourly connections into Cambridge (more frequently at peak times) and up north towards Oakington. There are dedicated footpaths down from the site into Cambridge and clear cycleways on Huntingdon Road down into the city centre.

The site is also within a 2km catchment of Eddington (to the south-west) and Darwin Green (to the south) which offer further facilities and employment opportunities, including:

- Supermarket
- Primary School
- Hotel
- Restaurants
- Cafes
- Sports Pitches
- Convenience Store
- Community rooms

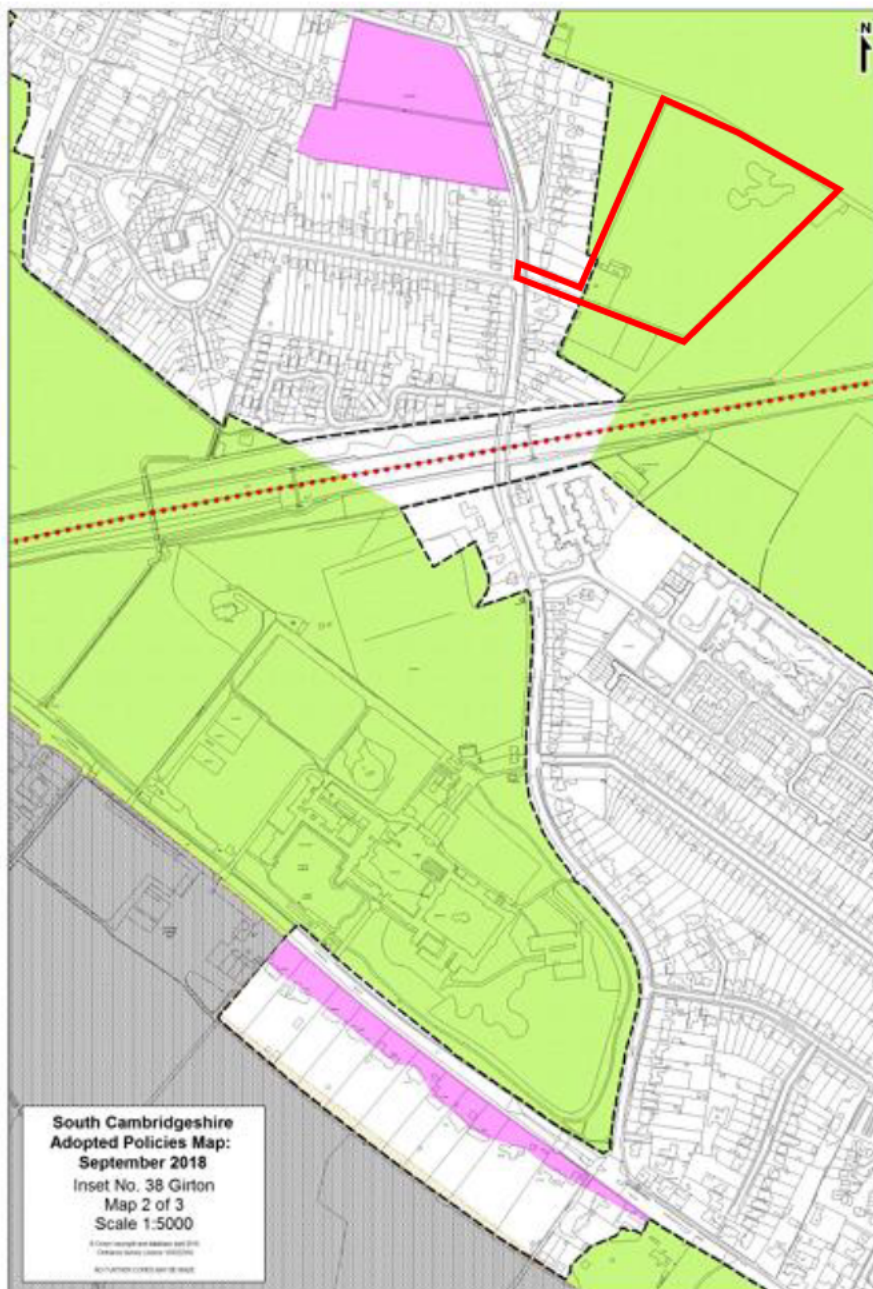
- Library
- Play areas

The above highlights that Girton is a highly sustainable settlement and is capable of receiving higher levels of growth without this being disproportionate in scale to the size of the existing settlement.

Local Planning Policy Framework

Development Plan

The site is located partly inside of the settlement boundary of Girton and partly within the Cambridge Green Belt, as shown on the South Cambridgeshire Adopted Policies Map from the 2018 Local Plan. The site has been overlaid onto the map below to show the context.



Emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan and Supporting Evidence Base

In 2021 as part of the evidence base for the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan, the Councils commissioned a Green Belt Assessment (Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment 2021).

The Study provides an assessment which identifies variations in openness and the extent to which land contributes to the purposes of the Green Belt and uses this to determine variations in the potential harm to those Green Belt purposes of releasing land within Greater Cambridge from the designation.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the role and function of Green Belt and defines the purposes of the designation as follows:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

These purposes have been applied locally as the 'Cambridge Green Belt Purposes', which are set out in the 2018 CCC and SCDC Local Plans as being to:

- Cambridge Purpose 1 (Purpose (a) in the NPPF) - preserve the unique character of Cambridge as a compact, dynamic city with a thriving historic centre
- Cambridge Purpose 2 (Purpose (d) in the NPPF) - maintain and enhance the quality of its setting
- Cambridge Purpose 3 (Purpose (b) in the NPPF) - prevent communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with the city

Within the Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment, the site falls within a wider parcel referred to as GI18, shown below (site outlined in yellow).

