

**Greater Cambridge Local Plan**

South Cambridgeshire Hall  
Cambourne Business Park  
Cambourne  
Cambridgeshire  
CB23 6EA

7<sup>th</sup> March 2025

**Lanpro Project Number: 4566**

By Call for Sites Electronic Submission

Dear Sir/Madam,

## **Greater Cambridge Local Plan Call for Sites Submission: Duxford Hub – Land to the north of A505, Duxford, Cambridgeshire**

### **Introduction**

This letter has been prepared by Lanpro Services on behalf of Albanwise Farming Ltd and Russell Smith Farms in relation to their land interest at the Duxford Hub: land to the north of A505, Duxford, Cambridgeshire, CB22 4QR.

The Site was originally submitted to the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service as part of its initial 'call for sites' process for the new Greater Cambridge Local Plan. The Site was given various references as the Site comprises a number of fields (see accompanying e-form for the full list). The Site was originally put forward as a mixed-use Site comprising residential and commercial floorspace. Since then, the previous Government published the 'Case for Cambridge' and the current Government has emphasised the growth of Cambridge to form part of Europe's Silicon Valley, along with Oxford. Therefore, a new Vision Document has been prepared, which seeks to promote the Site as a supply chain hub for the Cambridge Life Science and Technology Cluster.

This letter is submitted alongside the dedicated e-form, and a Vision Document, which provide further information as to why the Site should be considered as a sustainable Life Sciences Hub within a sustainable transport corridor, supporting future economic growth. The Site also provides much needed services and facilities to support the nearby settlements, including the provision of a community hub at Heathfield, areas of public open space, including sports fields and a strategic

mobility hub. Its location adjacent to Junction 10 of the M11 and within a 10-minute cycle ride to Whittlesford Train Station makes the Site ideally suited for a Life Sciences cluster.

## Site Context

Albanwise and Russell Smith Farms are local landowners with a combined parcel of land, which forms the Site. The Site extends to 280ha. It is situated to the north of the A505 Trunk Road. The majority of the Site is to the west of Junction 10 of the M11. The Site primarily comprises agricultural fields. Although part of the Site, to the east of the M11 comprises the Cambridge University Press and Assessment, a restaurant and floorspace for E(g) uses (offices, light industrial and research and development).

The Site is located within Flood Zone 1, although there are pockets of land around the Thriplow Reservoir. There are also pockets of land within the Site, which are at risk of surface water flooding. Throughout the Site there are a number of footpaths and bridleways, linking Heathfield to Thriplow in and around Whittlesford.

To the north of Heathfield, within the Site, there is the Scheduled Monument of Roman Settlement of Chronicle Hills. The Site is also located adjacent to the Duxford Airfield Conservation Area and the Thriplow Conservation Area. There are a number of Listed Buildings within the Duxford Airfield Conservation Area and the Thriplow Conservation Area.

A small portion of the Thriplow Peat Holes SSSI is located within the Site boundary.

The Site is located within the Cambridge Green Belt.

## Update to Site References

The Site was subject to a submission to the initial 'call for sites' exercise. The Site was separated into separate parcels and was promoted for a mixture of residential, employment and mixed-use development.

Since the initial 'call for sites' process, the Government has emphasised the importance of growing Cambridge's Life Sciences industry to support the national economy. Therefore, the Site has been resubmitted as part of this updated 'call for sites' process, promoting a supply chain hub for the Cambridge Life Science and Technology Cluster along with a Strategic Mobility Hub, Community Hub and public open space, including sports pitches. The Government has also designated the provision of data centres as Critical National Infrastructure. This means that data centres are considered to support economic growth and are supported by Government. This Site is also ideally located to support this use.

