

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

Ref: IE / 24-239

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Date: 07 May 2025

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Call for Sites – Land at Home Farm, Newton, Cambridge

This letter has been prepared by Ceres Property on behalf of Newton Farms in support of representations made to the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Call for Sites consultation, in relation to the Land and Buildings at Home Farm, Newton (the 'Site').

This letter provides an overview of the Site characteristics and its merits for development. We welcome working with the Council on the potential for development at this site as the plan-making process moves forward. The following sections of this letter review the context of Newton, the Site and its surroundings, the proposed development and key planning considerations.

Newton

The Site is located on the land at Home Farm, Newton. Newton is a village within South Cambridgeshire District Council, located to the south west of Cambridge and north east of Royston. Surrounding villages include Great Shelford, Little Shelford, Harston, Hauxton, Thriplow and Whittlesford. The village comprises a range of amenities and services.

Newton is connected to the wider highways network via the M11 and A10, providing connections to London to the south and Cambridge to the North. The site benefits from very good public transport connectivity, with a bus stop located on Cambridge Road, which provide regular bus services to Cambridge, the Shelfords, Hauxton, Thriplow, Fowlmere, Heydon, Chrishall ad Barley. Foxton train station is approximately 3 miles from Newton, and provides regular train services to Cambridge, London, Letchworth Garden City, Welwyn Garden City and Finsbury. Whittlesford Parkway train station is 3.8 miles from Newton.

The Site and Surroundings

The submission site is located at Home Farm, Newton. Home Farm sits on the northern side of Town Street and forms part of a group of existing agricultural and commercial buildings. The more modern agricultural buildings are located northwards of the historic farmyard, which have been converted to office/commercial use and are

generally to the south fronting onto Town Street. Zettlex (UK) currently occupy the existing office/commercial buildings to the front of Home Farm. They employ a total of 46 staff, with 35 based at Home Farm. The Site is accessed via an existing access onto Town Street.

The Site is not subject to any landscape or ecological designations within the adopted Local Plan. The Site is wholly located within Flood Zone 1, where there is a low risk of fluvial or tidal flooding. The majority of the Site is at low risk of surface water flooding, with a small area at medium risk to the rear. There are no historic assets within the Site. However, several Listed Buildings and an ancient monument are located outside the Site boundary, generally fronting Town Street. Part of the Site is within a SSSI Impact Risk zone. The Site is Grade 2 Agricultural Land.

Employment Space Need in Greater Cambridge

The Greater Cambridge Employment Land and Economic Development Evidence Study (November 2020) encourages the conversion of farm buildings to employment uses, to provide supply for small uses unable to afford premises closer to Cambridge. Further to this, the Greater Cambridge Local Plan First Proposals Topic Paper 6 (Jobs) (October 2021) acknowledges that that less local employment opportunities can reduce the vibrancy of communities and mean that people are required to travel further for work. In addition, feedback from the Greater Cambridgeshire First Conversation acknowledged that there is a need additional small to medium office units in the Cambridge area.

This indicates the need for employment space in Cambridge, especially for small to medium office units within the greater Cambridge area. There is not only a need for employment space within Cambridge city centre, but also for areas within Cambridge outside of the centre, for businesses that are unable to afford premises closer to Cambridge.

The Site that this submission relates to is for the conversion of farm buildings in South Cambridgeshire, to provide office space for a medium sized business to continue to operate. The following section of this letter provides further detail regarding the proposed use of the Site as employment space, which will help meet identified needs.

Proposed Development

The wider site is currently used for agricultural purposes, with buildings to the front used for office space. Zettlex (UK) are part of the Novanta Inc Group of companies, and currently occupy office space at Home Farm, Newton. As a result of business growth, Zettlex (UK) require additional office space. Instead of moving elsewhere, it is logical that the business expand into buildings at Home Farm, adjacent to their existing office. The accompanying location plan shows the existing agricultural buildings that are available for office use. Whilst the existing buildings are currently used for agricultural purposes, due to a downturn in agricultural business and growing need for additional office space for Zettlex (UK), it is logical to convert the existing buildings into office space.

Since Zettlex (UK) has been based at Newton, sales growth has increased from 20% to 30% Year on Year. Providing additional space will allow Zettlex (UK) to remain competitive, maintain and maximise its long-term viability. Growth will create jobs, improve infrastructure and continue to increase procurement of Material from local manufacturing companies and associated services.

The Greater Cambridge Local Plan First Proposals (2021) proposes minimal growth in the villages. However, national policy requires a need for a suitable proportion of growth to be directed to village locations, such as Newton. The need for additional office space for smaller to medium businesses outside of the Cambridge city centre is clearly defined. The Site is already used for office space and Zettlex (UK) are committed to operating within Newton. The use of Home Farm as a small employment site would reduce the need for employees to travel further to different premises and allow for the business to continue to operate.

Key Planning Considerations

The Site is free of any constraints that could render it fundamentally unsuitable for employment development.

As shown on the accompanying location plan, the area to the front of the site is already used as commercial offices, occupied by Zettlex (UK). The office is currently used for software development, and contains desk space. As such, there are no industrial activities at the site. This submission proposes the expansion of the existing employment site into the remainder of Home Farm, to meet local business needs.

The Site location is well connected to nearby towns, villages and cities via the M11, A11, bus services and train services.

Key planning considerations include minimising heritage impacts.

The Site is not subject to any legal or ownership constraints, and the landowners are fully committed to the promotion of the Site.

Summary

The Site is located to the rear of Home Farm, Newton, and has the opportunity to provide additional employment space to meet identified employment needs. The Site is accessible via active transport modes and public transport, including walking, cycling and busses.

Further discussions with the Council are welcomed on potential opportunities for this Site.

We wish to stress our desire to work collaboratively with the Council in respect of the Site, and to emphasise the flexibility that exists in respect of this land and buildings to respond to potential local development needs.

Yours sincerely