GI18



The assessment concludes the following against each of the Green Belt purposes for Parcel GI18:

- Cambridge Purpose 1 (NPPF Purpose (a)) – Relatively significant harm
- Cambridge Purpose 2 (NPPF Purpose (d)) – Relatively Limited harm
- Cambridge Purpose 3 (NPPF Purpose (b)) – Significant harm

The overall assessment concludes that the release of land from the Green Belt would have a Very High level of harm of Green Belt release.

Since the publication of the Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment 2021, a revised version of the NPPF has been published that includes for a new definition of 'grey belt' land. The glossary of the NPPF confirms that for the purposes of plan-making and decision-making, 'grey belt' is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143.

Firstly, the site comprises, in part, previously developed land.

Secondly, the site does not 'strongly' contribute to purposes (a), (b) or (d) in paragraph 143, for the reasons set out below.

Thirdly, the site is considerably smaller than the size of the overall parcel assessed in the Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment 2021. A site-specific assessment would therefore be required to more accurately assess the site on the purposes of the Green Belt and the level of harm should it be released from the Green Belt. On initial review we note the following:

Cambridge Purpose 1 (Purpose (a) in the NPPF) - preserve the unique character of Cambridge as a compact, dynamic city with a thriving historic centre

The assessment already concludes that the release would not alter the openness of the Green Belt due to the existing tree belts surrounding the GI18 parcel. There are opportunities to enhance this tree belt as part of the development, providing appropriate screening from all viewpoints, which will help mitigate any perceived impacts over Cambridge Purpose 1, which seeks to preserve the unique character of Cambridge. With the growth plans for Cambridge, sites like this will need to be considered to provide the anticipated housing growth required as part of the wider intentions being progressed by the Cambridge Delivery Group.

Cambridge Purpose 2 (Purpose (d) in the NPPF) - maintain and enhance the quality of its setting

The assessment confirms that the land is bound by agricultural farmland, 'the land contains no features or aspects that contribute specifically to the quality of Cambridge's setting and that the parcel makes a relatively limited contribution to the Cambridge Purpose 2'. This would apply to the site in isolation.

Cambridge Purpose 3 (Purpose (b) in the NPPF) - prevent communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with the city

In relation to Cambridge Purpose 3, while the release of this parcel of land, would push the development boundary further to the east, there is sufficient separation from any neighbouring settlement to avoid a risk of Girton merging with other communities. The parcel assessed under GI18, includes land beyond the red line of this submission. The closest settlement to the east is Histon and Impington which is circa 1.2km east of the corner of the site. To the south of the A14 road, the allocated and consented Darwin Green Development, ensures that separation will be maintained in perpetuity through the location of the Country Park just south of A14. As part of the Darwin Green proposals (namely phases 2 and 3), a bund

will be constructed to shield views and noise from the north looking to the south. Therefore, long-distance views into the development will be limited to land to the north and east of the site, where the site will be screened by both the existing tree belts and the enhancements likely to be secured as part of the development.

In summary, there is a clear case for this site to be considered as 'grey belt'. This further strengthens the case for its release from the Green Belt and allocation for residential development to meet the housing needs of the district.

The Emerging Proposals

The site is put forward for the allocation for residential development, open space, associated infrastructure, Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and enhanced opportunities for the development of biodiversity.

A Vision Document has been prepared to present an understanding of the site and how a residential development can be formed that is respectful of its edge of village location. The Vision Document is included with this Call for Sites submission. It demonstrates that the site is deliverable: it is available now, provides a suitable location for development, and new homes can be delivered on the site within five years of the adoption of the Local Plan.

Access would be taken off Girton Road to the west. This would be facilitated through the demolition of a single dwelling and the existing stable buildings on site. Further details of the initial access proposals can be found in the Vision Document.

The site is bound on all sides by established trees that form a distinct separation between the village and the countryside beyond. The proposals will remain to the village side and will be read in the context of the village rather than the countryside. The site would be seen as a natural extension to the village.

The Public Benefits

The identification of Land at Girton Road as a residential allocation in the Greater Cambridge Local Plan would provide significant social, economic and environmental benefits to the local area, including:

- The opportunity to provide new homes and affordable housing to help meet the needs of Girton and the wider district.
- Locating residential development in a sustainable location with access to local shops, schools and services, and high-quality sustainable transport links into the city centre. The site is located approximately 2km from the West Cambridge Science Park which provides opportunity for employment, and 2.5km from the city centre, and is well placed for future residents to be able to walk and cycle, rather than travel by private car, to these social and employment areas.
- Use of partly previously developed land.
- Increasing the amount of public open space and play space, providing recreation opportunities for residents and the wider community.
- Supporting Girton's economy through increased spend in local shops, restaurants etc.; and
- Enhancing biodiversity levels across the site and delivering green infrastructure for the benefit of ecology and existing and future residents

Conclusions

The site is suitable for Green Belt release to facilitate residential development. The site is considered to constitute 'Grey Belt' land due to it being in part previously developed land and its lack of contribution to

the Green Belt Purposes set out in both the NPPF and the Cambridge Green Belt Review. The site is appropriately screened from the surrounding agricultural land by existing tree belts, which can be enhanced through the development of the site. The site is in a sustainable location, with high quality public transport links into the city centre. It is therefore considered to be suitable for allocation to meet the needs for new homes in the emerging Local Plan.

Kind Regards

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Enclosures **Call for sites submission pack**