## Government's Vision for Greater Cambridge

The Labour Government is placing considerable emphasis on growth in and around Cambridge. In the Autumn Budget, the Chancellor referenced the need to fund Cambridge so that it realises its full potential. In the Budget, the Chancellor committed £10 million to enable the Cambridge Growth Company (a body set up to facilitate growth) to develop a plan for housing, transport, water and wider infrastructure. This is being chaired by Peter Freeman and, following our request, agreed to meet with the landowners to discuss the merits of the Site.

In January 2025, the Chancellor reiterated her commitment to deliver the Oxford to Cambridge Growth Corridor as a driver to boost the UK economy by up to £78 billion by 2035. She added that the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor has the “*potential to be Europe's Silicon Valley*”.

As the Site is located adjacent to Junction 10 of the M11 and is a 10-minute cycle ride to sustainable transport links (Whittlesford railway station) approximately 1.5km east of the site, it is considered a suitable and sustainable location to help Greater Cambridge meet the Government's ambitions to grow the Life Sciences sector.

## Site Promotion

### ***Proposed New Supply Chain Hub for Cambridge Life Science and Technology Cluster***

The Site is considered to be located in a sustainable location. It is strategically located adjacent to Junction 10 of the M11, providing north and south connectivity. It is also within a 10-minute cycle ride to Whittlesford Parkway, which provides direct rail services to Cambridge North, Cambridge (Central), Stansted Airport and London Liverpool Street. In early 2026, Whittlesford Parkway will have direct trains to the new Cambridge South station, directly linked to the Cambridge Biomedical Campus, with an estimated journey time of between 5-6 minutes. It also benefits from its proximity to what will be (after the anticipated closure of Cambridge Airport), the only remaining tarmac runway in the Greater Cambridge area, at Duxford Airfield, immediately south of the Site.

The Site is located at the centre of the Cambridge Life Sciences, Research and Development Cluster. All the 30 science and technology parks supporting this industry are within 12km of the proposed Site. Therefore, the Site is ideally located to support this nationally critical industry. The Site is also in a perfect location to deliver data centres, supporting the Government's ambitions to deliver Critical National Infrastructure.

The vision for the Site is for it to be a highly connected place focused around sustainable and active that could include:

- Enhanced highway junctions, including at Junction 10 of the M11, enabling better connectivity and safety;

- A new Strategic Mobility Hub (with ancillary uses including shops and cafés), providing users with parking facilities linking into the new sustainable transport network, reducing traffic on the highway network;
- Multi-modal connectivity between Whittlesford Parkway and the new Strategic Mobility Hub, adjacent to the Imperial War Museum, enabling visitors to travel to the Duxford Airfield via sustainable modes;
- The extension to the Cambridge South East Transport (CSET), providing a direct spur to link to Whittlesford Parkway and direct sustainable transport links to other nearby life sciences and research parks;
- Enhancements to Whittlesford Parkway to accommodate the increase in passenger numbers and to provide a better interchange facility between transport modes;
- A dedicated sustainable and active travel corridor with an autonomous shuttle service alongside high-quality cycling, pedestrian and wheelchair provision, linking the commercial areas of the Duxford Hub with the Strategic Mobility Hub, Imperial War Museum and Whittlesford Parkway; and
- Enhancements to existing and proposed new pedestrian and cycle links, building on the emerging Greenway network and providing sustainable links to the surrounding villages, including Duxford Sawston, Thriplow and Whittlesford.

As the Site is a proposed new employment hub, it is seeking to provide other facilities and services, not just much need floorspace for Mid Tech and start up development. These services and facilities include a Strategic Mobility Hub, Community Hub at Heathfield and areas of public open space, biodiversity enhancements and sports pitches. The Community Hub at Heathfield is seeking to provide a local shop, sports pitch, skate park, play space and community orchard. The Strategic Mobility Hub will be used by not only future employees in Duxford Hub but also residents in the surrounding settlements, reducing the need for residents to make vehicular journeys.

Further details on the proposed new settlement, including the proposed masterplan, is shown in the Vision Document, which accompanies this 'call for sites' submission.

### **Green Belt**

Although the Site is located in the Green Belt, the recently updated Green Belt National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) gives more power for Local Authorities to deliver development in the Green Belt.

Paragraph 145 does allow Authorities to review Green Belt boundaries in the development of their local plans should there be exceptional circumstances. Paragraph 146 defines exceptional circumstances as instances where an Authority “*cannot meet its identified needs for homes, commercial or other development.*”

It is considered that the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service will have to review its evidence to demonstrate whether they are exceptional circumstances to alter Green Belt boundaries within Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. In order to meet the Government's ambitions for growth for both housing and to support the Life Sciences sector, it is deemed that there will be a need for the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service to alter its Green Belt boundaries.

As the Site is proposing a Supply Chain Hub for the Cambridge Life Science and Technology Cluster as well as providing other services and facilities benefitting existing residents, such as the Strategic Mobility Hub and Heathfield Community Hub, it should be considered as a potential area of land to be removed from the Green Belt.

The importance of provision for clusters of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries that support the national economy are detailed in the recently updated NPPF. Paragraph 87 states that planning policies and decisions "*should recognise and address the specific location requirements of different sectors.*" In her latest announcement, the Chancellor reiterated the importance of the Life Sciences industry in Cambridgeshire. Therefore, this proposal for a Supply Chain Hub for the Cambridge Life Science and Technology Cluster is ideally located to support the Government's ambition as it is situated in proximity to the existing science parks.

The initial concept plan for the Site, set out in the Vision Document, has been designed to mitigate the impact of the development on the remaining Green Belt to reduce the threat of coalescence between the proposed development and Thriplow and Whittlesford. It has also considered how to preserve and enhance the Scheduled Monument of Roman Settlement of Chronicle Hills and Thriplow Peat Holes SSSI.

It has also considered the locally important views set out in the emerging Thriplow and Heathfield Neighbourhood Plan. In February 2025, the Independent Examiner concluded that the emerging Neighbourhood Plan was considered sound and should therefore, proceed to referendum. The Concept Plan has sought to provide open space within these locally important village and parish views to mitigate any impact from the development.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, this Site has been resubmitted to the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service's 'call for sites' exercise as it was originally promoted for a mixture of residential, employment and mixed-use development. The Site is now being proposed as a Supply Chain Hub for the Cambridge Life Science and Technology Cluster and for uses to deliver Critical National Infrastructure, such as data centres. It is also proposing ancillary uses, such as a Strategic Mobility Hub and the Heathfield Community Hub as well as public open space benefitting existing residents and future employees. The Site is ideally located on Junction 10 of the M11 to support the Government's vision to grow Cambridge's economy which is considered to be of national importance.

Future employees and existing residents will benefit from the Strategic Mobility Hub which will provide travellers with parking facilities linking to the new sustainable transport network, incorporating sustainable access to the Duxford Imperial War Museum. The scheme will provide a dedicated sustainable and active travel corridor for use by cyclists, pedestrians and wheelchair users to other nearby services and facilities, including Whittlesford Parkway, which provides regular services into Cambridge, Stansted Airport and London and in the future, Cambridge South, linking to the Cambridge Biomedical Campus.

The majority of the Site comprises areas of public open space, biodiversity enhancements and sports pitches, benefitting future employees and existing residents in Heathfield, Thriplow, Duxford and Whittlesford.

Although the Site is located within the Cambridgeshire Green Belt, its location and Greater Cambridge's need to support the Life Sciences Industry as set out by Government, makes the Site an ideal future allocation for a new Supply Chain Hub. The Vision Document outlines how the impact on the remaining Green Belt and the locally important views have been considered and mitigated through careful design of public open spaces.

If you have any questions or comments related to the Site, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,



Will Nichols

Regional Director

Encs. Location Plan, Vision Document/

Cc: Paul Hanson (Albanwise Ltd), Robert Smith, Ed Smith, Mike Smith (Russell Smith Farms) and Victoria Yeandle (Lanpro)

